



A STUDY OF
THE BOOK OF
ROMANS

upgrade



CHAPTER 13

Jesse Curney III, Sr. Pastor
New Mercies Christian Church

upgrade



OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD & GOVERNMENT

Romans 13:1–14 (NKJV)

Pastor Jesse Curney III

New Mercies Christian Church



INTRODUCTION

God has established three institutions:

- **Home (Genesis 2:18-25)**
- **Government (Genesis 9:1-17)**
- **Church (Acts 2)**

Tonight, we turn to one of the most practical and sometimes controversial passages in Scripture, **Romans 13**. This chapter deals with how Christians should relate to government and authority.



INTRODUCTION

Paul was writing to believers in Rome, the very center of political power in his day. Rome had not yet begun its full-scale persecution of Christians, but storm clouds were gathering. Paul knew a day was coming when Christians would face the impossible choice of bowing to Caesar or bowing to Christ.

We live in a different time but face a similar tension. In America today, our political climate is divided, hostile, and often confusing. Some Christians feel pressured to put politics above faith. Others are tempted to rebel, resist, or disengage completely.

Romans 13 gives us God's wisdom for being both faithful citizens of our nation and faithful disciples of Christ.



1. FOR WRATH'S SAKE

ROMANS 13:1 – 4 (NKJV)

¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.



1. FOR WRATH'S SAKE (vv. 1 – 4)

Paul begins with a clear principle: *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*

- Government is not an accident; it is ordained by God (Daniel 4:17, 25, 32; Acts 17:24-28).
- Government exists to restrain evil and punish wrongdoing (Genesis 9:5-6).
- The “sword” represents the authority to enforce law—even to the point of capital punishment.
- Even imperfect rulers are under God’s sovereign control.



Application for Today:

- The Bible reminds us that even when leaders fail morally, the office they hold is part of God's order. We don't have to respect every decision, but we must respect the God-given authority of government.
- Without authority, we would have anarchy. Without law, there would be lawlessness.
- As Dr. Tony Evans once said: *“Government is a divinely authorized institution to promote order in society. When we undermine it, we undermine God's order.”*



1. FOR WRATH'S SAKE (vv. 1 – 4)

Illustration:

- Paul himself used Roman law to his advantage when facing trial (Acts 22:25-29). That shows us it's not wrong to hold leaders accountable by the law, but it is wrong to disregard the law altogether.

How can we balance our duty to respect authority with our call to speak truth to power?



2. FOR CONSCIENCE'S SAKE

ROMANS 13:5 – 7 (NKJV)

⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.



2. FOR CONSCIENCE'S SAKE (vv. 5 – 7)

Obey with Integrity

Paul moves beyond fear of punishment to a higher motive: conscience. A Christian should obey the law not just to avoid fines or jail, but because it pleases God.

- Conscience is the inner witness that reminds us we are accountable before God (Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19).
- Romans 13:7 tells us to “render to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”



- Taxes may feel unfair, but evading them violates conscience and dishonors God.

Illustration:

- The U.S. has a “Conscience Fund” where people anonymously pay back money they owed the government. Why? Because when the conscience is pricked, we cannot live with ourselves until we do what is right.

What areas of civic life test your conscience most, and how can Scripture guide your response?



3. FOR LOVE'S SAKE

ROMANS 13:8 – 10 (NKJV)

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.



Love Fulfills the Law

Paul expands the discussion from government to our relationship with one another. He says: *“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”*

- Love is the supreme principle of Christian ethics (John 13:34).
- Love fulfills the Ten Commandments because it prevents us from harming our neighbor.
- **Debt:** While not forbidding borrowing, Paul stresses honesty and responsibility in financial dealings. Our only permanent debt is to love others.



3. FOR LOVE'S SAKE (vv. 8 – 10)

Application for Today:

- In an America divided by politics, love is the Christian's radical response. We must love neighbors who vote differently, look differently, and believe differently.
- Love bridges the political aisle and shows the world that Christ is greater than any party or policy.
- As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said: *“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”*

How would American politics look different if Christians truly practiced love in public life?



4. FOR JESUS' SAKE

ROMANS 13:11 – 14 (NKJV)

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.



Live as Citizens of Heaven First (vv. 11 – 14)

Paul ends with the highest motivation of all: our devotion to Jesus Christ.

- **Wake up!** The time is short. Christ's return is nearer now than ever (1 Thessalonians 5:1–11).
- **Clean up!** Put away works of darkness, immorality, drunkenness, strife, and envy. Live as children of light (1 John 2:28–3:3).
- **Grow up!** Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Maturity means letting Christ shape our decisions, attitudes, and desires (Galatians 5:16).



Application for Today:

- Our ultimate loyalty is not to a flag, party, or nation—but to Jesus Christ.
- Political involvement matters, but gospel witness matters more.
- In an age of corruption, greed, and division, Christians must shine as lights in the world.



Live as Citizens of Heaven First (vv. 11 – 14)

Illustration:

- Think of a soldier who always keeps his uniform ready because he never knows when inspection will come. That's how we should live, ready for Christ's return.

What practical steps can we take to “put on Christ” in a world full of political and cultural distractions?



CONCLUSION

Let's bring this all together:

- We **obey government for wrath's sake** because authority is ordained by God.
- We **obey for conscience's sake** to maintain our integrity before God.
- We **obey for love's sake** because love fulfills the law.
- We **obey for Jesus' sake** because our ultimate allegiance is to Him.



CLOSING THOUGHT

A Christian should be the best kind of citizen—not because government is perfect, but because Christ is Lord. Our nation needs Christians who respect authority, live with integrity, show radical love, and anticipate the coming of Jesus.



CLOSING PRAYER

“Lord, help us to live as faithful citizens of this nation and faithful disciples of Your Kingdom. Give us wisdom in how we honor authority, courage when we must obey You above men, and love that bridges divides. Above all, help us live each day ready for Christ’s return. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”