

Intro: Going into Ch 12 Paul has turned his focus in this letter from a clear doctrinal teaching delivery to a more practical exhortation. Basically, it was as if Paul was telling us "Because of all that God has done for us, in rescuing us from the bondage and penalty of sin. This therefore is how you should live."

The first 2 verses were a beseeching to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. To no longer be confirmed into the image of the world but be transformed by renewing our minds. Changing the way we think.

He then began to explain to us that we are all, collectively, part of the body of Christ. We are members individually with different purposes to serve the rest of the body, just as our physical bodies are.

- We have this individuality that can be celebrated and used for Gods glory.
- God has given each one of us gifts upon salvation, that we might use them!
 - As a local body you are encouraged to use your gifts here.

Paul also went on in verses 9-21 to tell us how we are to do life with each other. In community with each other. How are we to act?

- Love without hypocrisy (vs9) Pastor Bushawn explained that as "learn to love well" Don't just act like it, but open up in your little circle so that you can make yourself vulnerable, so that you can learn to love.
- Vs 10 "Be kindly affectionate vs 11 fervant in spirit; vs 12 patient in tribulation & steadfast in prayer.
- Bless and don't persecute; be of the same mind. Don't repay anyone evil for evil but live peaceably with everyone.
- Overcome evil with good.

In Chapter 13 the focus now shifts from how we are to function in the body to how we are to function in society. How we are to live in this world, as a part of the body of Christ representing the Kingdom of God. "What is the believers Role in Society"

And as we read this chapter we always want to keep in mind context and background. Ask the questions Who, What, Where, When, Why. Who was Paul writing to, what were the conditions of that day, why would Paul be writing what he's writing.

The answers to those questions help us understand even more about what the Spirit would be telling us today.

So in asking and answering those questions we want to begin by understanding that in Paul's day, and during the time of the writing of this letter the church in Rome was made up of both Gentile & Jewish believers.

Many in that city also were slaves or people under heavy oppression from the Roman government.

History tells us that many of the Jews in that time who were under Roman rule were in constant opposition to the governing authority. As a matter of fact, you may have seen in scripture the word Zealots used. Zealots were a group of Jewish religious fanatics who opposed Roman rule, refused to pay taxes & engaged in terrorist like attacks to try and over throw the government of Rome.

- They would even fight against their own countrymen if they paid tribute to the Roman government.
- They would kill them & burn their houses.

So Paul in writing this part of the letter would have this in mind.

- Not wanting Gentile believers to be confused by this influence.
- Nor slaves

(Read vs 1-7)

"What is the believers role in society?"

1-7 I. SUBMITTING TO GOVERNMENT

1-2 A. Every Soul Be Subject To Authorities

vs1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God."

1. Paul says **"let every soul be submissive"**. Let everyone have this submissive spirit within them when it comes to the government.

a. And just as hard as that may be to swallow for some of us, imagine the believers Paul is writing to.

b. When we look at our government today and we see how we're over taxed and how greed and hypocrisy run deep throughout the government. Who wants to be subject to that?

2. This would be a very hard passage to understand especially when government has completely overlooked you. Falsely accused & arrested you. Physically abused you. Mentally intimidated you!

a. For some the American experience has been a fare one. But for some not at all.

b. For some they find it easy to submit to governing authorities and for others they find it much more of a challenge.

i. We may find it a generational thing, a cultural thing, yet it's comforting to know they were dealing with it then.

1b 3. What's the answer Paul says "Be subject because the authorities that exist have been placed there by God"

a. Understand that God's in sovereign control. Those authorities have been appointed by God for His purposes.

4. And for some that may be very hard to understand. "How can God appoint this person President or not this person?" What about Adolf Hitler? How can God appoint Hitler to be in power?

- a. God has a divine purpose in everything.
- b. Because Hitler was responsible for killing 6 million Jews the world, even for a short period of time, was sympathetic toward the Jews and came together to form their own country after being banished all over the world. (world sentiment)
 - i. After seeing pictures and news reels of dead bodies.
 - ii. Fulfilling scripture.

5. When Paul says to be subject to the governing authorities, he's not saying to be submissive to sinful behavior or to violate a command of God.

- a. Peter & John arrested. Acts 4:18-20
- b. But even when Peter & John went about
- c. Even then ... no riots. Unpeaceable protests.

2 6. **"Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves"**

a. So resisting the authorities is resisting the "ordinance" of God. Or what God's ordained.

2b b. **"bring judgement on themselves"** So this judgment from authority wouldn't be glorifying God!

- i. **Go To 1 Pet 2:13-25**
- ii. vs 20

3-5 B. Rulers Are God's Ministers For Good

3-5 NLT *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. 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. 5 So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.*

- 3 1. **"do what is right and they will honor you"** We all know of a time when either you or someone you know did what was right and still wasn't honored. Right?
- a. So did the church in Rome.
 - b. But how are we to respond?
 - c. Like children who don't get a toy cause we were good in the store?
2. **(Tell personal story of night after recording)**
- 5 3. **"Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake"**
- a. Our conscience is so vital. Paul says don't just be submissive so you don't catch wrath but so that your own conscience doesn't begin to be seared.
 - b. **"seared"** – means branded with a hot iron and made unsensitive.
 - c. We can become so insensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit by trying to buck up against authority all the time.
 - i. Being so engulfed in injustice without trusting the Lord.
 - d. When I think of someone who challenged injustice but didn't violate his conscience or the word of God I think of Martin Luther King.

