

Book of Romans



Chapter 13

*Theme: Relationship to government;
relationship to neighbors*

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Romans Chapter 13

Must we obey a government that is corrupt? How do we, as Christians, relate to a government that is a representative republic? Do we have a dual citizenship?

Fundamental Institutions: (from Gen 1-11)

1. Personal Volition: Free will

The freedom to choose his own destiny The framers of the American Constitution reflect a profound understanding of this. “We hold these truths to be self-evident.” God didn’t want robots. Volition is a prerequisite to love...

2. Marriage: Model of Intimacy

Gen 2:24; Divine order in the human race. Men + women. Heterosexuals reproduce; homosexuals recruit. Man = head of the household Two rules for happiness: Eph 5:22ff.

3. Family:

Most important segment of society. Responsibility for authority over the children; Parent; not the state. Teach: respect law and order; relationships otherwise chaos ensues.

4. Human Government: (Rom 13:1-7)

Started with only eight...Genesis 9:5-6 “by man shall his blood be shed” capital punishment...All other authority derives...[Cf. Gen 49:10 background] No jails in ancient Israel. Steal: restitution five-fold. Habitual criminals stoned (Cities of Refuge).

No graduate schools for crime called “penitentiaries.”

First World Leader: Nimrod. Genesis 10:8-10. “Cush” = black.

(Nothing inferior here!) Cush = the progenitor of the southernmost peoples located in Africa; the descendants of Cush located around the southern parts of the Nile (Ethiopia).

“Mighty hunter in defiance of the Lord”

Bab-El => Babylon

Gen 11:1-4 Astrological Temple. Not just ignorance; demonic entries. Gen 6...

One world government leads to a Satanic tyranny...

The degree of evil will be unlimited (Gen 11:6).

1 John 5:19 (NIV), We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

The independent nation-state is to preserve freedom.. Government is adversary of freedom.

[Satan, through socialism, is attacking all four!]

Feminism; Rise (and condoning of) Homosexuality; Relativism; Consensus Thinking...¹

¹ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

If there was a single overarching theme for Paul in Romans chapter 12 it had to be that Believers should not retaliate when wronged nor seek revenge when insulted and offended. To be clear this by no means is speaking about Believers avoiding the criminal justice system when a crime has been committed. There is no suggestion that if someone physically attacks and harms you that you are to be passive or silent or shouldn't reasonably defend yourself. Or that if someone steals your property that you should not report it to the proper authorities and prosecute the thief. Rather we must remember that the context of Paul's ruling about non-retaliation has very much to do with the Middle Eastern culture of his time that was developed around a Shame and Honor system of society. Do not become confused between the terms shame and ashamed. Shame in a Shame and Honor society has to do with social status. Ashamed is a familiar emotion in Western society because it is based on feelings of guilt.

Shame and Honor societies are completely consumed with their concern for social status; this was the way of all Bible era cultures and that included the Hebrews especially of the earlier days before the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses was an extraordinary move away from a Shame and Honor system because it sought to draw Israel towards a social structure based on innocence and guilt; but that transformation would only happen slowly, imperfectly, and unevenly. So even 13 centuries later in Paul's day while Jewish society generally followed Torah Laws and Halakhah (traditions of the elders) and were judged according to guilt or innocence as it came to obeying God's laws, long entrenched elements of shame and honor remained part of Jewish cultural behavior.

Shame and honor societies have their basis in tribalism and thus the people are group-thinkers. That is, conforming to the group and to its ancient traditions is always the standard to be reached. Individualism is seen as rebellion and going against the group and thus it is a bad thing and the person who seeks individualism is shunned. Islam and the Arab world and the bulk of the Middle Eastern societies of the modern era are strongly shame and honor-based societies. At the root of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other Far East societies is shame and honor. Behaviorally speaking the thought of people who adhere to such a social philosophy is much less about acting rightly or wrongly (according to laws and regulations) and much more it is of acting honorably or shamefully (as decided by centuries of customs). These are not wordplays; right does not equate to honorable and wrong does not equate to shameful. Therefore, since right and wrong (innocence and guilt) take a back seat to what is shameful or honorable (meeting social norms) this type of society also has less of a concept of personal guilt (at least as the Western world thinks of guilt) and so people rarely deal with the emotion of being ashamed. Acting shamefully brings dishonor to a person; but not a sense of guilt or being ashamed. And this is because shame is not the result of being guilty of breaking a law or a regulation but rather shame is the dreaded and highly undesirable societal status of one who has lost their honor; they have lost their place in mainstream society. Again: shame and honor are definitions of social status and are generally not the result of doing right or wrong; it is not about criminal activity nor is it about morality or ethics. A person living in a Shame and Honor society is always either in a cultural condition of shame or of honor; there is no middle ground. What shame and honor amounts to is defined by long held tribal customs and traditions and therefore it varied to a degree among the many and different cultures. Thus, it wasn't hard for a traveler in a foreign place to find himself running for his life after inadvertently committing some type of unintended insult against a local, which within that particular society brought shame upon that person.

We of the West can scoff and snicker at this and think how ignorant and primitive. But folks, we are the minority; the bulk of the people on this planet in present times live in a Shame and Honor society, or at least shame and honor play a significant role in everyday matters; so we would do well to understand the basics of how it operates. Not understanding Shame and Honor systems of society, and not respecting their powerful influence on decisions and behavior that rises above the value of life is why all of the West's intrusions into Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, and into Israel's affairs with their hostile Arab neighbors, do nothing but muck things up all the more and totally confound Western governments.

By Paul's day God had been patiently working for centuries to wring the Shame and Honor mentality out of His people, Israel. Ironically, the Roman Empire was attempting to do the same by transforming every nation under its power into a society of laws such that taking revenge for being shamed was itself a crime. Yet ancient elements of shame and honor still were embedded in even Roman Hellenistic culture. Why am I telling you all of this? Because understanding this reality of Paul's day tells us what led Paul to speak to the Believers of Rome (Jews and gentiles) about not retaliating and not seeking revenge and enveloping his regulation against it with the foundational Torah commandment from Leviticus 19 to "love your neighbor as yourself". The Shame and Honor system was alive and well and it went directly against the most foundational principles of the Biblical Torah.

Now as we open Romans chapter 13 we find Paul applying the principles of non-retaliation and loving our neighbor among our fellow man to our relationship with our governing authorities. However, I must be honest: I personally find the opening verses of Romans chapter 13 to be quite problematic if we take these verses simplistically at face value as we remove from them the context of the Shame and Honor society in which Paul created these rulings. This is because if we try to apply them as-is to modern Western democracies based not on shame and honor but rather on guilt and innocence they create some of the worst sorts of doctrines and injustices. Thus, just as it is critical that we take the Laws of Moses more in their spirit than in their letter in order to transcend culture and time, it is equally important to do the same with the New Testament ruling and sayings of Yeshua, Paul and others. Some rulings and sayings can indeed leap across time and culture boundaries literally and fully intact (such as the dietary laws); but others of them (like the death penalty for adultery and the law against intercropping) must be massaged and deeply and prayerfully pondered in order to properly apply them to the entirely different societal conditions and governmental structures of the 21st century.²

² <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

McGee: THEME: Relationship to government; relationship to neighbors

As we come to chapter 13, we still are talking about the service of the sons of God. We are going to see that the believer has citizenship in heaven, but he also is a citizen in the world down here, which gives him a twofold responsibility. If there is a conflict between the two always our first responsibility is to our Lord in heaven.

