

Romans Refresh

Renewing Gospel-Centrality

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Romans 12:1-15:13

“Exhortations for Life Under the Gospel”

- 12:1-2: Foundational Response
- 12:3-16: Relationship to the “body”
- 12:17-21: Relationship to our “enemies”
- 13:1-7: Relationship to civil authorities
- 13:8-14: Central obligation to love others
- 14:1-15:13: Specific application

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

² Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³ 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; ⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good.

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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. ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷ 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)

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Civil Authorities

1. All civil authorities are appointed by God
 - in His wise providence, God has ordained every governing authority that exists
 - to oppose governing authorities is, in most cases, to oppose God and receive His judgment

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Civil Authorities

2. God instituted government for our good
 - government is designed by God to uphold His basic moral law in society—promote the “good” and punish the “evil”
 - the most basic function of civil government is the protection and preservation of the life and welfare of its citizens (cf. Gen. 9:5-6)

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Civil Authorities

3. Christians must be subject to civil authorities

- we have the highest incentive to submit—we know civil authorities are God’s servants!
- we pay taxes and honor those in authority because they are servants of God

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⁸ Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*. ⁹ For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the law*.

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¹¹ Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

(Romans 13:8-14)

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Central Obligation

- love for the “other” is the central and ongoing obligation of Christians

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Central Obligation

1. Love fulfills the law

- love for neighbor informs every other command in the law
- this love has now come into reality and been made effective in Christ by the Spirit

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Central Obligation

2. Love characterizes the “day”

- we live in the dawn of the final kingdom—let us live (love) like it!
- consciously embrace Christ in such a way that His character is manifested in all we do

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