-
- i. Who definitely understood what it meant to “not be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good”

- e. Sidney J. Harris wrote “**Once we assuage** (uh-sweyj) (make less severe) **our conscience by calling something a ‘necessary evil’ it begins to look more and more necessary and less and less evil”**

- f. **1 Tim 1:18-20** This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,

6-7 C. The Christians Responsibility Toward Government

1. Now Paul is really stepping on toes! Pay your taxes!
 - a. For conscience sake. Some will say “Well my conscience don’t have a problem not paying my taxes”
 - i. But should it?
 - b. I read that the IRS has a conscience fund where it receives 50-100 million dollars a year from people who feel bad about cheating on their taxes in years past. One note said “Dear Sirs, enclosed are \$175 that I owed from taxes 10 yrs ago. If my conscience is still bothering me, ill send the rest later”
2. Seriously though, Paul would be dealing with people who had a real problem with paying taxes to a government that was wasteful, crooked & ungodly in it’s dealings.

-
- a. Jesus dealing with the same Roman rule said *"Render therefore the things that are Caesars to Caesar and to God the things that are God's"* (Matt 22:21)
 - b. If the government wasn't funded we wouldn't have the good that government provides. And we all benefit from the good.
 - i. Roads, bridges, law enforcement, emergency services, the list would go on & on.

- 6b
 - 3. **"they are minsters attending continually to this very thing"**
 - 4. So **"render therefore to all this due"** If it's taxes- taxes; if its fear - fear; if it's honor- honor.

That would be our attitude toward government our role in society toward governing authorities.

8-10 II. OUR ROLE TOWARD OUR NIEGHBOR

We are no longer under the oral or written law. The laws that were hanging over all of us. Judging us, condemning us. Laws that were holding you down and causing you shame. The commands that were only revealing your inner sinful self and it's inability to please that you could never fulfill, you now have the chance to fulfill.... How? By loving your neighbor.

8 A. Let Love Be Our Only Debt

8" Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law."

- 1. I have a chance now to fulfill what I desperately could not fulfill!
 - a. Think about that, when I'm loving someone else I'm pleasing the Lord as if I've kept every law He's given man.

b. I have a chance to fulfill the law by loving the unlovable.

2. He says **"owe no one anything except to love one another"** In other words I should consider it the only debt I should be in. The only debt I should never completely pay off. To love one another.

a. This is how society should see us. This should be societies experience with the Christian. Followers of Christ should be identified by our love.

b. **John 13:34-35** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

9 B. **All The Commandments Are Summed Up In Love**

9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

10 C. **Love Does No Harm**

10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11-14 III. **OUR ROLES AS EXAMPLES IN SOCIETY**

Here's our roles now as examples in society. How we are to walk. How we are to live amongst our neighbors. "Who's my neighbor?" "The guy next door?" It's the cashier at the corner store; the barber at the barber shop; the person at the laundromat; the guys at the carwash, bank tellers, those in line at the post office, people who cut us off on the freeway, coworkers, basically everyone we are in this world doing life with.

Everyone that has eyes to see our walk. This is our role as examples in society.

11-12 A. Knowing The Time Cast Off Darkness

- 11a**
1. All of us should be aware of the time. **"knowing the time"**
"that it's high time"
 - a. Christian. We are not those who should be aimlessly wondering throughout this life unaware of what time it is.
 - b. We of all people know where we're going.
 - c. We trust in Jesus' return. (or rapture of the church)
 - d. We understand that we have entered into the Kingdom of God and are waiting our Savior to return and set up this Kingdom to reign forever!
 2. We of all people should know that the world many hold on to, will soon pass away and nothing else will matter but our salvation.

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells

- a. vs 11

11b 3. "for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed"

4. **"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light"**

a. **"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"**

Party at night – go to work in the morning

i. The party life should be over!

b. **1 Thess 5:7-10** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

12b

5. **"Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness"**

"cast off" – A Greek word that means to take off, like one puts off the garments of the night.

a. Like what you slept in.

b. Time to get up. Change your clothes.

12c

6. **"And put on the armor of light"**

13-14

B. **Do Not Indulge The Flesh**

13

1. **"Let us walk properly"** or decently, in a seemly manner. As you would in the day.

a. It's funny how some will act differently at night, in the club or at a party than they would at church on Sunday morning.

b. That should not be the Christian. We should walk the same on Sunday morning as any other "night" of the week.

i. That don't mean literally walk. I've been told I still have a certain walk. (But the way I live)

13b

2. **"not in revelry and drunkenness"** Revelry , meaning carousel as if letting loose.

a. Isn't that how drunkenness will get you?

B. Some translations say "rioting"

3. **"not in lewdness and lust"**

a. **"lewdness"** the Greek word ***Koite (koy-tay)*** Thayers =
(1) *A place for lying down, resting, sleeping in; a bed or couch*
(2) *specifically the marriage bed* (3) *cohabitation, whether lawful or unlawful.*

Community Questions: #1 What are the biggest obstacles you find in submitting to government authorities? (read vs 1) How would the word of God help you in those areas/ what scriptures do you know might help? #2 How have you been an example of Jesus Christ in society? In what areas have you not?