

Romans 13

Our Relationship with Government

Scripture: Romans 13:1-14

Big Idea: Showing Jesus in our attitude towards Governing Authorities

Call to Action: Think about how you treat those around you in authority.

Family Action: Talk to your kids about how sometimes it may be hard to follow those in charge.

Give examples of how we can still obey authority even if we don't like it.

Exposure to Exposition & Exploring the Scriptures: (10-20 mins)

- Bible Drills (Memorization of OT & NT Book order)
- Guide the children to Romans 13:1-14 in the Bible. (Help them as needed, NT vs OT)
- Say: We are going to continue through Paul's letter to the church of Rome.
- We will learn that the gospel is God's power to save everyone who believes, and we should never be ashamed of Jesus.
- Read aloud. (Ask kids to start their pointer finger on V1 and follow along)

Review: vv. 11:1-27 God is not done with Israel; He is showing kindness towards Gentiles (Israel's Future)
vv. 11:28 – 12:2 God keeps His promises & Our relationship with God
vv. 12:3-13 Our Relationship with Believers & Serve the Body with spiritual gifts
vv. 12:14-21 Our Relationship with Unbelievers
vv. 13:1-14 Our Relationship with Governing Authority

Opening Question

Have you ever had to follow a rule or obey someone in authority even when you didn't want to? → Why do you think God asks us to respect authority and treat others with love?

Notes:

In Romans 12-15, Paul shows us how to live in response to God's mercy. This is not a list of rules, but a plan for worship. Because God has saved us and nothing can separate us from His love, our lives should reflect gratitude and obedience.

Think of it like a target 🎯:

- The center is our relationship with God (12:1-2).
- Then comes our relationship with other believers (12:3-13).
- Then comes our relationship with the world/unbelievers (12:14-21).
- and finally, government and society. (13).

If living this way feels impossible, Paul already gave us the starting point. We become a living sacrifice, renewing our minds through God's Word. As our thinking changes, our behavior changes. This is where sanctification begins.

Paul now teaches the final part of living a holy life. This part is about how Christians live in the in society with Leaders. Even though our true home is in heaven, we still live here on earth with a government. Some

people might think that because we belong to God's kingdom, we don't have to listen to leaders or follow rules in society. But that's not true! God wants us to live in a way that respects authority and shows His goodness so that people can see Christ through us. (Police, Governor, President - The Government as a whole). Romans chapter 13.

Key Theological Term: *Sanctification*- The process of becoming more like Jesus in our lives.

Romans 13:1-14 NLT

Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. 2 So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. 3 For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. 4 The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. 5 So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

6 Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.

Love Fulfills God's Requirements

8 Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. 9 For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

11 This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. 13 Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

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V1-5 Respecting Authority

Paul now moves to the fourth and final ring – our relationship with the government and authority.

- Paul teaches a clear rule: Christians should respect and obey governing authorities.
- Why? Because God Himself established government.
- Every ruler and authority exists because God allowed them to be there.

1. Government Is Established by God (v. 1):

- God raises up leaders.
- God allows governments to exist.
- Even imperfect leaders are part of God's plan.

*Even when rulers are flawed, God can still use them for His purposes.

2. Government Helps Restrain Evil (v. 2):

- God created government to help control sin in society.
- Without laws and rulers, people would simply do whatever they wanted.

Government exists to:

- Protect people
- Promote justice
- Punish wrongdoing
- When we obey laws, society works better.

3. Disobeying Authority Brings Consequences (v.3-4):

- Paul explains: If you break the law, you should expect punishment.
- The government carries the authority to enforce justice.
- This doesn't mean every government is perfect – but it does mean chaos is worse than order.
- A world with no government at all would be far more dangerous.

4. Our Heart Should Be Toward Obedience (v.5):

- Christians should seek to obey the government whenever possible.
- Just like parents expect children to obey their rules, God expects us to respect authority.

Our attitude towards government should be:

- Respectful
- Peaceful
- Law-abiding

5. What if the government tells me to go against God?

There are rare times when we must obey God instead of government. For example, when the apostles were ordered not to preach about Jesus. (Acts 5:29) They said, "We must obey God rather than men."

Even then, the apostles:

- Disobeyed respectfully
- Accepted the consequences
- Continued trusting God
- They still showed respect to authority.

Kid Point: Christians honor God by respecting authority!

Romans 13:6-10 Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.

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V6-10 Living Honorably in the World

Paul continues teaching how Christians should live honorably in society. These actions protect our witness for Christ in the world.

1. Pay What You Owe (v. 6)

That means:

- Paul says Christians should pay taxes.
- Even if we dislike how governments spend money, we still obey the law.
- Paying taxes is not just about money – it is about obeying God.

Jesus taught the same thing. (Matthew 22:21)

- "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."

2. Respect & Obey Those Who Serve in these Roles (v.7)

Paul says government workers are servants of God.

- That includes people like:
 - Police officers
 - Judges
 - Teachers
 - Tax collectors
 - Government workers
- Even if they are imperfect, they still serve a role in society.

