

## The Book of Romans

The Gospel of God

## Romans 13:1-7

Submission, Disobedience and the Sword

<sup>1</sup> Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God, and those which exist are established by God.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

<sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

<sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

<sup>7</sup> Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

(Romans 13:1-7)

## Romans 13:1-7

### ➤ Key Principles

- 1) As Christians, we are to be subject to civil authorities
- 2) All governing authorities have been instituted by God to uphold His basic moral law in society
- 3) Paying taxes is a concrete sign of our submission to the authority of the state

## Application Questions:

1. When is it right to disobey civil authorities?
  - a) when civil authorities command us to do what God forbids, or forbid us to do what God commands (e.g. *Hebrew midwives; Daniel; the Apostles*)
    - there is a limit to government authority, which is the root of the belief in “*separation of church and state*”
    - civil authority extends only to the upholding of the basic moral law for the common good

### Application Questions:

1. When is it right to disobey civil authorities?
  - b) when civil authorities egregiously fail to uphold the moral law to the harm of their citizens
    - disobedience and resistance may be necessary even if the law is not directly against us
    - Example of Esther (Esther 4:11)

### Application Questions:

2. May we bear the sword as part of government?
  - yes; we must distinguish between personal revenge and God-sanctioned "vengeance" by government
  - this includes participation in "just war" enacted by the government for defense against violent aggression

### Application Questions:

3. What does submission imply for us in the U.S.?
  - *engage* – voting, lobbying, lawyering, writing and running for office
  - *influence* – shine the clarity of God's moral law on various issues for the common good
  - *pray* – for those in authority that we might lead a peaceful life and share the gospel (1 Tim. 2:1-4)