

**Message #45****Romans 13:1-7**

Politics is dirty business. When election years approach the filthy mud is flying. Ads are taken out on TV that are designed to rip the opposing candidate to shreds. Millions and millions of people will tell you it is their job to speak out against and protest those leaders that don't see it their way.

One question we as Christians should ask is whether or not it is ever Biblically right in the Grace Age to resist or disobey government. We think there are times when the answer to that question from a Biblical analysis is "Yes."

- 1) We should refuse to obey the government if it says we cannot teach the Scriptures and the Truth about Jesus Christ. Peter and the Apostles said, "We must obey God, rather than man" (Acts 5:27-29).
- 2) We should refuse to obey the government if it demands that believers perform immoral or non-righteous and non-Biblical actions. Daniel was ordered by the government to stop praying to God and he refused to obey (Dan. 6:5-28). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were ordered by government to bow down and worship an image and they refused to do it (Dan. 3:8-30). In Genesis, the government of Sodom went to Lot's house and demanded that he turn over the visitors for their deviant homosexual activity and Lot refused and God honored him (Gen. 19:1-11).

During the days of Hitler, Christians in Germany were told that they could not have anything to do with Israel and positively helping Jews. They were threatened by persecution and death. Many disobeyed the evil government and helped the Jewish people.

In the Great Tribulation, the government will demand that all people receive the mark of the Beast on their right hand or forehead. This mark will contain either the name or the number of the Satanic Antichrist. If people submit to government and take that mark they will end up in Hell. They had better refuse to obey that mandate (Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9-11).

- 3) We should refuse to obey government if the government becomes a threat to the welfare of innocent citizens. When Saul was king of Israel and wanted to kill King David, David did not submit, he fled (I Sam. 20). When King Herod put Peter in jail and angels broke him out, he did not submit and stay in jail, he got out of there (Acts 12:1-19).

The truth is there are times when the right thing to do is not to submit to government and when we come to those moments, we must be willing to take the consequences.

However, having said that, there is a general principle that God wants Grace Age, Church Age believers to know. Apparently there were some in the Churches who were promoting the idea that real spirituality is that which speaks out and takes a stand against political leaders we don't like. Some were suggesting the real mark of spiritual integrity is to fight against godless leaders.

What Paul says here in Romans is this:

**WE DEMONSTRATE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND THE GRACE OF GOD WHEN WE HUMBLY SUBMIT TO AND SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT LEADERS THAT GOD HAS ORDAINED TO BE IN OFFICE.**

If you are always fighting against our government, you need to know you are not doing what is right before God.

You may think I have misinterpreted what Paul writes here. I have not.

Martin Luther, Reformer of the 1550's said, "Christians must subject themselves also to the wicked and unbelievers."

Charles Hodge, theologian and linguist of the 1800's said, "Obedience to government is demanded on the grounds of their official station."

W. H. Griffith Thomas, theologian-preacher-teacher of the 1900's said, "When you resist government you resist God Himself."

Warren Wiersbe said, "Paul refutes the idea that Christians should disobey and rebel against authorities."

There are four simple reasons given in these verses as to why we are to submit to government:

**REASON #1** – Because God has ordained all government. **13:1**

The first reason why we need to have a right perspective of government is because of the sovereignty of God. Look very carefully here: **"there is no authority" in any form of government except that which has been permitted by God.**

The prepositions "from God" and "by God" are the same prepositions (upo). Both nouns "God" are in the genitive case. What this means is that God is the means and the authorization of any government official coming into power. He is the source of all government.

In fact, the word "established" (tassw) is one that means He made military assignments and appointments for those in government. There is no authority in existence except that which God has permitted to be in existence.

God does not always put leaders in power to bless His people. In fact, He can and will put government leaders in power to chastise and discipline His people.

Now keep in mind that when Paul wrote this, the key political leader was Nero. Nero was one of the most ungodly and immoral political leaders to ever have power.

Paul says you need to realize God has ordained all government. God put them into power and God can take them out of power.

Very few government officials realize this because they think by their slick advertising they got the majority of people to vote for them. What they don't realize is that God put them where they are and He will hold them highly accountable for decisions they make.

**REASON #2** – Because resisting government is opposing God. **13:2**

God is very clear here in that if we oppose government, we are opposing God who put that government into power. Paul says stand against government and you are standing against God.

God says if you do that you will receive condemnation on yourself. The verb “receive” is future tense and it is in the Indicative Mood. So what this means is that it is a fact (Indicative Mood) that in the future there will be a judgment in which one will be condemned for opposing government God ordained.

This judgment would occur at some point in the future after the violation. It could occur partially in this life, or be brought up at the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ.

In **Proverbs 24:21-22** we read “My son, fear the LORD and the King; do not associate with those who are given to change, for their calamity will rise suddenly and who knows the ruin that comes from both of them?”

