

Romans 13

1. What does it mean to you to submit? Do you have a positive or negative reaction to the word?

What does it mean to you to submit to Christ?

How does Paul open this chapter?

According to Paul, why are we to submit to the governing authorities?

How would you define our "governing authorities"?

2. Paul is very clear. He says that everyone **MUST** submit. Can we be obedient to Jesus if we do not submit to our governing authorities? Please explain.

What is civil disobedience? Is practicing civil disobedience in conflict with Paul's statement? Please explain. (Look at Acts 5:25-29; Daniel 3; Exodus 1:15-22)

Is obeying this command an issue for us today? If so, why?

What is the implication for us that all authorities that exist have been established by God?

3. Therefore, according to verse 2, what are the consequences of rebelling against the authorities?

Would you every consciously consider open rebellion against God? Can you think of examples from the Bible of how God deals with such rebellion? (See 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Numbers 20:10-13.)

What is the result of such disobedience or rebellion?

What do you believe Paul meant by his statement that rebelling against authorities will bring judgement?

Applying Paul's statement to our present situation, what should be Christians' relationship to whomever or whatever party is in charge?

What are our responsibilities when that government institutes policies that conflict with God's "policies"?

4. In verse 3 Paul gives us a very simple reason for submitting to authorities. What is that reason?

When has the "fear" of authority kept you from doing wrong?

What does it mean to you to live in the kingdom of God? (See Matthew 6:31-33.)

What can you learn about Nero Caesar and his rule over Christians? (If you have access to the Internet, look at <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/623-nero-caesar-and-the-christian-faith>))

Remembering what type of person Nero was, now how do you view Paul's statement in verse 1?

5. According to verses 4 and 5, all those in authority are servants of whom?

Therefore, why does Paul tell us that we are to submit to the authorities?

What are the authorities over you?

Many feel that politics and religion should not be mixed. Thus, we should not bring politics into the church. How do you feel about this issue and why?

How do you think Paul would feel about that belief?

6. How would you explain the phrase, "listening to one's conscience"?

How has listening to your conscience kept you from doing wrong?

Do you believe God uses our consciences to speak and guide us? Please explain.

7. Why should we pay taxes? (See Matthew 22:19-21)

Looking at verse 7, what should be our attitude about paying taxes?

Paul says that we should give to everyone we owe, but Paul is talking about more than money. According to this verse, what are some of the other things we can owe?

To whom do we owe a debt of respect? A debt of honor?

To whom do you owe a debt of respect or honor?

8. In verse 8, Paul says we should have no outstanding debt. Does this mean we are not to borrow money? Please explain. (See Matthew 5:42.)

Why should we not have outstanding debts, especially monetary? (See Proverbs 2:7; Psalm 37:21.)

Thus, we are also to pay our debts of respect and honor. How do we pay debts of respect? Of honor?

According to verse 8, we are to have only one outstanding debt. What is that debt?

Why is the debt of love a continuing debt?

To whom do we owe this debt of love? (See last part of verse 8 and Matthew 22:36-40.)

How prompt are you in paying this continuing debt of love?

9. Paul paraphrases Jesus' answer about the greatest commandment in verses 9 and 10. How are all the commandments summed up in the one rule: Love your neighbor as yourself?

How would this one commandment keep us from committing adultery, murder, stealing, covetousness, etc.?

We need to remember that Paul was addressing both Jews and Gentiles, two groups that had nothing to do with each other, which gives this command added meaning. How are we to apply this command in our lives?

Where can we see the effects of the lack of this love in our world today?

Verse 10 gives us the simple yet profound reason that love is the greatest commandment. How would love quell the serious divides in our nation?

What can we do as believers in Jesus to spread this truth?

Look at 1 John 4:7-9, and 19-21. How would you explain these verses to another?

10. To whom is Paul speaking in verse 11? To whom would he be addressing if he were speaking today?

What does Paul say?

Paul's words are still timely today. Understanding the present time, it is time to wake from our slumber. What does this mean?

What does it mean to you that we are to remain awake? (See Matthew 25:1-13. How do you interpret this parable?)

11. What does Paul mean that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed?

What does Paul mean by "the night is nearly over; the day is almost here"?

What are the deeds of darkness?

What does it mean to put on the armor of light?

12. Verse 12 in the NIV reads, "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime." Other versions read, "Let us behave honestly, properly, or becomingly." How would you explain this statement to a new Christian?

What are some of the activities that are done in the "darkness"?

Why do you think Paul lists strife and jealousy in the same category as sexual promiscuity?

How do we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

How would you tell the difference between one who was clothed in Christ and one who was clothed in the flesh?

13. We often hear people say they fear Christians being elected to public office because they fear that Christian beliefs would get in the way. Using what Paul states in this chapter, how would allay that fear or concern?