3. Do What is Fair (v.8)

Living honestly in everyday life.

Examples:

- Pay people fairly for their work
- Return things you borrow
- Keep your promises
- Follow customs that show respect

*These are not “extra kindness.” They are simply doing what is right.

The One Debt That Never Ends - LOVE

- Unlike money, love is never “paid off.”
- We keep loving people again and again – even when they do not return it.
- This is exactly how Jesus loved us.

When we love others well, we live out what God commands. Jesus summarized God’s law this way: Matthew 22:39: Love your neighbor as yourself. (v. 9-10)

Love means:

- Doing good for others
- Treating people fairly
- Expecting nothing in return
- This shows the world what Christ is like.

Kid Point: Christians honor God by living respectfully in society, doing what is right, and showing love

Romans 13:11-14 This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. 13 Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don’t participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

V11-14 Wake Up – Jesus Is Coming

Paul finishes this section of Romans with a strong reminder: Jesus is coming again! This helps us remember that our real future is with Christ. (v.11)

1. Leave the Darkness Behind (v. 12)

- Night represents the sinful world, while the coming day represents Christ’s kingdom.
- Because believers belong to the light, we should stop living in sinful ways.

2. Avoid the Sins of the World (v.13)

Paul lists some examples of behaviors that belong to the darkness. These things distract believers from living for Christ.

- Wild Parties
- Being Drunk
- Sexual Sin
- Bad Actions
- Fighting
- Jealousy

3. Prepare for Christ's Return (v.14)

Choose to live like Jesus! Letting our whole lives and body belong and follow Jesus:

- Following His commands
- Listening to the Holy Spirit
- Avoiding situations that lead us into sin

*When believers pursue holiness and follow Christ, they prepare themselves for the day they will see Him. Living this way honors God and prepares us for the reward He promises.

Kid Point: Jesus could return at any time, believers should live ready!

Observation Questions (What did it say?)

1. What does Paul say about where government authority comes from? (All governing authority is established by God. Police, teachers, president, boss, parents. v.1)
2. What are Christians instructed to give to those in authority? (Taxes, respect, and honor. v. 6-7)
3. What command summarizes how we should treat others? (Love your neighbor as yourself. v. 8-10)

Understanding Questions (What does it mean?)

1. Why should believers submit to governing authorities? (Because God has allowed those authorities to exist and uses them to maintain order. v. 1-4)
2. Why does Paul say love fulfills the law? (Because loving others keeps us from harming them and fulfills God's commands about how we treat people. v. 9-10)
3. Why does Paul tell believers to "wake up" spiritually? (Because Jesus' return is getting closer, and believers should live ready for Him. v.11)

Application Questions (What should I do?)

1. How can you show respect to authority in your life (parents, teachers, leaders)? (By obeying rules, speaking respectfully, and doing what is right. v. 1-2)
2. What is one practical way you can show love to your neighbor this week? (Let kids answer. Helping someone in need, being kind, forgiving someone, or treating others fairly. v. 8-10)
3. What is one "deed of darkness" you should avoid so you can live ready for Jesus? (SIN. Examples: jealousy, arguing, dishonesty, selfish behavior.) v. 13-14)

Activity #1: Flashlight in the Darkness

Supplies:

Instructions: Turn off the lights in the room so it is mostly dark.

Ask the kids:

- Is it easy or hard to see in the dark?
- What happens when you try to walk around in darkness?

Turn on the flashlight and shine it around the room.

- Explain that light helps us see clearly and move safely!

Connect this to the Bible passage. Romans 13:12 Night is almost gone. Day is almost here. We must stop doing the sinful things that are done in the dark. We must put on all the things God gives us to fight with for the day.

Explain:

- Darkness = sin and living like the world
- Light = living like Jesus

Play hide the objects in the dark

- Have the children close their eyes or look away while you hide an object.
- Use the flashlights to find the small object you hid.

Explain:

- That we need to live in the light, even as we go through life in the world and it may be hard.
- Jesus shines light on our sin and calls us to live for HIM/light and not in darkness/sin.

Activity #2 : Memory Verse: (Come up with moves)

Romans 12:21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Remind them: What is the Gospel?

Jesus' perfect life paid for the sins of all who believe. Jesus died on the cross as the punishment for sin. But Jesus did not stay dead, three days later He rose to life (resurrection) defeating the power of death. Believe, and you will be saved!

- We are all sinful. We all deserve the consequence of sin- death.
- Jesus is what saves us from the sin we all have in our bodies. And one day, he'll even give us a new body.

Supporting Truths Kids Can Grasp:

- God establishes governing authorities, and believers should submit to them. (Romans 13:1).
- Government exists to restrain evil and promote what is good. (Romans 13:3-4).
- Christians should pay what they owe and show respect and honor to others. (Romans 13:6-7).
- Loving others fulfills God's commands for how we treat people. (Romans 13:8-10).

- Because Jesus could return at any time, believers should turn from sin and live in the light. (Romans 13:11-14).