

Romans Chapter 13 - 14

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Introduction:

In the previous chapter, Paul has made it clear that Christians are not to seek vengeance for themselves. Does that take away the government's authority to punish people who break its laws? That question forms the main subject of the chapter before us.

In heaven exists the Father, Son (Word) and Holy Spirit. The Father is in charge. The rest of the heavenly creatures obey the Father. When the Three-in-One God created life on the planet, God put Adam in charge of creatures and when his companion Eve appeared, she was responsible to Adam.

When she listened to Satan and sinned, it was *Adam* who was responsible for Eve's sin. It has been called Adam's sin including here in Romans.

Even when people are co-equals, someone is still in charge. As the children of Adam spread across the area where they lived, they eventually set up cities (Genesis 10:10-11). Differences over such items as property lines, stolen animals and stolen foodstuffs arose, creating the need for local judges. As a result, we see government developing.

Sometimes the governing *judge* was a *prophet* (Exodus 18:13). At other times a *king* (2 Samuel 15:1-4) or someone else. Ultimately, the principle of government traces back to God. It existed in heaven before the universe was created.

Romans 13 NLT

(1) Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.

- **Everyone . . .** This *simple* word **everyone** includes the believers who are reading this letter. The reason is also *simple*: **God** is at the root of all **authority**. Recall what Jesus told Pilate at His trial:

Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over Me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin."

(John 19:11 NLT)

- **Placed there by God** That means Caesar Augustus (Pilate's employer) and Nebuchadnezzar. That means Adolph Hitler. That means all rulers whether the very best or the very worst. The principle of having a government was instituted by the God of Heaven. Sometimes He uses that government to punish its wayward citizens or prepare them to be conquered by some other government.

(2) So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

- Jesus did not revile the Roman government that took His life. The exception to this rule is seen in Acts as Peter addressed the Jewish leaders:

So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than Him?"

(Acts 4:18-19 NLT)

Peter was saying that the commands from **God** take precedent over the commands from a government.

(3) For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to

live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you.

- Believers were not to live their lives in opposition to the existing governmental authorities.

(4) The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong.

- The government, no matter what views they hold, are **servants of God**.
- Believers must be good citizens, even if we hold citizenship in a greater kingdom. Here what Jeremiah told the Jews who would be taken to Babylon:

He sent the letter with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah when they went to Babylon as King Zedekiah's ambassadors to Nebuchadnezzar. This is what Jeremiah's letter said: This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives He has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare." (Jeremiah 29:3-7 NLT)

Those carried to Babylon are going to be there many years so they are to **build homes** and **plant gardens** because they will be there to pick the vegetables. They are to **marry, have children, find spouses** for them so they will have **grandchildren**. They are to work for the **peace and prosperity** of Babylon, not be terrorists. They are to **pray for**

Babylon while they live in it. We as Christians hold dual citizenship and we are to be citizens who live the best we can and pray for the nation in which we live.

(5) So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

- For believers, it was not only **submission to avoid punishment**, but to have a **clear conscience** before God.

(6) Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do.

- Believers are to pay their **taxes** in order to **pay government** workers. **God** wants to have His **workers paid**. It was the Jewish enemies of Jesus who questioned **paying taxes** to the Roman government.

Now tell us -- is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" He saw through their trickery and said, "Show Me a Roman coin. Whose picture and title are stamped on it?" "Caesar's," they replied. "Well then," He said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." (Luke 20:22-25 NLT)

The Lord established that Caesar had rightful authority. He also closed the door for them using the money that should go to God's causes to pay their taxes.

- Christians make the best kind of citizens: they are loyal, they pay their taxes and they pray for the national leaders.

(7) Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority. (8) Owe nothing to anyone -- except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

- Debt is so easy to acquire. In some nations people are offered housing and employment with pay, but soon are in debt to their

employer because they had to take time off for sickness. In a few months, they have become slaves. This is true of those in India and Pakistan working in the kilns making bricks for construction. To a certain extent, it is true of any of us who cannot pay when the payment is due.

Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the lender. (Proverbs 22:7 NLT)

- The only debt we are to carry is to **love one another**. We must make regular payments on this debt.

(9) For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These -- and other such commandments -- are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

- Paul speaks of the law behind the ten **commandments** of Moses: **Love your neighbor as yourself**. This is not just an abstract principle, but must become an everyday activity with people we deal with. Just as one of Jesus' listeners tried to get out of taking action by asking "Who is my neighbor?", so we must identify those who are in need as our **neighbor**.

(10) Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

- The underlying principle of **love** puts the believer in the position of meeting the requirements of **God's law**.

THE COMING OF DAY

(11) This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

- The first rays of the sun are appearing. The night is almost over. Sleep time is **running out**. Wake up. Our eternal **salvation** will come in the day that is emerging.

(12) The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

- Get rid of the **dirty clothes** of **dark deeds** and dawn the **shining armor** obeying the Lord.

(13) Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.

