

THE WILL OF GOD
Submit to Governing Authorities
Romans 13:1-7

Big Idea: Christian citizens are to submit to governing authorities and pay their taxes.

1. Submit to the governing authorities (13:1-2).

A. Because their authority comes from God (vv. 1-2).

(1) No governing authority exists apart from God's will and determination (v. 1).

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

1 Pet. 2:13

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,
Titus 3:1

1 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities,
to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,

(2) To resist governing authorities is to resist what God has ordained (v. 2).

2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

- We are to exercise civil disobedience when obedience to the state would entail disobedience to God.

Principle number one is that we should obey the civil magistrates, but principle number two, which balances it, is that we must always obey God. If there is a conflict between what the civil magistrate commands and what God demands, it is our moral duty to disobey the civil magistrate.

Sproul, R. C. - The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans, p. 213.

- **Principles of civil disobedience:**

- The law being resisted must be unjust and immoral, clearly contrary to the will of God, and not just inconvenient or burdensome.
- Legal means of changing the unjust situation must have been exhausted. Civil disobedience is a method not of first resort, but of last resort.
- As you consider civil disobedience, you must be willing to accept the penalty for breaking the law.

B. Because their ministry is to promote good and restrain evil (vv. 3-5).

(1) Promote what is good (v. 3)

3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,

(2) Restrain what is evil (vv. 4-5)

4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

1 Peter 2:13-17

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- **God's purpose for government:**

- To render judgment for the sake of justice.

- To build platforms of peace, order, and flourishing. Justice leads to and allows for order and flourishing.
- To set the stage for redemption.

Jonathan Leeman - *How the Nations Rage*, pp. 107-119

1 Tm. 2:1-4

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2. Pay taxes to the governing authorities (13:6-7).

A. Because they are ministers of God (v. 6).

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

B. Because we are to pay what is owed to them (v. 7).

7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Mark 12:14b-17

14b Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" 15 But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." 16 And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." 17 Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him.

As a devoted follower of King Jesus, my Lord, my Savior, and my sovereign God, I pledge the following to the governing authorities, which are ordained by God:

1. I will be a good citizen living in subjection to governmental authority, even a pagan one (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). I will responsibly engage the political process. If allowed, I will vote, seeking to bring my Christian convictions into the public arena.
2. I will live internationally like Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, and Jesus Himself on earth. My ultimate allegiance is to Christ and His kingdom.
3. I will obey the state but worship only God. And I will thank God for all the good He does through the government, praying always for all who are in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-5).
4. I will acknowledge that all governmental authority is established by and comes from God (Mk. 12:17; Rom. 13:1, 4, 6).
5. I will acknowledge that all government serves in some measure the purposes of promoting good and punishing evil (Rom. 13:3-4).
6. I will pay all taxes levied upon me by my government, recognizing its right to do so (Mk. 12:17; Rom. 13:6-7).
7. I will engage in "civil disobedience" only when my government prohibits me from doing what the Bible commands, or when it commands me to do what the Bible prohibits.

Daniel Akin - *Christ-centered exposition: Exalting Jesus in Mark*, p. 278