

# The Book of Romans

## LESSON THIRTEEN

### “Christian Obligation to Government & Our Fellow Man”

The people in Rome had long been under the rule of the Roman Empire. It was a pagan empire that worshipped multiple gods and goddesses, and the ruling government expressed many practices and lifestyles that were contrary to God and His Word, to say the least. These new believers in Christ had turned their devotion to His Kingship and were now made citizens of heaven. However, they were still living on this earth and the question of how much of this pagan government and authority they were still subject to was a very important one for Paul to address.

1. Read **verse 1**. Looking at the **first part** of verse 1, who does Paul say is subject to the governing authorities?
2. This was in contrast to what many of the Jews believed, who had formed groups of zealots that refused to submit to any authority but to God alone, and refused to pay taxes to anyone but God. However, what lesson did Jesus teach to His disciples as he answered the question concerning taxes that the Pharisees brought to Him? Read **Mark 12:13-17** and then record **Mark 12:17** below.
3. Looking at the rest of **Romans 13:1**, what reason does Paul give to support his statement to “**Let every soul be subject?**”
4. Look up **Daniel 4:17** and record that verse below.

5. What does **Psalm 75:6-7** say about this?
  
6. God is the ultimate authority, and He is the One who raises up one to a position of power and demotes another. Looking at **Romans 13:2**, what does Paul say we are doing when we refuse to respect the governing authorities?
  
7. Are there times when we should NOT obey the governing authority? The answer is YES! Read **Acts 4:16-20**, then record Peter's reply to the demands of the Jewish council and arresting authorities in **Acts 4:19-20**.
  
8. Shortly after this incident the apostles had another encounter with the Jewish council. Record **Acts 5:27-29** below.
  
9. The Scriptures make clear that if we are being told to do something contrary to God's Word that we are to submit to His higher authority. However, in our day to day living, outside of those kinds of circumstances, we are to submit to the authority of government in every way and be the best citizens possible. Write down Paul's words in **Romans 13:3**.

10. Peter also gives us godly advice in **1 Peter 2:13-15**. What does he say?
11. Looking at **Romans 13:4**, what does Paul call these governing authorities in this verse?
12. Paul reminds us in this verse that there are consequences to wrongdoing, and the government has been given the power, by the authority of God, to execute punishment on those who do wrong. Fear of consequences is a deterrent to doing unlawful things. What is the other deterrent Paul mentions in **verse 5**, which should be especially true for the Christian believer?
13. For us, as believers and followers of Christ, this second reason, “for conscience’ sake,” is more important than the first reason given by Paul concerning the fear of consequences. Our desire to not act in a way that is dishonoring to God should be our greatest motivation for being a law-abiding citizen. **Acts 24:15-16** record Paul’s words as he was brought before Governor Felix. Write Paul’s words down below.
14. This should be our attitude and desire as well. As we look at **Romans 13:6**, we see that one of the ways we obey and submit to the governing authorities is to pay our taxes. What reason does Paul give us for doing so, found in **verse 6**?

15. The NLT translates this verse: **“Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do.”** Paul sums up his arguments concerning our submission to authority in **Romans 13:7**. This is reminiscent of Jesus’ words in **Mark 12**. Record **Romans 13:7** below.

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** states: **“A Christian’s responsibility to civil authorities involves more than obedience. It also includes support by paying taxes. This is because the leaders, as God’s servants, are supposed to give their full time to governing and need support through taxes from citizens, Christians included. So a Christian ought to give everyone what he owes him (lit., “repay everyone his dues”), whether substance (taxes and revenue) or respect and honor.”**

16. Paul has been explaining to us what we owe in the way of submission, obedience, support, respect and honor to the authorities God has placed over us. There is, however, one debt that he states we can never fully satisfy. It remains a debt that no matter how many times it is paid, it remains outstanding. Looking at **Romans 13:8**, record that verse below.

17. Record the following Scriptures that speak of this debt we owe in all of our relationships.

**John 13:34-35 -**

**1 Corinthians 16:14 -**

**Ephesians 5:2 -**

**1 John 4:11 –**

**18.** In **Romans 13:9**, Paul loosely quotes Jesus' words in **Matthew 19:18-19**; **Mark 10:19** and **Mark 12:31**. We find, not only in these verses, but repeated throughout the New Testament, that the greatest commandment is love. Paul goes on in **Romans 13:10** to clarify how it is that love fulfills the whole law. What description does he give us of love in the first half of this verse?

