

Our Relationship with Government

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures

Romans 13:1-7 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. ⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

1 Timothy 2:1-4 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Peter 2:13-17 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men -- ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Key Point: We need to show a calm, qualified respect for those in authority, whether they represent our views or not.

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- If you ever received a speeding ticket, what was that experience like? How did you feel?

Start thinking. Ask questions to get your group thinking.

- In Romans 13:1-7, what is Paul's main command for believers in relation to government? What are his reasons for this command?
- What does he say is the "job description" of the civil government? Do you feel like there are certain roles government should have, but that Paul doesn't address them here?
- In Titus 3:1 and 1 Tim 2:1-4 does Paul add anything to what the roll of government is, or how Christians are to relate to it?
- In 1 Pet 2:13-17, does Peter agree with Paul? Does he add anything?
- According to Acts 5:12-29, what are legitimate reasons for civil disobedience?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- How similar is your attitude toward the authorities with the one Paul commands here?
- Do you tend to have too high a view, or too low a view, of the authorities God has established over you?
- Are there any ways in which you are being called to courageously disobey an authority in order to obey God?
- In Sunday's message we were told we need to show a calm, qualified respect for those in authority, whether they represent our views or not. How are you giving the authorities your calm, qualified respect?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week!

- Pray through 1 Tim 2:1-4 for specific authorities this week.

Prayer Requests. It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

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