

# OF THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

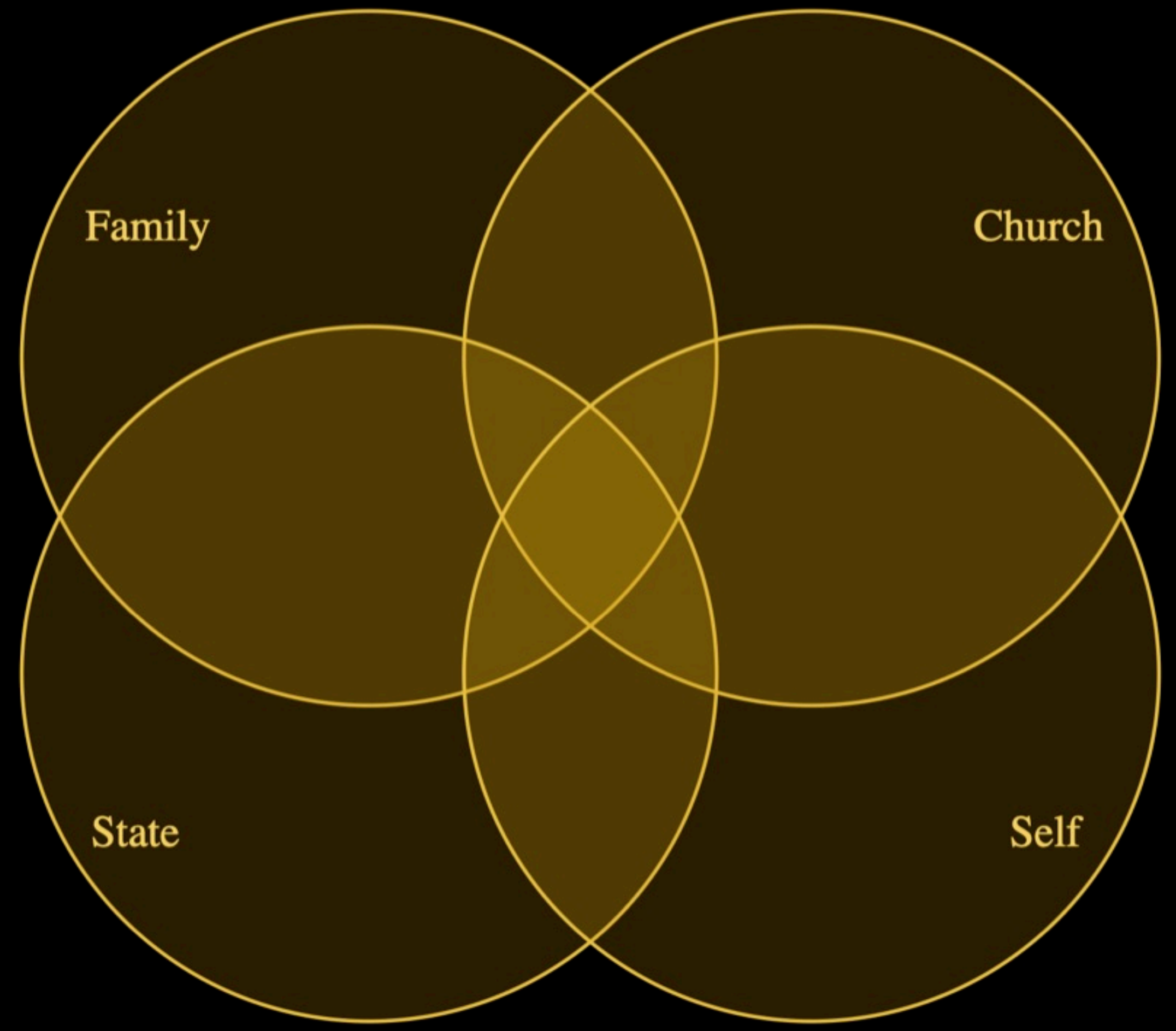
Romans 13:1-7

## XVI. Of the Civil Government

*“We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.”*

**CLAIM 1 – Government is God-Given**

*“We believe that civil government is of divine  
appointment”*



**13** 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. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

*“for the interests and good order of human society;”*

**CLAIM 2 – Government has a God-Given  
Function**

<sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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.

**Romans 13:3–4**

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**CLAIM 3 – We are Called to Engage, Not Just  
Endure**

<sup>5</sup> Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> 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.

*“and that magistrates are to be prayed for,  
conscientiously honored, and obeyed;”*

**CLAIM 4 – There is an Exception**

*“except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.”*

Civil disobedience or resistance is permissible  
when **obedience to authorities**  
**means disobedience to God.**

*“But in that obedience which we have shown to be due the authority of rulers, we are always to make this exception, indeed, to observe it as primary, that such obedience is never to lead us away from obedience to him, to whose will the desires of all ought to yield, to whose majesty scepters ought to be submitted. And how absurd would it be that in satisfying men you should incur the displeasure of him for whose sake you obey men he has opened his sacred mouth, must alone be heard, before all and above all men; next to him we are subject to those men who are in authority over us, but only in him. If they command anything against him, let it go unesteemed (IV. xx. 32). John Calvin*

# *Two Citizenships*

<sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

**Philippians 3:20**

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