**19.** The kind of love Paul speaks of is **agape** love. It is the love of God. It is not natural to our self-centered nature. It is supernatural and it is something that we can only do through the power of the Holy Spirit we have received. Turn back to **Romans 8:3-4** and record those verses below.

**20.** Looking at **Romans 13:11**, Paul speaks of the urgency we should be motivated by in fulfilling this debt to love. What does he say?

**21.** This is such a sobering and true statement. At any moment we can find ourselves standing face to face with Christ. But Paul is speaking here specifically regarding the eminent return of Christ. Paul most certainly believed that Christ could return for His church at any moment, and he warned his readers to not be found "asleep" and caught off-guard. What do these other Scriptures tell us concerning being "alert" and "ready" for Christ's return at any moment?

**Matthew 25:13 -**

**Mark 13:35-37 -**

**1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 -**

**1 Peter 4:7-8 -**

22. What does Paul tell us to do in **Romans 13:12**?

23. We again sense an urgency in Paul's exhortation. What reason does he give at the beginning of the verse?

24. The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** says, "**Christians are soldiers in a conflict who need to be alert and equipped for battle.**" How are we told to "ready ourselves" in **Ephesians 6:10-18**? Write down Paul's instructions from these verses.

**Ephesians 6:10 -**

**Ephesians 6:11 -**

**Ephesians 6:12 -**

**Ephesians 6:13 -**

**Ephesians 6:14 -**

**Ephesians 6:15 -**

**Ephesians 6:16 -**

**Ephesians 6:17 -**

**Ephesians 6:18 -**

25. Before we can put on the armor of God, we have things we must “put off.” What are these things we need to take off according to **Romans 13:12**?

26. “Works of darkness” always refer to our old sinful nature. The following verses clarify the things we need to put off. Write down these descriptions of the works of darkness.

**Ephesians 4:22 -**

**Ephesians 4:25a -**

**Ephesians 4:28a -**

**Ephesians 4:29a -**

**Ephesians 4:31 -**

**Colossians 3:5 -**

**Colossians 3:8-9 -**

27. After we put off the works of darkness, we are told in the last half of **Romans 13:12** to “put on the armor of light.” We went through the pieces of that armor in question #24. What do these other verses tell us concerning the light that should replace the darkness as we live through Christ?

**2 Corinthians 4:6 -**

**Ephesians 5:8 -**

**Ephesians 5:14 -**

**Colossians 3:12-14 -**

**1 Thessalonians 5:5 -**

**1 Thessalonians 5:8 -**

**1 John 1:7 -**

**28.** As we come to Paul's final admonitions in this chapter, write down what he tells us to do in **Romans 13:13**.

**29.** He gives us a final plea of what we are not to engage in and instead tells us to "walk properly." The Greek word is "euschemonos." It means decently, honestly, appropriately. We are to walk and behave appropriately to *who we are in Christ*. The NLT says, "**Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.**" Looking at **verse 14**, what does Paul say we are to do instead? How does he sum up his arguments in this verse?

**30.** How do we "put on Christ?" What does **Galatians 3:26-27** tell us?

**Adam Clarke** states: **“Putting on, or being clothed with Jesus Christ, signifies receiving and believing the Gospel; and consequently taking its maxims for the government of life, having the mind that was in Christ. The ancient Jews frequently use the phrase putting on the shechinah, or Divine majesty, to signify the soul’s being clothed with immortality, and rendered fit for glory. To be clothed with a person is a Greek phrase, signifying to assume the interests of another - to enter into his views, to imitate him, and be wholly on his side.”**

- 31.** Paul ends this chapter telling us to **make no provision** for the flesh. Don’t provide **opportunity** for our fleshly nature to be gratified. What safe-guards do you put in place to give no opportunity to your flesh? How do you go about making “no provision?”

**David Guzik** comments: **“Make no provision for the flesh: The flesh will be as active as we allow it to be. We have a work to do in walking properly, as in the day - it isn’t as if Jesus does it *for* us as we sit back; instead, He does it *through* us as we willingly and actively partner with Him.”**

- 32.** What was your greatest take-away from this chapter?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2026