

The Government and Us... Romans 13:1-7..

- Governments are always in the news—making decisions that affect each of us. Let's look at what the Bible says about government. What is our responsibility towards government...what is the responsibility of government toward us?

I. Right Beliefs leads to right _____

- We're in the final section of Romans beginning with chapter 12. We move from the theological to the practical. Romans 12:1.. *"Therefore,"* -- in light of all the doctrinal content of the first eleven chapters of Romans here is how we should live..
- When Paul gets practical he starts talking about relationships:
 - our relationship to our Lord, .. Romans 12:1,2... *do not be conformed but be*
 - then our relationship to the church, Romans 12:3-8.. *in Christ..we form one body* vs 4.
 - then our relationship to each other, Romans 12:9-16...*live in harmony* Vs 16..
 - then our relationship with difficult people. Romans 12:17-21...*if your enemy is hungry*
 - then our relationship with government.. Romans 13:1-7..

II. The _____ of Government

1. Civil government is a part of God's purpose for the world.

Romans 13:1... *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities for there is no authority except that which God has established."* v. 2 *Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

- Government is divinely appointed by God...vs 1... The authorities which exist have been established by God... vs 2.. God has established human government because we are sinners and we need to submit to that authority to have law and order and promote the general welfare of the public.



- The Bible records three different institutions our Lord has constructed for our benefit:
 - a) The family. God created the family before there was government Genesis 2:18-25... *it is not good for the man to be alone*..vs 18.. Vs 24... basis of marriage
 - b) The church... the people who follow Jesus ..Acts 2...
 - c) The government. No human government is perfect but we do need authority over us and we need to submit to it.. Vs 1. Submission: .. Is not about superiority/inferiority - but it is about a function—*Having the courage, respect and consideration to give up my rights to meet another person's needs*

2. Government leaders are of God.

For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant (διάκονός) for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer .. Romans 13:3,4.

- Look to Isaiah 10 to see how seriously God takes issues of righteous leadership... and the responsibility of it... Isaiah 10:1-3 "*Woe to those who make unjust laws and those who issue oppressive decrees to deprive the poor of their rights and rob My oppressed people of justice making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless* [For those who do this—consider what's going to happen] *What will you do on the day of reckoning when disaster comes from afar?*
- People in government have responsibility to act justly. ..they are servants. When Jimmy Carter was elected President of the US he said... "I have been elected as chief servant among you". Another national leader on his election said... "I don't want your congratulations.. I want your prayers"... So it is with all of us in leadership positions.

3. Civil government is

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord Philippians 2:10,11..

- The Bible says eventually God will abolish all human forms of government and Jesus Christ will be King. Philippians 2:10,11 ...that won't be a democracy. It will be a theocracy. Far better to submit to Jesus willingly—as Saviour and Lord—now! John 5:22

III. The _____ of Government

1. To protect Human Life.

Genesis 9:6... *For whoever sheds the blood of people, by man (Judicial authority) shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made people...* Protection of human life—an authority given to the State.. (not for personal revenge). Sanctity of human life principle

2 To protect personal and rights.

Exodus 20:14-17 – *You shall not steal....* The Ten Commandments legitimize private property

3 To handle disputes between people.

Moses says, "But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some wise and understanding, respected men from each of your tribes and I'll set them over you." Deuteronomy 1:12. Judges were set up..a judicial system..

4 Punish

He is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. (vs 4) We don't exercise personal revenge but appropriate judicial authority has the responsibility to act on our behalf.. Romans 13:4. Thank God for righteous police...

IV. OUR RESPONSIBILITY & RELATIONSHIP TO THE GOVERNMENT

1. A Christian is a of two worlds

"But our *citizenship* (πολίτευμα) is in heaven and we eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus." Philippians 3:20



- The follower of Jesus is a citizen of two worlds. Our citizenship is in heaven and also in some earthly country. How do we keep those in focus, in balance? Luke 20:22. Jesus tells us how to keep the two different citizenships in balance. The Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus. *"And they came to Jesus and said, 'Is it not right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' He saw through their duplicity and said to them, 'Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He said to them, 'Then give to Caesar what's Caesar's and to God what is Gods.'"*
- What belongs to Caesar? Taxes. What belongs to God? Your life, your allegiance. At all times Matthew 6:33 *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."*

2. My Obedience is to God.

If the government law is in contradiction to God's law then our response is to be... Acts 5:29... *we must obey God rather than people* (Acts 5:17-32).

3 Obey the law. (unless it is in direct contradiction of God's law)

Titus 3:1... *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient*

Why obey?

God established authority .. Romans 13:1... *God has established..*

For my own good.. Romans 13:3... *rulers hold no terror for those who do right*

Maintain a clear conscience.. Romans 13:5.. Any citizen. can obey the law because of fear of punishment but a Christian ought to obey because of conscience

Maintain a good testimony.. 1 Peter 2:13-15.. *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.*

4. Pray for Public Officials.

1 Timothy 2:1-3.. *I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone (2) for kings and for those in authority, **that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness***

- 5. **Requirement of paying taxes..** Romans 13:6-7.. *This is why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servant, who give their full time to governing.. 'Pax Romana' etc..*

6. **Influence Government for** Matthew 5:13,14 ..*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.*

- Salt... penetrates, flavours, preserves..Christians can help make a positive difference as we live out our lives for Jesus. A genuine follower of Jesus Christ will be a good citizen and we are to let our lights shine and have great impact.. eg William Wilberforce (slavery), Florence Nightingale (nursing practice), John Flynn (Royal Flying Doctor Service) and each of us can have a unique impact for Jesus
- What do we do when good is defined as bad? How should we respond when a Government makes practices illegal that have been part of the Christian faith? eg of Daniel ... When King Darius exceeded his God-given authority— *‘Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before...’* (Daniel. 6:10).” Daniel continued his praying - he courageously accepted consequences
- As Murray Campbell says we need to plan for difficult days ahead. and continue to do good. The Apostle Peter wrote a letter to Christians whom he refers to as ‘exiles’. “Exiles” because the Apostles knew that this world isn’t our home. Our current place of residence is temporary. Our journey on planet earth is brief ... James 4:14... this reminds us not to hold on too tightly to the things on earth and *“keep persevering with the journey set out before us looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith”*.

The Apostle Peter wrote this as recorded in 1 Peter 2:12,13—very apt for Christians today... **Live such good lives** among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us...1 Peter 2:11-13.

Then the example of Christ....

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.” 23 When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2: 21-23.

- Keep looking unto Jesus all the days of our lives as we live as a citizen on planet earth—as we share the news of Jesus to the lost—and one day we go into His glorious presence for eternity. Revelation 21:4—there is no more human government and Jesus Christ reigns as Lord and King—perfect governance for all eternity!!

***“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!”***

Revelation 5:12

***“To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!”***

Revelation 5:13