

Romans – Chapter 13

Summary of Chapter 12

- We are priests in the new temple offering up our lives to God
- We need to live a new and transformed life by thinking anew
- Our faith is not solely between us and God, but we are simply members of a body with each person playing their role
- If we live by the Spirit, we will have genuine love:
 - For fellow believers
 - For our persecutors
 - For the lowly
 - For our enemies

Chapter 13: Submission to Others

Highlight: **God** and **Lord**

Submission to Authorities

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Notice the similar commands in 1 Peter 2:13-15 and Titus 3:1-2. The phrase “be subject to” is also translated:

- *Submit to*
- *Obey*
- *Be subordinate to*

What does it mean to be subject to? Is it more about how we *think* or about how we *act*?

The Scriptures call us to “Be subject to governing authorities” (vs 1) and sometimes to “Obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29).

Is it always clear and obvious when we should ‘be subject’ to government and when we ought to resist?

Clement was a member of the church in Rome in the 1st century. This is a prayer he wrote a few decades after Paul’s letter:

Give harmony and peace to us and all who dwell upon the earth, even as You gave to our fathers, when they called upon You in faith and truth, submissive as we are to Your almighty and all-excellent Name.

To our rulers and governors on the earth – to them You, Lord, gave the power of sovereignty by Your glorious and ineffable might, to the end that we may know the glory and honour given to them by You and be subject to them, in nothing resisting Your will; to them, Lord, give health, peace, harmony, stability, that they may exercise the authority given to them without offense.

For You, O heavenly Lord and King eternal, give to the sons of men glory and honour and power over the things that are on the earth; do Thou, Lord, direct their counsel according to that which is good and well-pleasing in Your sight, that, devoutly in peace and meekness exercising the power given them by You, they may find You favourable.

O You, who alone has power to do these things and more abundant good with us, we praise You through the High Priest and Guardian of our souls Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and majesty to You both now and from generation to generation and for evermore. Amen.

God's Servant – the King

³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

The Bible writers see governments as having authority that comes from God and as being 'servants of God'. See John 19:10-11; Daniel 2:19-21; 4:31-32. How does this change our view and response to our government?

Love is the Fulfilment of the Law (8-10)

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one 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 covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Why does Paul quote the Law of Moses here? Hasn't Romans been about how "*By works of the law no human being will be justified*" (3:20) and "*Christ is the end of the law*" (10:4)? Why should we care about fulfilling the law?

Make No Provision for the Flesh (11-14)

¹¹ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

“Make no provision” is also translated as:

- **Do not think about**
- **Stop paying attention to**
- **Make no plans**
- **Make no forethought**

How would we summarise what Romans has had to say about ‘the flesh’? Read:

- **Romans 7:5**
- **Romans 8:5-8**
- **Romans 7:14**
- **Romans 8:12-13**

Questions

How would we summarise this chapter?

What can I apply from what I have learnt? How does this chapter change my choices and behaviour?

What is something I can pray for based on this text?