

Unit 22 - Submission to the Authorities

Romans 13:1-7

Text

¹Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³For 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 he will commend you. ⁴For 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. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Open

- If you could hold any government position (elected or non-elected; local, state or national), what would it be? Why?

Discover

1. How should Christians relate to government?

vs. 1

vs. 3

vs. 5

vs. 7

2. What reasons does Paul give in support of this position?

vs. 1

vs. 2

vs. 4

vs. 5

vs. 6

Discover

3. **Topical study.** In your own words, what do these passages tell us about the Christian's relationship to human government?

Mark 12:17

Titus 3:1

1 Peter 2:13-17

Acts 5:29

Hebrews 11:31

4. How do verses 4-5 imply a limit on our obedience to human government? (see also Acts 5:29)

5. Why must we pay taxes? (v. 6)?

6. What else do we "owe" our government officials and civil servants? (v. 7)

Close

- Why is rebellion against the government such a serious matter? What are its consequences?
- How might these principles be applied by Christians living in a totalitarian state in which evangelism and Christian church meetings are illegal?
- How might these principles be applied by Christians living in a democratic political system?
- Case Study: An organization which promotes civil disobedience to prevent abortions, is organizing a rally in your city. You are on the committee which is responsible for recommending whether church members should participate. What do you recommend?
- What do you think constitutes showing respect and honor to a president? A member of Congress? What would be excluded?