The Lord Jesus made it very clear that we have a responsibility to human government. You remember that He was asked by His enemies, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or not?" He asked them to show Him a coin -- He wanted to teach them from something they themselves had, and also I don't think He had a coin in His pocket that day. He didn't have much while He was down here in this world. He asked them whose superscription and whose image was on that coin. They said, "Caesar's." Then He made this significant statement, "...Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20:25).

Governments are ordained of God, and He gave them certain authority. At the very beginning of human government, He said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6). God has a regard for human life; it is precious in His sight. You have no right to take another human life. If you do, you are to forfeit your own life. Our contemporary society feels differently about it and makes the criminal the hero and the honest man the villain. We live in a day when evil is called good and good is called evil. However, believers have a responsibility to human government. In fact, Paul said to a young preacher, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." (1Tim. 2:1-3). By the way, we are to pray for those in authority, not leave it to the preacher on Sunday morning.

The duty of the believer as a citizen of heaven is spiritual. The duty of a believer as a citizen under a government is secular. These two are separate functions, and to combine them is to fail to keep church and state separate and distinct.

The Jew in Paul's day was reluctant to bow before the proud Roman state. Jewry had fomented disturbances in the city of Rome, and as a result Claudius had banished them on one occasion. The proud Pharisees rejected the Roman authorities in Palestine in their desire to restore the government to the nation of Israel; it was they who masterminded the encounter with Jesus and raised the issue, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" The implications smacked of revolution, as you can see. It is well to remember that the authorities in Paul's day were mad and murderous. Nero was on the throne of Rome, and there was Pilate and Herod -- all a bunch of rascals, yet he said that believers were to obey those in authority.³

³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

1 Peter 2:13-16: ¹³Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; ¹⁴Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. ¹⁵For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: ¹⁶As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

To be sure we must begin by understanding that any governmental concept of democracy or republic is nowhere present in Paul's thoughts. Even the Roman Empire's attempt to be a republic that was more responsive to the people is a far cry from how we would envision a republic in our day because, first and foremost, these Senators were appointed by Roman magistrates; there was no election. And the Emperor was still considered to be a god and could override any decision of the Roman Senate on that basis. So, Paul's world was a world of tyrants, monarchs, kings, and petty potentates that ruled autocratically. He couldn't possibly have envisioned Western style democracy any more than he could have envisioned the Space Shuttle or iPhones. This understanding must be the basis for how we are to interpret the literal meaning of Paul's Halakhot (his religious rulings for Believers) in Romans chapter 13.

However, there was an underlying mood of rebellion among the Jews especially among the Zealots (mostly due to their expectation of a Messiah that would lead them out of oppression from Rome), and there was also a growing issue of Believers in Yeshua trying to interweave the concept of being members of the Kingdom of God with being members of the Roman Empire. This is a significant issue that Christianity continues to struggle with; that is, just what role should we allow government to play in our lives? And conversely, what role should Believers play in the affairs of government? The big difference between Paul's day and ours is that we have considerably more say in the matter, even being able to help choose those who govern us and create our societal laws. Thus, Paul's first order of business is to say this: whatever government you live under, honor it because God created human government and allows it to function. However, the word usually translated in our English Bibles as "obey", which in Greek is *hupotasso*, more means to submit oneself to authority or control. It has the sense of reciprocal obligation (both sides having duties and responsibilities) while obey is a one-way street: the government decrees and the citizen carries it out. Therefore, the KJV actually uses the word "subject" instead of obey and so is the much better translation. KJV Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

This is an important distinction; the blanket order to obey our government is quite different than our positive agreement that we are subject to our government and the laws and regulations it creates. It is not the same to understand that our government (any kind of government system) has the right and duty to enact laws and have a measure of authority over us versus when the government says "jump" and our only option is to ask, "how high?" Yet how to translate that from Paul's era to ours requires some thought. Since in the West we have actual individual input on who governs us then we have the duty to be reliably informed and to make the best decision

possible at the ballot box. However, as Believers we need to keep our voting preferences within the confines of loving our neighbor as we think about ballot measures on taxation, schools, public facilities, immigration, social welfare, and the like. We also must constantly think about selecting those government leaders whom we believe will rule everyone equally, justly, and without favor or corruption, according to God's principles of justice and morality.

Let me summarize: the principle Paul is presenting is that as far as it is up to us, we are to have peaceful co-existence with our government authorities, and show them respect even with those leaders we don't agree because God requires it of us. The Prophet Jeremiah had to remind Israel of this God-principle when they were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and exiled to Babylon, just as Paul is reminding Believers that this principle has not changed with the coming of Messiah.

Jeremiah 27:5-11 CJB 5 ""I made the earth, humankind, and the animals on the earth by my great power and my outstretched arm; and I give it to whom it seems right to me. 6 For now, I have given over all these lands to my servant N'vukhadnetzar the king of Bavel; I have also given him the wild animals to serve him. 7 All the nations will serve him, his son and his grandson, until his own country gets its turn- at which time many nations and great kings will make him their slave. 8 The nation and kingdom that refuses to serve this N'vukhadnetzar king of Bavel, that will not put their necks under the yoke of the king of Bavel, I will punish," says ADONAI "with sword, famine and plague, until I have put an end to them through him. 9 ""You, therefore, don't listen to your prophets, diviners, dreamers, magicians or sorcerers, when they tell you that you won't be subject to the king of Bavel; 10 for they are prophesying lies to you that will result in your being removed far from your land, with my driving you out, so that you perish. 11 But the nation that puts its neck under the yoke of the king of Bavel and serves him, that nation I will allow to remain on their own soil," says ADONAI. "They will farm it and live there.""

Jeremiah tells us that God operates behind the scenes to set up nations and bring rulers into power and so are to subject ourselves to them; but this is not something that sets so easily with Western Christians, the vast majority of us living in democracies. Therefore, in verse 2 when Paul says it is wrong for Believers to resist those in authority over them, it is with this God-principle in mind.⁴

McGee: We are to submit ourselves to governmental authorities for the very simple reason that they are ordained of God. It is true that the kingdoms of this world belong to Satan and that injustice and corruption abound in all governments; yet God still has control. History is the monotonous account of how a government flourished for a time in pomp and pride and then was brought to ruin and rubble. Why? Because corruption and lawlessness became rampant. As it did, God brought the government to an end. God still rules -- even over this earth. God has not abdicated His throne; He is riding triumphantly in His own chariot. Neither is He disturbed about what is happening on this earth.

You will recall that when Uzziah, king of Judah, died, Isaiah was disturbed and very much discouraged. Uzziah had been a good king, and Isaiah thought the government would disintegrate after he was gone. So Isaiah went into the temple, which is a good place to go at a time like that. He came into God's presence, and He saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, high

⁴ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

and lifted up. In other words, God had not abdicated. Uzziah was dead, but God was not dead. God was still on the throne.

Now the allegiance of the Christian is to that throne. And his relationship to his government on earth is submission.⁵

BKC: In relation to authority (13:1-7)

1-3. Rome was the imperial capital, the seat of the empire's civil government. As residents in Rome, Paul's initial readers were aware of both the glory and the shame of that city in the days of Nero, who reigned from a.d. 54 to 68. But they were also citizens of Christ's kingdom (Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:13). Appropriately, therefore, Paul discussed a Christian's relationship to his government and civil rulers. Both in its length and specific details this discussion is the key New Testament passage on the subject (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

The apostle's basic exhortation is, Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities (lit., "higher authorities"). The basic reason for such submission is that those authorities are established by God (cf. Dan. 4:17, 25, 34-35). An individual who rebels against the authority, therefore, is rebelling against (lit., "has taken a stand against") what God has instituted (lit., "the ordinance of God"). Such persons are thus actually rebelling against God and bring civil and/or divine judgment on themselves. Those who obey and do right need have no fear of authorities; in fact, civil leaders commend those who do good.⁶

Guzik: The Christian and government.

