



God, Government, Taxes and Us

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Sunday, February 19, 2012

ROMANS: **The Righteousness
of God Revealed**



Romans 13:1-7

[1] Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. [2] Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. [3] For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,



Romans 13:1-7

[4] for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. [5] Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. [6] For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.


A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person is in the center, with trees on either side. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

Romans 13:1-7

[7] Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.



Flowing directly from Paul's direction to make sure our love is genuine, in our relationships with one another, even extending to our enemies, he now tells us to submit to civil authorities. He gives us four reasons:


A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person is in the center, with their right arm raised. To the left and right are silhouettes of trees. The foreground is a dark, textured surface, possibly a stone path or field.

We submit because God has
put civil authorities in place.

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking out over a landscape at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, and there are trees on either side of the person. The person's right arm is raised.

Types of Government:

- Monarchy
- Republic
- Dictatorship
- Theocracy
- Parliamentary



We submit because God has
put civil authorities in place
for our good.




If we were like angels, blameless and freely able to exercise perfect self-control, we would not need rules or regulations. Why, then, do we have so many laws and statutes? Because of man's wickedness, for he is constantly overflowing with evil; this is why a remedy is required.

—**John Calvin**, Sermon on Galatians 3:19-20, “The Many Functions of God’s Law” (1558) in the volume *Sermons on Galatians* (Edinburgh 1997).



If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.

—James Madison, *The Federalist* No. 51 (1788).

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person is in the center, with their right arm raised. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person. The foreground is dark and textured, possibly a field of grass or a path.

We submit because God has
put civil authorities in place
and if we don't
we will be punished.



We submit because God has
put civil authorities in place
and our submission confirms we
understand and believe it.



Why does Paul speak so unreservedly about the good of government, why not talk about exceptions?

- Paul is more concerned with the authentic expression of our faith than with our civil rights being protected.
- Paul is more interested in our trusting God than with our lives being comfortable.

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person is in the center, with their right arm raised. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person. The foreground is dark and textured, possibly a stone path or a field of rocks.

Are there exceptions?

- Commands of government contradict commands of God.

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person is in the center, with their right arm raised. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person, and some grass on the hill.

Illustrations of exceptions:

- Moses' mother

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person's right arm is raised. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person.

Exodus 3:15

[15] God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person. The overall scene is dark, with the person and trees in silhouette against the bright sky.

Illustrations of exceptions:

- Moses' mother
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person's right arm is raised. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person.

Daniel 3:16-18

[16] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. [17] If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset sky. The person is in the center, with their right arm raised. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person, and some grass on the hill.

Illustrations of exceptions:

- Moses' mother
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
- Daniel

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up at a sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. There are trees on either side of the person.

Illustrations of exceptions:

- Moses' mother
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
- Daniel
- Peter and the Apostles

A silhouette of a person standing on a hill, looking up with one hand raised, against a sunset sky. The scene is framed by two trees on either side.

Acts 5:27-29

[27] And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, [28] saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.” [29] But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.



Illustrations of exceptions:

- Moses' mother
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
- Daniel
- Peter and the Apostles
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer



What should our attitude be if we resist?

- Our submission to God drives us, not our desire to resist, disobey, reject or defy civil authority.