

The Gospel, Government, & Disagreement

Romans 13:1–15:13

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FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH: God's Word Matters Today!

1. **ALL** Scripture is useful for **ALL** of life *2 Timothy 3:16-17*
   - Teaching – Showing me what is ***true***
   - Reproof – Showing me where I'm ***wrong***
   - Correction – Showing me how to get ***back*** on track
   - Training – Equipping me to live ***rightly***

   TRUTH: God's Word is useful for every area of my life, not just the parts I consider **SPIRITUAL**

   HARD TRUTH: If I only accept the parts of Scripture that agree with me, I'm not allowing God's Word to be my authority.

2. We must **ENGAGE** the Word to live by the Word *Psalm 1:1-3; Romans 12:2*

BIG IDEA: If Jesus is Lord, His Word must shape how I **THINK** and how I **LIVE**

Life-shaping Responsibilities from Romans on the Eve of Mid-Term Elections:

1. Our responsibility to governing authorities *Romans 13:1-7*
   - God **ESTABLISHES** governing authorities (v.v. 1-2) *Daniel 2:21*
   - Government should ***restrain*** **EVIL** and ***promote*** **GOOD** (v.v. 3-4) *Romans 12:19*
   - Christians should **HONOR** legitimate authority (v.v. 5-7) *1 Timothy 2:1-2*

   TRUTH: I can disagree with those in authority while still honoring the authority of their office.

   HARD TRUTH: If my willingness to respect governing authorities changes depending on which political party wins, I need to examine whether I'm following Scripture consistently.

   What about civil disobedience?
   - We normally submit to government because we ultimately submit to God. But when government commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands, **GOD COMES FIRST** *Exodus 1:17; Daniel 3:16–18, 6:10; Acts 4:18–20, 5:29*

   What does this mean for us as citizens?
   - Being a citizen of heaven doesn't **ELIMINATE** my responsibilities on earth. It changes how I carry them out.

Online Notes

KEEP READING →

2. Our responsibility to love others *Romans 13:8-14*

   - Love does not **CANCEL** truth (v.v. 8-10)
   - Biblical love is shaped by **BIBLICAL TRUTH** (v.v. 9-10) *Ephesians 4:15*

TRUTH: Biblical love is shaped by God's Truth, not merely my feelings.

HARD TRUTH: If I claim to stand for biblical truth but consistently treat people without love, I'm not faithfully representing Jesus.

HARDER TRUTH: My political convictions do not cancel my Christian obligations.

- At all times, we must live like people who **BELONG** to Jesus (v.v. 11-14)
- Reality: We don't get an "election-season" **EXEMPTION** from acting like Jesus

3. Our responsibility to handle disagreements biblically *Romans 14:1-15:7*

   - Understanding the Biblical Spectrum
     - Straight-line issues:
       - Scripture gives clear moral commands or principles
       - ***Obey*** what God has ***revealed***
       - *Examples*: Sanctity of Human Life *(Gen. 1:26-27, Ps. 139:13-16, Ex. 20:13)*; Marriage & Sexual Morality *(Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:4-6, 1 Thess. 4:3-5)*; Worship & Obedience to God *(Ex. 20:3-5, Matt. 4:10, Acts 5:29)*
     - Jagged-line issues:
       - Scripture gives principles requiring wisdom in application
       - ***Apply*** biblical wisdom with ***humility***
       - *Examples*: Healthcare Policy *(Matt. 25:36, 40, Lk. 10:33-35, Gal. 6:10)*; Immigration & Borders *(Lev. 19:33-34, Deut. 10:18-19, Rom. 13:1-4)*; Economic Strategies *(Pr. 14:31, 2 Thess. 3:10-12, 1 Tim. 6:17-19)*
     - KEY PRINCIPLE: We must never treat God's commands like personal preferences or elevate our personal preferences to the level of God's commands.

How Christians should disagree

- Don't **JUDGE** or despise one another over matters of Christian liberty (14:1-12)

TRUTH: I can hold strong convictions without treating people who disagree with me with contempt.

HARD TRUTH: If politics determines who I can love, respect or fellowship with, politics has taken a place in my life that belongs to Jesus.

- Christian freedom must be governed by **LOVE** (14:13-23)
- The goal is **UNITY** around Jesus (15:1-7)
  - Unity does not require uniformity
  - Pursue unity for the glory of God (15:5-7)

What will still be true on Wednesday?

- Jesus is still **LORD**
- God is still **SOVEREIGN**
- His Word is still **TRUE**
- The Gospel is still **POWERFUL**
- Our neighbors still need **JESUS**
- Our mission is still to **MAKE DISCIPLES**
- Our hope is in the **GOD OF HOPE** *Romans 15:13*

Memory Verse:

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.
Romans 13:1 ESV

Recommended Resources:

3C Podcast Bonus Episode - Faithful Citizenship Series
ESV Bible Verses for Straight-Line vs Jagged-Line Issues
Straight & Jagged Lines of Wisdom
A Biblical Spectrum for Christian Living Infographic
The Nature of Sin Infographic
Is This Activity Sinful for Me Infographic
Stewardship Spheres of Society

My next step today is to...

- ○ Memorize Romans 6:11
- ○ Repent and accept Jesus as my Savior and submit to His Lordship for the first time!
- ○ Go public as a follower of Jesus and get baptized
- ○ Vote on Tuesday! (if I haven't already voted early)
- ○ Show love and grace to others in areas of Christian liberty.
- ○ Read Romans chapter 13 & 14 this week
- ○ Watch or listen to ***The 3C Podcast*** to go deeper this week
- ○ _____

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out to you most from Romans 13:1-15:7? What was new, surprising, or encouraging?
- Why do you think political issues can create such strong emotions and disagreements, even among Christians?
- According to Romans 13:1-7, what responsibilities do Christians have toward governing authorities? How can we honor someone in authority without necessarily agreeing with their decisions?
- What is the difference between loving someone and agreeing with them? How does Romans 13:8–10 help us understand what biblical love should look like when we disagree?
- How does the distinction between Straight-Line and Jagged-Line issues help us think more biblically about difficult questions? What happens when we confuse God's clear commands with our personal preferences?
- Romans 14:1-12 warns Christians against judging or despising one another over matters of Christian liberty. How can we hold strong convictions without treating those who disagree with us with contempt?
- Think about your recent conversations, social media activity, or private attitude toward people who disagree with you. Have your words and responses consistently reflected the love and character of Jesus? Where might you need to make an adjustment?
- Second Timothy 3:16-17 teaches that all Scripture is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training. How do you typically respond when God's Word challenges something you already believe or want to be true? Can you identify an area where you need to be more teachable?
- The Big Idea of this message is, ""If Jesus is Lord, His Word must shape how I THINK and how I LIVE." Is there an area of your life where your opinions, emotions, political loyalties, or personal preferences have been influencing you more than God's Word?
- Regardless of Tuesday's election results, Jesus will still be Lord, and our mission will remain unchanged. What is one specific step you need to take this week to demonstrate that your ultimate allegiance and hope are in Jesus rather than a political outcome?