Subject to the governing authorities: The connection between Romans 12 and Romans 13 is clear. If the Christian is not to seek personal vengeance, it does not take away the government's authority to punish wrongdoers.

Every soul: This certainly includes Christians. Paul simply says that we should be subject to the governing authorities. This was in contrast to groups of zealous Jews in that day who recognized no king but God and paid taxes to no one but God.

For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God: We subject ourselves to governing authorities because they are appointed by God and serve a purpose in His plan.

No authority except from God: God appoints a nation's leaders, but not always to bless the people. Sometimes it is to judge the people or to ripen the nation for judgment.

We remember that Paul wrote this during the reign of the Roman Empire. It was no democracy, and no special friend to Christians – yet he still saw their legitimate authority.

“Your Savior suffered under Pontius Pilate, one of the worst Roman governors Judea ever had; and Paul under Nero, the worst Roman Emperor. And neither our Lord nor His Apostle denied or reviled the ‘authority!’ ” (Newell)⁷

ESV: 13:1–7 This passage addresses the responsibility of Christians to governing authorities. They are to “be subject to” (which generally means to obey, cf. 1 Pet. 3:5–6) the government because it has been ordained by God. Paul is speaking here of the general principle of submission to government. Several other passages show that God approves of Christians disobeying government, but only when obedience to government would mean disobeying God

⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁷ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

(see Ex. 1:17, 21; 1 Kings 18:4–16; Est. 4:16; Dan. 3:12–18; 6:10; Matt. 2:12; Acts 5:29; Heb. 11:23). There were even times when God raised up leaders to rebel against the government and deliver his people from evil rulers (Exodus 1-14; Judg. 2:16; Heb. 11:32–34).

13:1 It is true that those governing authorities that exist have been instituted by God, but sometimes God gives good authorities as a blessing, and sometimes he institutes evil rulers as a means of trial or judgment (2 Chron. 25:20; 32:24–25). On God's rule over earthly authorities, see Ps. 75:7 and Dan. 2:21. These earthly “authorities” will ultimately be superseded by the rule of Christ (Dan. 2:44; Rev. 22:1–5).⁸

FCSBN: Governing authorities. This has been traditionally understood as a reference to the Roman government. However, tradition has Paul being martyred for failing to submit to the Roman governing authorities, or at least to the emperor. Paul uses the Greek word *exousia*, which means to have authority over something, typically as a king or government would. This supports the notion that Paul is referring to the Roman authorities. The word *archon* in Greek is used as a general term meaning “rulers” and is used in the New Testament for Jewish rulers (see Lk 8:41; 18:18; 23:13, 35; Ac 7:27, 35; 14:5). Though a minority opinion among scholars, Paul may have been referring to Jewish rulers rather than Roman rulers, though this is not obvious in Greek. If Paul meant Jewish rulers, he was probably arguing that Gentiles who worshiped God should submit or comply with Jewish expectations. It’s possible that Gentile Christians and non-believing Jews were worshiping together in the synagogues of Rome (see note on Ro 1:6). This reading harmonizes with Paul’s own line of thought in chapters 9–11, which speak of Gentile humility toward non-believing Jews. It also fits with Paul’s instructions about Gentile eating habits in light of Jews with different convictions in the verses that follow his plea for submission.⁹

²Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Missler: Exception: Acts 4:18-21. Know the law: Acts 23: 1-5; 11; 28:19.

America: we have a representative government; we are committed to the rule of law, not a person or specific ruler.

The Bible does not seem to deal directly with the responsibilities of a democracy in which officials are elected and laws are drafted by elected officials and have authority over officials. Thus, we must make applications to our democratic context carefully. Submission in our Republic is primarily to laws and constitutional processes and not to persons. Our officials are actually our employees.

Biblical submission is a readiness to obey law and uphold the legal order, not an approval or endorsement of all lawmakers or even all laws absolutely. Christ’s absolute supremacy over our lives qualifies the absoluteness of human law.

The Christian recognizes Christ and his law as the final authority. John the Baptist’s preaching is an example of a proper indictment of present government authority. Jesus said of John the Baptist, “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!” (Matt 11:11). Nevertheless, he was beheaded for indicting

⁸ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁹ First-Century Study Bible Notes

publicly the ruling authority. "For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her'" (Matthew 14:3-4) Therefore, opposition to a leader's behavior, and public criticism of it, and the declaration of moral unfitness for office, is not necessarily inconsistent with a submissive spirit to governing authorities.¹⁰

McGee: In other words, anyone resisting the authority is resisting the ordinance of God. And those resisting shall receive for themselves judgment.

The principle stated in verse 1 raised many questions which the following verses amplify and explain. This verse seems to preclude the possibility of a believer having any part in rebellion or revolution. What about it? James Stifler cites the examples of Cromwell and Washington. Both of those men led a revolution. Stifler offers no solution. I am not sure I have one either, but I am going to do the best I can to solve this. The believer has opposed bad government and supported good government on the theory that good government is the one ordained of God. The believer is for law and order, as over against lawlessness. He is for honesty and justice, as over against corruption and rank injustice. At great moments of crisis in history -- and that's where we are today -- the believers have had difficult decisions to make.

I want to briefly give you my viewpoint, and I believe that it will coincide with history. During these last days, which I believe we are in right now, lawlessness abounds. The believer must oppose it; he must not be a part of it, even when it is in his own government. We need to beware of those who would change our government under the guise of improving it. Remember John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod, Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, James, the brother of John, was slain with the sword of Herod, and Paul was put to death by Nero. Yet Paul says, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (v. 2). Therefore, Christianity never became a movement to improve government, help society, or clean up the town. The gospel was the power of God unto salvation of the individual. Paul never went around telling about the deplorable conditions of Roman jails -- and he knew them well from the inside. When visiting Rome, my wife and I went to the Mamertine prison, and I got claustrophobia down there. I said to my wife, "Let's get out of here!" But Paul couldn't get out; they kept him down in that damp, dark prison. Remember he wrote to Timothy, "Bring my cloak with you" (see 2Tim. 4:13) -- he was getting cold down there.

It is very difficult to say that we are to obey a corrupt government. I am not impressed by these men -- preacher or politician -- who are running up the American flag and singing the national anthem as promotion for themselves. And behind it is corruption. Frankly, I feel resentful when I hear of certain government officials and certain wealthy men in positions of power who pay no taxes at all when I have a heavy tax burden. There is corruption in government from the top to the bottom, and it is not confined to one party. These unsaved, godless men who are in positions of government actually do not understand the American system. You see, the men who made our laws had a Bible background. I don't know that Thomas Jefferson was a Christian -- he was a deist -- but he had great respect for the Word of God. Many of those men were outstanding Christians -- John Hancock, whose name is first on the Declaration of Independence, was a real Christian. However, in our day the government is corrupt. I go to the civic centers in our cities, and I see fine buildings, costing millions of dollars, which have been built by contractors who are friends of the politicians. Also I see poverty areas.

¹⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

While both parties talk about eliminating poverty, the poverty remains. Oh, corruption is there. What's wrong? Well, the thing wrong is the human heart.

What is the Christian to do? My business is to get out the Word of God, and my business is to obey the law. That is what Paul is saying here. Christianity is not a movement to improve government or to help society clean up the town. It is to preach a gospel that is the power of God unto salvation which will bring into existence individuals like the men who signed the Declaration of Independence and gave us a government of laws.

My friend, nothing is wrong with our form of government; there is something wrong with the individuals who are in positions of power. A professor in the history department of the University of Michigan summed it up well when he said, "America is in the hands of those who do not understand the spiritual heritage that we have."¹¹

Guzik: Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God: Since governments have authority from God, we are bound to obey them – unless, of course, they order us to do something in contradiction to God’s law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before man (as in Acts 4:19).