In the time in which we live, we have six responsibilities as believers to all government:

- 1) Submit to it unless they demand we do something immoral or unbiblical.
- 2) Pray for it for their salvation and for God's direction.
- 3) Respect it realizing God has ordained it.
- 4) Support it by paying our taxes.
- 5) Proclaim God's truth to government even when it contradicts what they are doing.
- 6) Vote for it because in this country God has given us this responsibility.

**REASON #3** – Because God has a purpose for all government. **13:3-4**

R. A. Torrey said, “Even bad government is better than no government at all.”

In these verses there are two stated God ordained purposes of government:

**Purpose #1** - Government has a God ordained responsibility to punish those who do evil.  
**13:3a, 4b**

The local, state, national levels of government have a responsibility to praise those who do good and punish those who do evil. It is not the responsibility of the Christian to become a vigilante and punish criminals. It is the responsibility of government.

The word “sword” is one that refers to a destructive weapon that speaks of punishment, even to the extent of bodily injury and death. God has given this kind of punishment responsibility to government and it does include the death penalty.

Now the word “evil” is articular, so this is specific evil as established by God in His word. The word literally refers to that which is bad, evil, wicked, worthless and harmful (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 227).

Government has a God ordained responsibility to punish those who do these things and even give the death penalty. It does not have the responsibility to psychoanalyze those doing evil, but to punish them.

At the beginning of our constitution it states that one of the purposes of government is to establish justice. This is not only true to our constitution, but it is true to the word of God.

Government has the responsibility to do what is just in punishing those who do evil and if they twist this or make decisions that are not just, they are going to answer to Almighty God.

**Purpose #2** - Government has a God ordained responsibility to praise those who do good.  
**13:3b, 4a**

Government also has the responsibility to praise those who do good. Now there is an article “the” before the noun good which means doing good consistent with God and His word.

We live in a time when a leader does something good and people on the other side not only won’t praise him, but they try to destroy him. It doesn’t matter the party. The idea of each esteeming others better than self is not seen much in politics. As one political leader once said, “When most politicians look in the mirror they see the next President.”

Let me give an illustration one from the Democrats and one from the Republicans.

When President Obama was President he wanted to try and come up with a health care system that would help everyone in the United States. That is what he wanted to do. Now they may not have figured everything out right. But his intentions were good. The Republicans made him out to be some terrorist trying to destroy America. That wasn’t true on that point at all. Instead of saying, you know he has a good idea there, let’s work and see if we can make this happen, it became a political war. He never was praised, he was always demonized.

When President Trump was President he wanted to use our own fuel sources so we did not have to depend on other nations to bring down prices. His intentions were good and right. It provided more jobs for people and brought gas prices down. The Democrats made him out to be some nationalist who was trying to destroy America and other nations. That wasn’t true. That wasn’t the point. Instead of saying he has a good idea there, let’s make this happen, he was hated by political opponents.

Government is supposed to praise those who do good. That is part of their responsibility but quite honestly, it doesn't happen often.

Now carefully notice in **verse 4** that God calls these leaders "a minister of God." This is the word from which we get our English word "deacon." God views government as being in a sacred appointed office and they had better take this seriously because God will judge them for what they do.

Now Paul says government is a minister of God and it is supposed to be a minister for good. So Paul says to the people of God, you pursue doing what is good and not evil because if you do evil, you will incur the judgment of authorities God has ordained.

Now when we read I Timothy 2:1-3, we realize the importance of us praying for government: "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority **so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.** This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior..."

Quite honestly, we who have experienced God's grace should be the best citizens in the place where we live.

**REASON #4** – Because God says it is a necessity to submit to government. **13:5-7**

Religious and political zealots took the position of a militia that said we only submit to God, not government. There are three specific ways we submit to government:

**Way #1** - We submit to government because of our conscience. **13:5**

In order to have a good conscience before God and within ourselves, we need a submissive attitude to God ordained leadership. If you want a clean, clear conscience that is not dirty and under conviction, then this is the way to keep it.

If you have spent your days opposing government and authority, you probably won't get a good night's sleep because your conscience, unless totally hardened, will keep you awake.

**Way #2** - We submit to government with our money. **13:6-7a**

There are two specific areas Paul mentions in the use of money:

**(Money Area #1)** - We are to pay taxes.

This was kind of like our federal income tax.

**(Money Area #2)** - We are to pay custom.

This was more like a state income tax.

**Way #3** - We are to submit to government in our attitude. **13:7b-c**

There are two specific attitudes we are to have pertaining to government:

**(Attitude #1)** - We are to have an attitude of fear.

**(Attitude #2)** - We are to have an attitude of honor.

Here is something we can do this week. Don't say one negative word about government but pray for it. Pray for the leaders of our Nation, our State, our City, and our Township.

You do that and you'll have a good conscience before God and you will be a demonstration of His Grace.