

**Romans 13:1-7**  
**For the week of February 11, 2024**

**Reflection**

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?
  
2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

**How do we relate to our increasingly secular government and culture? Is it correct to say with some that when a government begins to turn evil, the Christian is obligated to oppose it and to refuse to support it? We must remember that when Paul was writing this, Nero was on the Roman throne. While he had not yet turned into the evil anti-Christian emperor he was to become, there were definitely signs of anti-Christian activity in the empire. So, Paul is not writing this under the kind of government many of us have grown up under, and he still calls upon people to submit. This section comes out of the blue without any thematic preparation. Some (Munro 1983:56–67) believe it was a later interpolation (*to insert a different thought*) into the letter, but that is unnecessary. Probably the discussion of persecutors in *Romans* 12:9–21 brought this to Paul's mind. It develops the message of *Romans* 12:9, 14, 17 and 21 to respond to evil/oppression with good. As Fitzmyer (*a biblical scholar*) points out (1993b:662), there had not yet been any official persecution in Rome. Claudius had expelled Jews and Christians for rioting in A.D. 49, but that had been local. Still, there were signs of unrest, and Acts tells us of ongoing local problems in most of the cities Paul evangelized.<sup>1</sup>**

**Observation** (vs. 1)

3. What is Paul saying in this verse?

**Interpretation**

4. What does “there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” mean? (see also Dan 2:21; Prov 8:15-16; John 19:11; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Pet 2:13-17)

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<sup>1</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 341.

**Application**

5. Does allegiance to God negate your responsibility to secular authority?<sup>2</sup> Why or why not?

**Observation** (vs. 2-3)

6. What is the message to the Roman church?

**Interpretation**

7. How is resisting authority resisting God?

8. Are the examples of civil disobedience in Acts (4:19; 5:29) a contradiction to what Paul is commanding in verses 2-3? Why or why not?

9. How are rulers not a threat to good behavior but bad?

**Application**

10. How do these verses speak not only to your behavior towards authorities, but also your attitude?

**Observation** (vs. 4-5)

11. What is being said in these verses?

**Interpretation**

12. How are rulers serving as an instrument of God? (see also Jer 25:9)

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [Romans](#), vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 243.

**Application**

13. How do you respond to Bible translator JB Phillips' statement about these verses, "One should obey not simply because it is the safest, but because it is the right thing to do"?

**Observation** (6-7)

14. What is Paul commanding the Roman church to do and why?

**Interpretation**

15. Read Mark 12:13-16 and write the comparisons below.

**Application**

16. Believers are to respect and honor governing authorities, "not because they are powerful and influential *men*, but because they have been appointed by God."<sup>3</sup> Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

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<sup>3</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [Romans](#), vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 245.