Those who resist will bring judgment on themselves: God uses governing authorities as a check upon man’s sinful desires and tendencies. Government can be an effective tool in resisting the effects of man’s fallenness.¹²

³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

Missler: [Contrast with the rebellious Jews against Roman law. Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome.]

Problem: what is to be done when the “rulers are a terror to good works”?

Our Unique Mandate: A government of the people, by the people, and for the people. I believe you and I will be held accountable for this mandate that has come to us at such a high price.

Our Stewardship

The Illiteracy of the Electorate:

Biggest problem: Ignorance or Apathy?

“I don’t know and I don’t care!”¹³

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

However, I’m not sure exactly what Paul is getting at in verse 3 when he says that rulers (presumably all rulers) are no terror to good conduct but only to the bad. And that all we have to do as a Believer is to do good and then there is no reason to fear any ruler. I wonder how he felt a very few years later when Nero took over Rome and had Paul executed? Would he have said it is just the ruler’s God-given prerogative to burn Christians at the stake simply for his own amusement (as did Nero) and there should be no resistance or effort to save one’s own life? What would Paul have said about Adolf Hitler? Would Paul have seen it as the Believer’s duty to submit to Hitler and to not resist the government ordered genocide and extermination of millions

¹¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

¹³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

of undesirables and deplorables? Is it Paul's intent to say that Believers should have aided Hitler in his madness if so ordered, as literally thousands upon thousands of German Christians did? And this because God put him in control of the German government and so Believers would be fighting against God to resist Nero or Hitler?

In fact, during WWII this was the official position of the German Lutheran Church and to a degree the Catholic Church as well as elements of other Christian denominations. So, were those who helped Hitler kill millions right to obey him? Let me not keep you in suspense: the answer is Heaven forbid! This is why we must never take a few words or a verse or two out of the Bible and make it a doctrine in itself or as the final word on any matter of faith. Listen to a different viewpoint about obeying the higher powers (those in government, religious or secular, who rule over us) that we find in the Book of Acts.

Acts 5:20-29 CJB 20 "Go, stand in the Temple court and keep telling the people all about this new life!" 21 After hearing that, they entered the Temple area about dawn and began to teach. Now the *cohen hagadol* and his associates came and called a meeting of the Sanhedrin (that is, of Isra'el's whole assembly of elders) and sent to the jail to have them brought. 22 But the officers who went did not find them in the prison. So they returned and reported, 23 "We found the jail securely locked and the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened it, we found no one inside!" 24 When the captain of the Temple police and the head *cohanim* heard these things, they were puzzled and wondered what would happen next. 25 Then someone came and reported to them, "Listen! The men you ordered put in prison are standing in the Temple court, teaching the people!" 26 The captain and his officers went and brought them, but not with force; because they were afraid of being stoned by the people. 27 They conducted them to the Sanhedrin, where the *cohen hagadol* demanded of them, 28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name! Look here! you have filled *Yerushalayim* with your teaching; moreover, you are determined to make us responsible for this man's death!" 29 Kefa and the other emissaries answered, "We must obey God, not men.

And how can we forget the story of Stephen who refused to stop preaching in Yeshua's name at the order of the duly formed Sanhedrin so he was stoned to death....with Paul in full agreement? The point is that the Halakhah (the religious ruling) that Paul is making to open Romans 13 has a far greater context than merely the paragraph or even chapter in which it is found; greater even than in the context of the entire book of Romans of which it is just a tiny part. Paul himself refused to obey Roman government officials and so was martyred. When we take the totality of the Bible as our context, instead of a dozen words, we come to realize that while we are indeed obligated as Believers to subject ourselves to the rulers of the nation to which we are part that does not mean that God expects us to obey the humans who rule when their demand goes directly against His biblical laws and commandments.¹⁴

McGee: 3-4 The government is to maintain law and order. When it does not do that, it has failed. I feel that a Christian should be opposed to the breakdown of law and order. We are to respect our rulers who are enforcing the law. I have great respect for our army, although it is

¹⁴ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

honeycombed with corruption. I have great respect for police officers, although I know they make mistakes.¹⁵

Guzik: (Rom 13:3-4) The job of government: to punish and deter evildoers.

Do what is good, and you will have praise: Paul's idea is that Christians should be the best citizens of all. Even though they are loyal to God before they are loyal to the state, Christians are good citizens because they are honest, give no trouble to the state, pay their taxes, and – most importantly – pray for the state and the rulers.¹⁶

ESV: Rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad means that civil government in general is a great blessing from God for which we should be thankful. Without civil government there would be anarchy, a horrible alternative in which evil runs rampant.¹⁷

4For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Missler: Pray for our law enforcement officers; they daily put their life on the line to maintain order. Likewise, our armed forces...Highest profession: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay engineering experiments, et al) may destine our present establishments for failure in future challenges...]

Luke 3:12-14.

[vs. Liberals attempting to do away with capital punishment. Cf. Gen 9:6. Don't confuse the rules of the courtroom with individual relationships...] Prisons do not reform; they harden. There were no jails or prisons in Israel.

Erosion of rule of law: The trojan horse of psychology has also eliminated the concept of human responsibility... Rules of evidence have superseded the guilt or innocent of the accused; technicalities now rule rather than the issue at bar.¹⁸

BKC: 4-5. Furthermore, a civil leader is God's servant, a concept often forgotten today. By commending those who do right (v. 3), a civil leader himself does good (v. 4). But on the other hand, he bears arms (the sword) as God's servant (the second time in this verse Paul referred to the ruler this way; cf. v. 6), as an agent of wrath. Governmental force, properly used, helps prevent tyranny and executes justice; it brings punishment on the wrongdoer. A Christian has two reasons to be submissive to civil authorities—to avoid possible punishment (lit., "the wrath") and to heed his conscience, which prods him to obey God's ordinances.¹⁹

¹⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

¹⁷ ESV Study Bible Notes

¹⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

¹⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Guzik: He is God's minister: Paul describes government officials as God's minister. They have a ministry in the plan and administration of God, just as much as church leaders do.

If the state's rulers are God's minister (servant), they should remember that they are only servants, and not gods themselves.

An avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil: It is through the just punishment of evil that government serves its function in God's plan of holding man's sinful tendencies in check. When a government fails to do this consistently, it opens itself up to God's judgment and correction.

He does not bear the sword in vain: The sword is a reference to capital punishment. In the Roman Empire, criminals were typically executed by beheading with a sword (crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals of the lowest classes). Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has no doubt that the state has the legitimate authority to execute criminals.²⁰

ESV: Governing authorities are God's servants and carry out his wrath on evildoers, and they do so for your good. Even though Christians must not take personal revenge (12:17–20), it is right for them to turn punishment over to the civil authorities, who have the responsibility to punish evil. The reference to the sword most likely refers to the penalty of capital punishment (cf. Gen. 9:6).²¹

⁵Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Missler: Be a law-abiding citizen, as long as they are not in conflict with the law of God.²²

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Paul also brings home the point in verse 5 that while it is all well and good to obey the government for fear that you'll be punished if you don't, it is better to obey because you know it is the right thing to do.²³

McGee: Christians are to obey the law not only because we'll be judged and have to pay a fine if we don't, but obey for conscience sake.²⁴

Guzik: (Rom 13:5-7) The Christian's responsibility towards government.

Therefore you must be subject: We must be subject to government; not only because we fear punishment, but because we know it is right before God to do so.

For conscience sake: Christian obedience to the state is never blind – it obeys with the eyes of conscience wide open.

²⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

²¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

²² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

²³ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

²⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

ESV: Christians should obey the civil authorities not only to avoid God's wrath (coming through those authorities, v. 4) but also because their conscience tells them that submitting to the government is right (see note on vv. 1–7).²⁵

‘For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Missler: [Excessive taxes are a penalty for poor planning. Judge Hand]
[Prior to 1913, U.S. survived without any income tax.]²⁶

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

But then in verse 6 Paul speaks of the sorts of things we ought to do without question when the government orders it. He says we ought to pay our taxes; pay our monetary debts; and even pay honor and respect to those who are our debtors and to those in authority over us.

Whatever we lawfully, morally and ethically owe, it needs to be paid. Goodness how that principle has been overturned in modern times! Let me translate that to you in modern application. Students: you incurred debt to go to college and now you feel buried in monetary obligation. That it never occurred to you that it was possibly an unwise venture to take on so much debt for an education changes nothing. You owe it; pay it. Those who have heavy medical debt because for whatever reason you don’t have insurance, but you certainly wanted good medical care and gladly received it: pay your debt whether you think it is more than it should be or not. For those who pay income taxes or any other kind of taxes: pay your taxes...all of them. Whether you think them fair and equitable or not, your government has made those taxation laws and they are valid. And from God’s viewpoint the issue of taxation is certainly not one of morality. God has made no ordinances concerning how much tax is too much and in a number of Bible references He made it quite clear that we are to pay our taxes to our governments. Here is Christ’s instruction to His followers in perhaps the most famous of those references:

Matthew 22:16-21 CJB that you tell the truth and really teach what God's way is. You aren't concerned with what other people think about you, since you pay no attention to a person's status. 17 So tell us your opinion: does Torah permit paying taxes to the Roman Emperor or not?" 18 Yeshua, however, knowing their malicious intent, said, "You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap me? 19 Show me the coin used to pay the tax!" They brought him a denarius; 20 and he asked them, "Whose name and picture are these?" 21 "The Emperor's," they replied. Yeshua said to them, "Nu, give the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor. And give to God what belongs to God!"

So here is the bottom line: Believers, Christians or Messianics, we are to leave no debt unpaid whether that debt is to God, an individual, a business, or to our government. That debt can be a debt of gratitude; a debt of respect; a debt of forgiveness; or a debt of money. But the one debt that we should never stop repaying is the debt of love to our fellow man. There is no beginning or end to that debt; there is no time limit in our lives when we can say that we’ve paid enough love and we can call it paid in full. Paul reminds us that it is THE fundamental Torah

²⁵ ESV Study Bible Notes

²⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

commandment to love our neighbor; it is not simply a nice thought. Yeshua affirmed this in the Book of Matthew:

Matthew 7:12 CJB 12 "Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets.

While this might sound to a Christian as though it is the beginning of a new faith creed for Believers, it is not. Listen to this short excerpt from the Jewish Talmud. In tractate Shabbat 31a we find this:

“On another occasion it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, ‘Make me a proselyte, on condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot.’ Thereupon he repulsed him with the builder’s cubit, which was in his hand. When he went before Hillel, he said to him, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah, while all the rest is the commentary thereof....go and learn it.”

What Christ thought and what Paul taught about loving our neighbor was a bedrock principle of the Old Testament and of Judaism, and not an innovative new Christian doctrine that in time came to be known as the Golden Rule. Let’s not miss what is being said: to “not do to your neighbor what you don’t want done to you” is simply the negative way of saying to love your neighbor as yourself. And that loving your neighbor IS loving God because He commands us to love our neighbor in the Torah. Working together in perfect unity, loving your neighbor and loving your God with all your being is what the entire Bible is about....everything else we read in the Scriptures (Old or New Testament.. even the Ten Commandments) is but commentary on those two principles. So however, we might interpret a biblical passage if it does not conform to both of those principles we have misunderstood it. At the same time do not ever think that anything God tells us to do or not to do in the Bible contradicts either of those two principles. For example: to think (as is common in the Church today) that executing a convicted murderer as God ordains it in His Word is violating the principle of love your neighbor is fundamentally wrong minded. To think that standing against homosexuality as God stands firmly against it in His Word is violating the principle of love your neighbor is fundamentally wrong minded. And the reason that a large block of the Church has adopted the view that it is wrong to practice a life for a life, or it is wrong to condemn homosexuality as sin or to prohibit gay marriage, is because these Christians don’t understand or believe that the root of every commandment of GodOld or New Testament....is entirely based on love your neighbor and love God. If we don’t study and trust God’s biblical commands as truth and light then we don’t know how to love our neighbor or how to love God; instead every man does what is right in his own eyes and that is sin. The Church propensity is to make it up as we go because it feels better to our personal sensibilities and it pleases the world to no end for us to conform to them; but such a road is leading to the ruination of our families and our societies and dangerously damaging our relationship with the Lord.²⁷

McGee: Although we may resent the way our tax money is being used, we are to pay taxes anyway.

In this verse the word for minister is one from which we get our word liturgy. It is strictly religious and is the same word used of angels in Hebrews 1:14 where they are called ministering spirits. This means that the ruler occupies a divinely-appointed office. He has no religious

²⁷ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

function, of course, but he holds a God-appointed office. That makes me pay my taxes, although I resent doing so.

We need today a heaven-sent revival. I am sick and tired of those who are shedding crocodile tears. They remind me of Lewis Carroll's brilliant satire, *Alice in Wonderland*. You remember that the Walrus and the Carpenter in this story were walking along the seashore weeping because there was so much sand and not enough oysters. They kept on eating and eating and weeping and weeping. What a picture of corruption! But in all of this the believer should submit to his government.²⁸

BKC: 6-7. A Christian's responsibility to civil authorities involves more than obedience (vv. 1, 5). It also includes support by paying taxes (cf. Matt. 22:21). This is because the leaders, as God's servants (cf. Rom. 13:4), are supposed to give their full time to governing and need support through taxes from citizens, Christians included. So a Christian ought to give everyone what he owes him (lit., "repay everyone his dues"), whether substance (taxes and revenue) or respect and honor.²⁹

Guzik: You also pay taxes... Render therefore to all their due: We are also to pay the taxes due from us, because there is a sense in which we support God's work when we do so.

By implication, Romans 13:6 also says that the taxes collected are to be used by government to get the job done of restraining evil and keeping an orderly society – not to enrich the government officials themselves.

Taxes... customs... fear... honor: We are to give to the state the money, honor, and proper reverence which are due to the state, all the while reserving our right to give to God that which is due to God alone (Matthew 22:21).

In light of this, is rebellion against government ever justified? If a citizen has a choice between two governments, it is right to choose and to promote the one that is most legitimate in God's eyes – the one which will best fulfill God's purpose for governments.

In a democracy we understand that there is a sense in which we are the government, and should not hesitate to help "govern" our democracy through our participation in the democratic process.³⁰

ESV: 6–7 Christians must not refuse to pay taxes simply because they think some of the money is used unjustly, for the Roman Empire surely did not use all of its money for godly purposes! So, too, believers are to honor their leaders, even if they are not fully admirable.³¹

²⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

³⁰ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

³¹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁷Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Missler: 1 Tim 2:1-3; 1 Pet 2:11-18. [This is the ideal. What are the exceptions?]³²

McGee: Although there may be unworthy men in the office, we are to respect the office. When I was in the army, I was told to salute the uniform. There were some folk in that uniform that I didn't care about saluting, but I saluted the uniform. We are to show respect for authority. A Christian will be the best citizen although his citizenship is in heaven.³³

⁸Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Missler: "Stop owing anything to anyone except..." The debt of love and the real meaning of the law to the Christian = something higher.³⁴

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

Beginning in verse 8 Paul concludes his instructions concerning loving your neighbor by quoting 4 of the 10 Commandments of Exodus; so clearly the Ten Commandments were alive and well in the era of 2nd Temple Judaism. Don't commit adultery; don't murder (meaning to unjustly kill a human being); don't steal and don't covet are the 4. I must say I'm not at all certain why Paul would omit the law to honor your father and mother as it too, of course, pertains to loving our fellow man. It might be that to Paul those who are your immediate family are not necessarily considered as part of "your neighbor" in the common sense of it in his day. That would not mean that family gets less, but rather even greater consideration and love since they are of close blood relation (but that is merely my personal speculation). For many Believers there is always that nagging question of 'who is my neighbor?' Clearly in Leviticus 19, a neighbor is a fellow Israelite...another Hebrew.