- People are watching us in this new **day**. Have nothing to do with **parties and drunkenness** (we will discuss wine use later), misusing **sex**, arguing and **jealousy**.

(14) Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

- Get on the right **clothes** because the **Lord** is **present**.
- Control your **thinking** and avoid planning that includes our **evil desires**. Other translations read: *make no provision for the flesh*. This would prohibit a believer from obtaining cigarettes.

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Romans 14 NLT

(1) Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. (2) For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables.

- Paul's illustration of differences between believers is that some are vegetarians. They make that choice because of their **conscience**. The matter is not to be debated even though it points to a **weak faith**. (We are saved by our faith and not by eating the correct food.)
- **J.W. McGarvey** speaks of those Jews **weak in faith**:

He is said to be "weak in the faith" because his judgment, still bound and tethered by silly scruples and obsolete laws, failed to assert that strength which the liberty of the new faith allowed it. Thus the Jewish conscience still shuddered at acts which the Gentile Christian regarded as wholly innocent and permissible; but, since its "failings leaned to virtue's side," and were usually capable of correction if patiently handled, it was to be treated with consideration and affectionate kindness.

(3) Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them.

- The making for a faction exist here. The meat-eaters were not to look down on the vegetarians. Food choices are not part of obeying **God** and He **accepts** both groups.

(4) Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

- Those with the "other view" are **servants** of God as well.

(5) In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable.

- Besides diet, another illustration of accepting those who differ with our view is which **days** are **holy**. Some believers graded the days while other said that all **days** were **alike**.

(6) Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor Him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God.

- Three kinds of differences within the church are identified:

- Those who **worship on special days**. Under the Law of Moses, there were certain days to be kept. While the church is not governed by that law, some with that heritage may still find their conscience prompts them to observe the **special day**.
- Those who **eat all kinds of foods** without checking on where it has been before it reached the worshipers dining table.
- Those who **refuse to eat certain foods** that were forbidden under the Law of Moses.

When you've already started eating and somebody says, "Let's Pray."



All three groups made their choices to **please the Lord** and to give **thanks to Him**.

(7) For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. (8) If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

- At one time we **lived** and **died** based on what was our own best interests, but that all changed when we became believers. Now we **belong to the Lord**.

(9) Christ died and rose again for this very purpose -- to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

- Because Jesus **died and rose** from the grave, He is now **Lord** of **both the living and the dead**.

(10) So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

- There were sharp differences between the sub-groups. **Believers** were **condemning believers**. Instead of us passing

judgment on our fellow-believers, be aware that we will all be **judged** by **God**.

(11) For the Scriptures say, "As surely as I live,' says the LORD, 'every knee will bend to Me, and every tongue will confess and give praise to God. '"

- Paul is quoting Isaiah:

I have sworn by My own name; I have spoken the truth, and I will never go back on My word: Every knee will bend to Me, and every tongue will confess allegiance to Me. " (Isaiah 45:23 NLT)

His point is that everyone will be judged by the **Lord**. Our view of others will not be considered.

(12) Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God.

- **God** does judge the masses, but we each have our **personal** trial. Peter reinforced this point:

But remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead. (1 Peter 4:5 NLT)

Remember, we have an attorney who purchased us.

(13) So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

- So switch from **condemning** other brethren to **living** ourselves in such a way that **others** will not **stumble and fall** over our example. Notice that **others** can fall after becoming believers.

(14) I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong.

- Inspired Paul says that all **food** is acceptable, but only if the **person** deciding **believes** that, because conscience takes precedent over the facts.

(15) And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died.

- An added point to consider is the response of other **believers** to our choice. If they are upset by what we do then we are **not acting in love** towards them. Our taste buds are very minor weighed against **Christ's** 33 years of living among men, being insulted, rejected and finally crucified on a Roman cross.

(16) Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good.

- While we have freedom to act as we see best, we must include how others view our actions, also.

(17) For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

- **The Kingdom of God** has **goodness, peace and joy** among it's attributes. That is a million times more important than than what's on our plate or in our glass. Every believer must have this perspective.

(18) If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too.

- Two approvals are attached to putting the Kingdom of God first:
 1. **God** will be **pleased** with us
 2. and our brethren will also **approve** of our choice.

(19) So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.

- God will be pleased (verse 18) because we are:
 1. promoting **harmony in the church**

2. **and trying to build each other up.**

(20) Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble.

- In actuality, our choice of **food** doesn't make any difference to **God**, but the *effect* of our choice on others does make a difference to **God**.

(21) It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble.

- The key with the Lord is the effect of our choices on other **believers**.

(22) You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right.

- Our true convictions about neutral matters is part of our own relationship with **God**. Further, we are not to **feel guilty** about our true feelings.

(23) But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.

- Paul's bottom line is not whether to do or not to do a given activity, but what your conscience says to about it. Contradicting our conscience is always **sinning**.

MUSIC BOX

Come, let us sing to the LORD! (Psalms 95:1 NLT)

Verse	Link:	Put in Browser:
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