

**Living in Light of Now and What is Coming
Romans 13**

As Christians, we know that we will continue to live in this world until we die or until Christ returns. The way that we live between these two worlds, the world we are in now and the one that is to come will say a lot about us.

The Law of the Land (Romans 13:1-7)

In Romans 13:1-7, Paul's intention is not to give us a standard by which the Christian votes or point to a political party, but to tell how Christians must live in light of the laws and authority that are over them. All authority ultimately comes from the Lord (John 19:11, Daniel 2:21). With that in mind, Christians submit to governmental authority as an act of service to God first. However, there are limitations to our submission. If a governing authority puts forth a command that forces a believer into sin, the Christian must stand against that but do it respectfully (Acts 4:18-20). However, this does not mean that Christians have an excuse not to pray and honor those in authority over them.

The Law of the Lord (Romans 13:8-10)

Love is an outstanding debt that we will never be able to pay in full. There is never a moment in our lives where we can say that we have maxed out all the love that we are able to give. The love that Paul talks about in this section of verses is the love by which God loves. The Greek word that is used (agape) points to a sacrificial, unmerited, pure, grace-filled love that is seen fully in the love that God has for us. We are commanded to love as God has loved. God calls us to love purely and perfectly and while that may sound impossible, it is achieved by what Christ has done on our behalf. It is because He fulfilled the Law perfectly that we are able to have eternal life. We simply live in light of that reality and let that guide the way we love our neighbors. It is when we embrace and understand His love that loving our neighbor becomes truly possible.

In Light of the World to Come (Romans 13:11-14)

This section is a good reminder for us that if the Spirit dwells in us, if we belong to Christ, we know where we are going and we know that though we walk through the darkness, we know that the great light is coming. With a view of Heaven, with a view of our risen Savior upon the throne, we can endure through submission to authority, we can more joyfully love our neighbors, we can find greater joy in serving others. While we may not be in heaven yet, we should live as if we already were. While Paul may not give us every possible way that we can cast off the works of darkness, we already have an example and a summary on how we must do it. We do it by imitating Christ, He is our perfect example. And the way that we do it is by putting on the armor of light and loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. While our eyes may be set towards Heaven, may our actions be set to love those on earth.