Leviticus 19:15-18 CJB 15 "Do not be unjust in judging- show neither partiality to the poor nor deference to the mighty, but with justice judge your neighbor. 16 "Do not go around spreading slander among your people, but also don't stand idly by when your neighbor's life is at stake; I am ADONAI. 17 "Do not hate your brother in your heart, but rebuke your neighbor frankly, so that you won't carry sin because of him. 18 Don't take vengeance on or bear a grudge against any of your people; rather, love your neighbor as yourself; I am ADONAI.

So, loving your neighbor as it was originally given meant to love a fellow Hebrew of any tribe. However, by Yeshua's day the tribal system among Hebrews was nearly dead and mostly an ancient memory that had more to do with biblical prophesy and certain birthrights given to descendants of certain tribes. For instance: The Messiah had to come from the tribe of Judah, and Priests had to come from the tribe of Levi. Thus, because tribalism had little bearing on the Jews

³² Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

³³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

any longer, and because God included gentile membership in the Covenants with Israel provided those gentiles trusted in Yeshua as Lord and Savior, then we find Christ clearly expanding the definition of “neighbor” beyond physical, fleshly or national Israel.

Luke 10:25-37 CJB 25 An expert in Torah stood up to try and trap him by asking, "Rabbi, what should I do to obtain eternal life?" 26 But Yeshua said to him, "What is written in the Torah? How do you read it?" 27 He answered, "You are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your understanding; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 "That's the right answer," Yeshua said. "Do this, and you will have life." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Yeshua, "And who is my 'neighbor'?" 30 Taking up the question, Yeshua said: "A man was going down from Yerushalayim to Yericho when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him naked and beat him up, then went off, leaving him half dead. 31 By coincidence, a cohen was going down on that road; but when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levi who reached the place and saw him also passed by on the other side. 33 "But a man from Shomron who was traveling came upon him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. 34 So he went up to him, put oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he set him on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day, he took out two days' wages, gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Look after him; and if you spend more than this, I'll pay you back when I return.' 36 Of these three, which one seems to you to have become the 'neighbor' of the man who fell among robbers?" 37 He answered, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Yeshua said to him, "You go and do as he did."

I also want you to notice something else significant about this passage from Luke. A Torah teacher (by definition a Pharisee) immediately answered Yeshua's question about eternal life by quoting the dual underlying principles of Torah of loving your neighbor and loving God. Yeshua commended him on being correct. Remember that a Torah teacher, a Pharisee, was a representative of Judaism and the synagogue system, and not of the Temple. So even this Pharisee who was a scholar of Tradition (Halakhah) more than actual Biblical Torah held these two principles as the basis for his own Scriptural understanding. So we must not be overly harsh on 2nd Temple Judaism or the Pharisees and think that they had gone so far as to abandon God's Biblical Torah and replace it with their own Traditions.³⁵

McGee: Did you borrow your neighbor's lawnmower? Take it back to him. Housewife, did you borrow a cup of sugar from your neighbor? Return it, please. Owe no one anything, In this we find Paul saying that the believer is positively to owe no man anything but love. This is a great principle to guide Christians in installment purchasing. You may ask, "Do you think we should turn in our credit cards?" No, but you had better be able to see your way clear in order to pay your debts.

The believer always owes the debt of love to his neighbor. That does not necessarily mean the man next door, but all people with whom you come in contact. This love is not some sentimental

³⁵ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

thing. I get a little disturbed when I hear liberalism continually talk about love, love, love. How do you reveal love?³⁶

BKC: In light of the future (13:8-14)

8-10. Discussion of believers' obligations to civil authorities evidently triggered Paul's thinking concerning believers' debts to others. He commanded, Let no debt remain outstanding (lit., "Do not keep on owing anyone anything") except the continuing debt to love one another (lit., "except loving one another"). This is not a prohibition against a proper use of credit; it is an underscoring of a Christian's obligation to express divine love in all interpersonal relationships. A Christian should never fall short, and so be "in debt," in loving others (John 13:34-35; 1 Cor. 16:14; Eph. 5:2; Col. 3:14; 1 John 3:14, 23; 4:7, 11, 21).

The importance of continually showing love is seen in the explanation, For he who loves his fellow man (lit., "the other one") has fulfilled the Law (cf. Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31). Love, not mere external conformity to rules, is the essence of the Law (cf. Gal. 5:14).

Paul then quoted various specific commands from the social section of the Ten Commandments. These prohibitions—not to commit adultery... murder... steal and covet—are the 7th, 6th, 8th, and 10th commandments, in that order (Ex. 20:13-15, 17). Paul summed up that entire section of the Law by quoting Leviticus 19:18. The Jewish Rabbis and the Lord Jesus summarized the social section of the Law in the same words (cf. Matt. 22:39). Paul then expressed this principle in other words, Love does no harm (lit., "Love does not keep on working evil") to its neighbor, and then he repeated (cf. Rom. 13:8) his basic assertion that love fulfills the Mosaic Law. Only in Christ can a person meet this or any of the other requirements of the Law (8:4).³⁷

Guzik: The Christian's obligation to his neighbors.

Owe no one anything except to love one another: On a personal level, the only "debt" we are to carry is the "debt" to love one another – this is a perpetual obligation we carry both before God and each other.

Some take this as a command to never borrow, but Jesus permitted borrowing in passages like Matthew 5:42. That isn't the sense of what Paul is saying here, though the Scriptures do remind us of the danger and obligations of borrowing (Proverbs 22:7).

"We may pay our taxes and be quit. We may give respect and honor where they are due and have no further obligation. But we can never say, 'I have done all the loving I need to do.' Love then is a permanent obligation, a debt impossible to discharge." (Morris)³⁸

ESV: Verses 8–10 focus on the Christian's relationship to the Mosaic law. Owe no one anything links back to v. 7, and thus the command does not prohibit all borrowing but means that one should always "pay what is owed" (see v. 7), fulfilling whatever repayment agreements have been made. The debt one never ceases paying is the call to love one another. Indeed, love fulfills what the Mosaic law demands.³⁹

³⁶ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁷ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

³⁸ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

³⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁹For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

McGee: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Now don't tell me that you love someone and are committing adultery with that one. You can call that love if you want to, but it is nothing in the world but sex. It is licentiousness, it is fornication, and it is sin in God's sight. God hasn't changed His mind about it.

"Thou shalt not kill." You can kill a person in more ways than pulling a trigger of a gun. You can destroy them by ruining their reputation.

"Thou shalt not steal." If you love, you won't get something dishonestly.

"Thou shalt not covet." When your neighbor drives up in a new automobile, how do you feel about it? Sometimes we say, "I wish we had the car and they had one just like it." What we really mean is that we would rather have that car than see them have it.

