

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

The Sacrificial Life Involves Submission to Government

Romans 13:1-7

1 In the last chapter Christians were asked to present their bodies as living sacrifices to the Lord because that was their reasonable service. That's the way God wants us to worship Him. One of the ways you can demonstrate your sacrificial life is in your relationship to government as responsible citizens.

But you may ask, "How can I support a government that is so contrary to what I believe?" I don't believe in abortion on demand. I don't believe in government spending beyond the revenue they receive; especially when they have to borrow it from China and Japan. The eroding government benefits and the excessive taxes necessary to pay for all of these scare me! Yet, the Bible says here to support and obey the government. [2](#)

Yes it does! Please remember when the Apostle Paul penned these words, the emperor Nero was sitting on the Roman throne! As a Christian, you have the

responsibility to submit to your government because .

. . 3

I. God Provided for You the Concept of Government – v1-2 4

. . . God provided for you the concept of government. In Romans, Chapter 13, verses 1 and 2 we read, **Everyone 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. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.** 5

Verse 1 emphasizes that God designed the idea that everyone would be in subjection to someone. 1 6

For instance, First Peter, Chapter 5, verse 5 states, **Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with**

¹ Romans 13:1 - Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities.

humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷

Again, in First Peter, Chapter 2, verse 17 we read, **Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.** Therefore, ⁸ verse 2 concludes ² that when you say, “I am my own boss”, “I’m going to do my own thing” or “nobody’s going to tell me what to do”, you are rebelling against God’s plan! ⁹

The other concept here is that God designed authority to be given to people, not angels. ¹⁰ We find this in Genesis, Chapter 1, verses 27 and 28, **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”** ¹¹

² Romans 13:2 - Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Again, in Titus, Chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, **Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.** ¹² Remember what the Lord said to Pilate, **You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.** ³ ¹³

What does this not imply? ¹⁴

It does not imply that certain individuals were designed by God to rule other people. This idea was called the “Divine Right of Kings”. God did not ordain Hitler, or Saddam Hussein, Barack Obama or anyone else to reign. ¹⁵

This scripture doesn’t imply that a certain form of government is ordained of God. We believe, as do most people, that democracy is superior to a monarchy or a dictatorship. But this passage doesn’t imply that. ¹⁶

³ John 19:11.

What appears to be the implication here? ¹⁷ The implication is that few people would have the responsibility before God for many people! The United States is not a pure democracy. With over 300 million people, we are too big and couldn't handle that form of government. We are a democratic republic. We elect representatives to legislate over us. ¹⁸

God provided for us the concept of government. So, verse 2 tells us ⁴ that if you rebel against the concept of government, you will receive the judgment of God!

¹⁹

You have the responsibility to submit to your government because . . . ²⁰

⁴ Romans 13:2 - Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

II. God Has a Purpose for Government – v3-4

. . . God has a purpose for government. ²¹ Continuing with verse 3 and 4, For 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. For 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. ²²

The first purpose is found in verse 3. ⁵ Government is to execute praise where praise is due. It’s proper for dignitaries to gather at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It’s proper for military personnel to receive commendation medals for service to their country. It’s proper for outstanding citizens to receive recognition from civic leaders. ²³

⁵ Romans 13:3 - For 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.

The second purpose is found in verse 4. ⁶ Government is responsible to execute wrath where wrath is due. ²⁴ This verse implies the need for armed forces, police and correctional institutions. ²⁵ “Bear the sword” implies capital punishment. ²⁶

But doesn't the Bible oppose capital punishment because of the 6th Commandment, **You shall not murder** ⁷? ²⁷ The Ten Commandments were addressed to individuals, not government executing justice! ²⁸ Genesis, Chapter 9, verse 6 ⁸ prescribes capital punishment for murder. ²⁹ Exodus, Chapter 22, verse 20 ⁹ prescribes capital punishment for idolatry. ³⁰ Exodus, Chapter 35, verse 2 ¹⁰ prescribes capital punishment for working on the Sabbath Day. ³¹

⁶ Romans 13:4 - For 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.

⁷ Exodus 20:13.

⁸ Genesis 9:6 - Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

⁹ Exodus 22:20 - Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed.

¹⁰ Exodus 35:2 - For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death.

Leviticus, Chapter 20, verse 10 ¹¹ prescribes capital punishment for adultery. ³²

You have the responsibility to submit to your government because . . . ³³

III. God Commanded an Obligation to Government – v5-7

. . . God commanded an obligation to government. ³⁴

Finally, in verses 5 through 7 we read, **Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.** ³⁵

In verse 5 ¹² God wants you to submit to government demands. ³⁶ First Peter, Chapter 2, verses 13 through

¹¹ Leviticus 20:10 - If a man commits adultery with another man's wife — with the wife of his neighbor — both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

15 explains and augments this concept, Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ³⁷

Obedience to the law, however, is conditioned on the government's demands remaining consistent with God's revealed will! The story of Corrie ten Boom and her family is a prime example of this. When Hitler's Third Reich invaded the Netherlands in 1940 they began to imprison Jews in concentration camps where most were executed. Corrie ten Boom's family became involved in the Dutch underground by hiding their Jewish neighbors in their home until they could escape. Were they disobedient to the law? Yes! Were they morally right? Yes! ³⁸

¹² Romans 13:5 - Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

Obedience to the law involves having the right attitude in relationship to it. Obedience should not come from the fear of being caught but to fulfill your Christian responsibility. For instance, do you knowingly break the speed laws on the highway when there isn't any law enforcement apparent? It's amazing, isn't it, how quickly you become a law abiding citizen as soon as you observe a police car in your mirror. Practice being aware of God's abiding presence in your life and seek His continual approval over every attitude you have. That's how you develop a close personal relationship with Him! ³⁹

Verses 6 and 7 ¹³ remind us that God wants you to support your government financially. ⁴⁰ Lord Jesus supported the IRS when He said, **Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.** ¹⁴ ⁴¹ He went

¹³ Romans 13:6-7 - This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

¹⁴ Matthew 22:21.

ahead and paid the Temple taxes ¹⁵ even though He was, technically, exempt! After all, He was God in the flesh, the whole reason for the Temple's existence in the first place! ⁴²

The Old Testament tithe supported the Jewish government as well as the religious institution. This was commanded in the Law of Moses. ⁴³

As a Christian, you need to obey the laws of your country when those laws are consistent with God's revealed word. Pay your taxes! Support your government! Vote for godly people and godly laws!

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

¹⁵ Matthew 17:24-27 - After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?" "Yes, he does," he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes — from their own sons or from others?" "From others," Peter answered. "Then the sons are exempt," Jesus said to him. "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."