Paul is saying that our love for our neighbor is revealed in what we do rather than in what we say. He is not putting the Christian back under the Law; he is saying that love manifests itself in not committing adultery, not killing, not stealing, not coveting. You can talk about love all you want to, but if you commit these acts against your neighbor, you have no love for him.⁴⁰

Guzik: You shall love your neighbor as yourself: Paul echoes Jesus' words as recorded in Matthew 22:36-40. This is one of the two commands upon which hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Love your neighbor means to love the people you actually meet with and deal with every day. It is easy for us to love in the theoretical and the abstract, but God demands that we love real people.

"No man can compass the ends of life by drawing a little line around himself upon the ground. No man can fulfill his calling as a Christian by seeking the welfare of his wife and family only, for these are only a sort of greater self." (Spurgeon)⁴¹

ESV: Paul cites several OT commandments regarding responsibility to others, all of which are summed up in the call from Lev. 19:18 to love your neighbor as yourself.⁴²

¹⁰Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

Missler: Neighbor [fellow citizens] not brother. (Romans 6, 7 & 8 dealt with relationships within the body.)

The goal of the Christian life (vs. The Law): 1 Tim 1:5, Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

Good conscience: 1 John 1:9. Sincere faith: taking God at His Word. (1 Tim 1:6-14).

Walking according to the Spirit converts a duty to a delight.

"Walking" involves a moment-by-moment, incremental, trusting... (Gal 5:13ff. Cf. 5:22-23).⁴³

⁴⁰ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

⁴² ESV Study Bible Notes

⁴³ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

McGee: Loving your neighbor is the fullness of the Law. This love, let me repeat, is the fruit of the Spirit.⁴⁴

Guzik: Love is the fulfillment of the law: It is easy to do all the right religious “things” but to neglect love. Our love is the true measure of our obedience to God.⁴⁵

FCSBN: Love is the fulfillment of the law. Compare with Gal 5:13–14. This is not out of step with rabbinic notions about the essence of the law. Rabbi Hillel, who was living when Jesus was a boy, is quoted as saying, “What is hateful to you, do not do to other people, this is the whole of the Torah, the rest is commentary; go and learn.”⁴⁶

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Missler: *kairos* (vs. *chronos*, chronological) = special segment of time; season.

“Salvation” = glorification; salvation in the future sense:

Past tense: justification; delivery from the penalty of sin.

Present tense: sanctification; delivery from the power of sin.

Future tense: glorification; delivery from the presence of sin.⁴⁷

Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:

While you might not recognize it as such, verse 11 to the end of Romans chapter 13 is about the End Times. Paul says, “You know at what point of history we stand”. I’ve mentioned in earlier lessons that undeniably Paul believes that he is living in the End Times and expects Yeshua’s return at any moment. It is why he behaves and tries to motivate others to salvation with such zeal and urgency; to his bones he believes time is very short. But Paul wasn’t the only one who believed that the end was imminent. In the Apocryphal book of Enoch 51 we read this:

“In those days the Elect One will arise and choose the righteous and holy from among them, because the day for their being saved has come near”.

Paul speaks of awakening out of our sleep. I don’t think he means this negatively; that is, that people have not been paying attention or they have intentionally ignored reality. Rather it seems to me that he is saying that it has been so very long since the promise of God to Abraham has been made, and so very long that the Jews have lived either in exile or under the harsh hand of a foreign occupier. Thus, the prophecy that Israel and the Jews will be delivered has been as if in a coma, but the coma is ending and now is the time for Israel to awaken because the time of their deliverance is upon them. I think that interpretation is backed up by Paul’s words that “The night is almost over, and the day is almost here”. Since darkness is always a biblical metaphor for evil and light is always a biblical metaphor for good then we can better understand the words that follow about putting off behavior that occurs in darkness and putting on behavior that occurs in

⁴⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

FCSBN: ⁴⁵ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

⁴⁶ First-Century Study Bible Notes

⁴⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

daylight. He then goes on to list a few behaviors that occur in darkness that need to stop, especially among Believers. No doubt this would have been a particular problem in the City of Rome where the recipients of his letter resided. Stop partying, stop getting drunk, and stop engaging in sexual immorality. Also stop every excess and cease being quarrelsome or jealous. Most of these exhortations we can understand because of their plain meaning. Without getting into detail, however, I want to reiterate that especially when it comes to sexual immorality, large segments of the Church have today utterly abandoned any pretence of prohibiting it. Those segments ordain gay ministers; they sanctify gay marriages; they have no issue with couples living together and having children without the benefit of marriage; and adultery is thought to be a private matter. Why do they believe this way? Because they have abandoned sexual morality in the same way they have abandoned God's Word as the infallible source of truth and instead are following manmade doctrines. Therefore, the definitions of terms like immorality and even love have been redefined to Paul ends this chapter by essentially saying that due to where we are in history, it is a waste of valuable time to do all these wrong things as the final grains of sand drain out of the hour glass. Rather we need to be productive for the Kingdom of God while we still can. How do we do this? Paul says by "clothing" ourselves with Yeshua. The mental picture of clothing ourselves with Yeshua was mostly meaningful to the Jews of Paul's audience because such a motif was common in Judaism and it regularly referred to righteousness. So, we are to put on the righteousness given to us as a free gift on account of our trust in Christ's sacrifice and His perfect faithfulness and get on with the business of living a redeemed life of victory as opposed to our former life as a slave to sin.⁴⁸

McGee: 11-12 Paul said this nineteen hundred years ago, and certainly we ought to say it with a little more urgency in this day in which we are living. Let me give you my translation: And this - seeing that ye know the time or the season, that now it is the hour for you to wake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is passing, it is far spent, and the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

In this closing section an alarm clock goes off to waken believers who have gone to sleep in the world and have forgotten this added incentive for yielding their total personalities to God. My friend, this is not the time for the child of God to live for the things of this world. I think many a rich Christian is going to be embarrassed when the Lord comes. How big will your bank account be, my friend? Are you using your time and what you possess for God? I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye yield your total personalities -- all you are, all you have -- to God. This is rational. This is reasonable. This is what you are supposed to be doing, Christian friend.

If we really are looking for the return of Christ, it will purify our lives. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1John 3:3). These fellows who get divorces and live like the world, then talk about being premillennial and pretribulational and looking for the imminent coming of Christ, are not being honest. The apostle John says that that man is a liar! Let us wake up, my friend. Let us live for God in this hour!⁴⁹

⁴⁸ <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

⁴⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC: Expressing divine love is a Christian's constant responsibility, but it is especially crucial in understanding the present time (lit., "knowing the season"). Paul was not referring to time in general but to the end-time and to the imminent return of the Lord Jesus. It is a time, therefore, for spiritual vigilance and industriousness: wake up from your (some mss. have "our," which conforms to the context) slumber (cf. Eph. 5:14; 1 Peter 5:8). This need for alertness is because our salvation (ultimate or final salvation realized at the return of the Savior; cf. Rom. 8:23; Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 1:5) is nearer now than when we first believed (cf. James 5:8). Each passing day in the faith brings final salvation and deliverance closer.⁵⁰

Guzik: The night is far spent, the day is at hand: Because we know the danger of the times and we anticipate the soon return of Jesus, we should be all the more energetic and committed to a right walk with God instead of a sleep-walk with God.

How important it is to awake out of sleep! We can do many Christian things and essentially be asleep towards God. What a difference it makes when we are awake!

- We can speak when we are awake
- We can hear when we are awake
- We can walk when we are awake
- We can sing when we are awake
- We can think when we are awake⁵¹

ESV: 11–12 In this section (12:3-13:14) the final verses call Christians to action, given the shortness of the time before Jesus returns. Sleep here is a metaphor for a life of moral carelessness and laxity. Salvation is viewed as a future reality here, and it draws nearer every day. the day is at hand. The nearness of the end summons Christians to put off all evil works and to live in the light.⁵²

¹²The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

[Ephesians 6:10-18 details]

BKC: Paul considered the time of Christ's return and the consummation of salvation for believers (v. 11) as the start of a new day. The present time, while Christ is absent (John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11) and Satan is at work (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2), is described as the night (cf. 2 Peter 1:19). Since "the day" is almost here, Paul urged his readers to put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Christians are soldiers in a conflict who need to be alert and equipped for battle (Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Thes. 5:8). Upright, Christ-honoring living is often referred to as being in the light (John 12:36; Eph. 5:8, 14; Col. 1:12; 1 Thes. 5:5; 1 John 1:7; 2:10).⁵³

⁵⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁵¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

⁵² ESV Study Bible Notes

⁵³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Guzik: Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light: The illustration is from taking off and putting on clothes. When you get dressed every day, you dress appropriately to who you are and what you plan to do. Therefore, every day, put on the Lord Jesus Christ!

We must cast off before we can put on. “The rags of sin must come off if we put on the robe of Christ. There must be a taking away of the love of sin, there must be a renouncing of the practices and habits of sin, or else a man cannot be a Christian. It will be an idle attempt to try and wear religion as a sort of celestial overall over the top of old sins.” (Spurgeon)

The works of darkness: These are characterized as revelry and drunkenness, licentiousness and lust, strife and envy. These are not appropriate for Christians who have come out of the night into God’s light.

The idea behind the word for licentiousness is “the desire for a forbidden bed.” It describes the person who sets no value on sexual purity and fidelity.

Lust in this passage has the idea of people who are lost to shame. They no longer care what people think and flaunt their sin openly, even proudly.

The armor of light: This is related to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. When we put on Christ, we put on all the armor of God and are equipped to both defend and attack.

“Putting on Christ is a strong and vivid metaphor. It means more than put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, signifying rather Let Jesus Christ Himself be the armor that you wear.” (Morris)⁵⁴

FCSBN: Armor of light. Light and darkness were also important metaphors for the Dead Sea Scrolls community: “All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of injustice are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.”⁵⁵

CJSBN: 12–13 The night is almost over, the day is almost here. Night and day, also darkness and light, as metaphors for evil and good are found in the Gospel of John (John 8:12), in the Tanakh (for example, Isa. 60:1ff.), and in the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Essenes, who separated themselves from what they considered the immoral life fostered by the establishment in Jerusalem. In addition, day and daytime are metaphors for the *olam haba*, “the age to come.”⁵⁶

13Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

McGee: In other words, let us walk honorably as those in the day; not in revelings and drunkenness, not in sexual intercourse and dissolute abandon, not in strife and jealousy. We hear a great deal about night life. The believer is identified with day life. He walks as one who belongs to the day.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

⁵⁵ First-Century Study Bible Notes

⁵⁶ Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

⁵⁷ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

BKC: 13-14. In verse 13 Paul repeated his exhortation of verse 12, changing the figure from warfare to lifestyle. He charged, Let us behave decently, as in the daytime (lit., "day"). Crime, violence, and wickedness are associated with darkness and the night (John 1:5; 3:19-20; 8:12; 12:35, 46; Eph. 5:8, 11; 6:12; 1 Thes. 5:7; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:9, 11). Perhaps this contrast was suggested to Paul by his phrase "deeds of darkness" (Rom. 13:12). At any rate the activities and attitudes he listed—orgies and drunkenness... sexual immorality and debauchery... dissension and jealousy (cf. Gal. 5:19-21)—are certainly "deeds of darkness." It is interesting that Paul linked jealousy with immorality. Such actions and attitudes have no place in a Christian's life. He belongs to "the light"; these deeds and thoughts belong to the darkness. A Christian's lifestyle must be pure and holy, especially in view of Christ's approaching return (cf. Rom. 13:11-12; 1 John 3:3). The secret to living chaste lives is for Christians to clothe themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. "put on," Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). At salvation they were "clothed with Christ" (Gal. 3:27), so they should conduct themselves accordingly. Also, the secret includes not thinking about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (lit., "and do not make forethought [*pronoian*] for the flesh [*sarkos*; cf. Rom. 8:3-5, 8-9, 12-13] for lusts"). For a Christian to plan out specific ways to gratify his sinful nature is wrong and out of bounds.⁵⁸

ESV: Things not fitting for those who belong to the light include (1) sins of addiction in drinking and partying; (2) sexual sins; and (3) social sins.⁵⁹

14 **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.**

Missler: How: by confessing all known sin; and walking moment-by-moment, taking every thought captive, taking a step at a time, trusting in Him...being transformed by the [continual] renewing of your mind...⁶⁰

McGee: Oh, how many believers are making every provision for the flesh but are making no provision to go into His presence. My friend, I beg you to put Christ first in your life and to get out the Word of God. This is all-important.⁶¹

Guzik: Make no provision for the flesh: The flesh will be as active as we allow it to be. We have a work to do in walking properly, as in the day – it isn't as if Jesus does it for us as we sit back; instead, He does it through us as we willingly and actively partner with Him.

God used this passage to show Augustine, the great theologian of the early church, that he really could live the Christian life as empowered by the Holy Spirit – he just had to do it. And so do we.⁶²

⁵⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

⁵⁹ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁶⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

⁶¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-13.cfm?a=1059001

ESV: Paul's exhortations can be summed up in the call to put on . . . Christ. The metaphor of putting on clothing implies not just imitating Christ's character but also living in close personal fellowship with him. Even though believers have new life, they still must constantly renounce the flesh and refuse to gratify its desires.⁶³

Important Quotes

James Abram Garfield. [After serving in Congress 18 years, Garfield was elected as a Senator from Ohio. Garfield was asked to give the nomination speech for John Sherman at the opening of the Republican Convention in 1880. His speech received such a standing ovation, that the convention decided to nominate him instead of John Sherman. He was elected President in 1881.]

“Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness, and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature...

“If the next centennial does not find us a great nation... it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces.” —1876, in a speech commemorating the centennial of the Declaration of Independence, “A Century of Congress,” by James A. Garfield, published in *Atlantic*, July 1877.

“I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever.”

—Thomas Jefferson, 1781, Notes on the State of Virginia

“A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse...from the public treasury...”

“The average age of the world’s greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through this sequence:

- from bondage to spiritual faith;
- from spiritual faith to great courage;
- from courage to liberty;
- from liberty to abundance;
- from abundance to complacency;
- from complacency to apathy;
- from apathy to dependency;
- from dependence back again into bondage.”

—attributed to Alexander Tyler, 1750

“If you love wealth more than liberty, and if you prefer the tranquility of servitude rather than the animated contest of freedom, then go home in peace. We seek neither your counsel nor your arms. But bend down and lick the hands that feed you; and may your chains rest lightly upon you. And may posterity forget that you were our countryman.”

—Samuel Adams⁶⁴

⁶³ ESV Study Bible Notes

⁶⁴ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

The Prayer

When minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas State legislature, everyone was expecting the usual politically correct generalities, but what they heard instead was a stirring prayer, passionately calling our country to repentance and righteousness.

(The response was immediate. A number of the Legislature walked out during the prayer in protest. In 6 short weeks, the Central Christian Church had logged more than 5,000 responding calls, with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of the prayer from India, Africa and Korea.)

“Heavenly Father, we come before you today and ask Your forgiveness and to seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, “Woe on those who call evil good, but that’s exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We confess that: We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism. We have worshiped other gods and called it multiculturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it alternative lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have abused power and called it political savvy. We have coveted our neighbor’s possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

“Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the Living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org