

**The Epistle to the Romans
(Special English Edition)**

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God's Righteousness Applied

Reading assignment: Romans 13

Introduction

We are still discussing righteousness. Not imputed righteousness. We have that in Christ by the gift and grace of God (1 Corinthians 1:30; Romans 3:21-22). Here, as in Chapter 12 and in the balance of the Epistle, Paul presents righteousness for Christian living.

Doctrine is of little value until you adopt it into your heart and you show it in your life.

In this lesson, you will see the way the Christian practices righteousness in his feelings and duties toward human government. The advice in this chapter is not always easy to accept or to understand every situation, but we will try to show you the truth and the will of God for Christians everywhere.

Importance of this Lesson

- Perhaps the most important phrase is *for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law*. Romans 13 is not limited to instruction regarding responsibility to existing governments. Verses 8-10 command and define love. Verses 11-14 beg us to prepare for the coming of Christ.
- It is important to remember that if we love people, we will obey the laws of God and man. If we love Christ, we will prepare for His return.

THE LESSON

- Outline:**
- A. The Christian's Obligation – Romans 13:1-7
 - B. The Christian's Means of Application – Romans 13:8-10
 - C. The Christian's Motivation – Romans 13:11-14

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION – Romans 13:1-7

- A. Verse 1 – *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*
 - 1. It was necessary for Paul to clarify our duty as Christians toward human government.
 - a. It was difficult for many Jews to submit to idolatrous Roman authority. This was because of Deuteronomy 17:15. This verse said that they must not have a "stranger (foreigner)" for a ruler.
 - b. According to Acts 18:2, the Roman Emperor Claudius did not allow any Jews to live in Rome. Some Jews stayed in Rome and it was natural for them to rebel and hate the government.
 - 2. We learn from the Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:5-6) that human government is an institution that God Himself established. God gave it the power to punish people by putting them to death. We must still obey such a government.
 - a. Daniel 4:17 says, "...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." Daniel 4:25 says, "...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."
 - b. In John 19:11, Jesus said to Pilate, "...Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...."

- c. From all this we learn the following: God established human government. God is an absolute King. God allows men to have governments, but God still rules over the nations. Men may rule but God over-rules. Every government receives its power from God.
 3. *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.*
 - a. The word “every” certainly includes unbelievers, but remember that Paul here, as throughout the epistle, was teaching believers.
 - b. The word *subject* is a military term that means to obey without question.
 - c. Paul wrote this same advice to Titus. “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Titus 3:1). And Peter agrees fully with Paul in 1 Peter 2:13,14 “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors....”
 4. *...the powers that be are ordained of God.*
 - a. *To be ordained* means, that something is established, it is set up and set aside for a reason – the reason here is to regulate human affairs.
 - b. From this we learn four things:
 - 1) No one is excused from this duty.
 - 2) The apostles all agreed completely about the Christian’s duty to human government.
 - 3) God established Human governments and we must respect and obey them.
 - 4) This verse alone is a sharp condemnation of lawlessness in that time and today. It is a blow to those who oppose, and try to overthrow present governments.
 5. The question naturally arises – What should a Christian do about his loyalty to Christ when he is living under a government that is against Christians? Note carefully the following:
 - a. Christians have two citizenship (Philippians 1:20,21).
 - b. We must pray for and honor those who are in authority. We also have a duty to obey God when government commands us to do that which we know is against the will of God (1 Timothy 2:1-3).
 - 1) Daniel refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar’s idol. Daniel said, “...God... will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods...” (Daniel 3:17-18). Daniel prayed in the open and violated the law of King Darius (Daniel 6:10).
 - 2) In Acts 4:19-20, Peter and John violated the instructions of the Sanhedrin. They said “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”
 - 3) And, in Acts 5:29, Peter said, “...We ought to obey God rather than men.”
 - ◆ *Keep in mind that through the centuries millions of believers have lost their lives – not for willfully defying their government, but for obeying what they knew to be the will of God.*
- B. Verse 2 – *...resisteth the power, resisteth...God... and... shall receive... damnation* (or judgment).
1. When we rebel against a government that God established we oppose that which a sovereign God has ordained.
 2. The condemnation or judgment such rebels receive is from both God and the government they oppose.
 3. Millions of misguided Christians believe it is their duty to overthrow the present government. Christians have no such command! The great commission is a great operation to save people. We are not here to change the world. Christ will do that when He returns. Our duty is to win as many souls to Christ as we can before He returns.
- C. Verses 3-4 – *For rulers are not a terror to good works,... do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.*
1. Do you want to stop fearing the government? Then do right, behave yourself and don’t unnecessarily violate the law. The government normally praises law-abiding citizens.
 2. *...not a terror...* – not only SOME governments or CERTAIN rulers, but God set up all governments to judge the evil, not the good. Read 1 Peter 2:14. Governments everywhere abused Paul but he never recommended that people should over-throw the government.

3. A Christian must not be a part of rebel movements. He must not take part in rebellions. His duty is to obey the established government.
 4. *For he is the minister of God to thee for good.* We all need to keep in mind that rulers are God's servants! When we obey rulers we obey God. When we oppose them we rebel against God's sovereign purpose.
 - ◆ *Remember what we taught you. We must obey God rather than man when man commands us to do that which we know is contrary to God's will.*
 5. *...he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath...."*
 - a. The sword is a picture of power to punish crimes by death.
 - b. 1 John 3:4 says..."sin is the transgression of the law." The word translated "law" is a very strong word meaning "lawlessness." Lawlessness or opposition against the power of God is sin.
 - c. Lawlessness not only opposes God, it destroys the social system of a nation.
- D. Verses 5-7
1. Paul advises us here to submit to the government for two reasons:
 - a. The "wrath" is the anger of the governments (verse 4).
 - b. As for conscience, it is impossible for a Christian to break the law and not feel a stab in his conscience. We must try to have a good conscience before God (1 Peter 2:19; Hebrews 13:18; 2 Corinthians 1:12).
 2. Christians must pay their taxes! This is the method by which governments fulfill their work as God's servants (verse 6). Dean Alford quotes Tertullian (an early church father) as saying, "That which the Romans lost by the Christian's refusing to bestow gifts on their temples, they gained by their conscientious payment of their taxes."
 3. Christians must give honor to those people to whom honor is due, but we must also give recognition to whom recognition is due (verse 7). Christians must never hate anyone. We must give honor to those people who hold high and honorable positions. We must respect and honor all men. We must pay the taxes that they ask us to pay (1 Peter 2:17).
 4. The power of the love of God in the heart of a Christian is what gives him grace to submit to human government.
 5. The Bible says much about love. If you do not have it, whatever else you may have is of no profit (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

II. THE CHRISTIAN MEANS OF APPLICATION – Romans 13:8-10

- A. Verse 8
1. *Owe no man anything but to love one another...* – We should avoid as much as possible becoming indebted to the world in material things. But love is a continual obligation.
 2. To really love another is to fulfill the law! Read Galatians 5:13,14; 1 John 4:7,8,11. One cannot be "lawless" when love fills his heart.
- B. Verse 9 – Here Paul named five of the great commandments. Then he said that these and any other commandments are fulfilled in this one saying: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* This verse is taken from Leviticus 19:18.
- C. Verse 10 – *Love worketh no ill to its neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* See also Galatians 5:14. Good sense tells us that we are not going to destroy that which we delight in or that which we highly respect. So, if we love others, including the leaders of our government, we will not oppose them or try to overthrow them by force.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S MOTIVATION – Romans 13:11-14

These verses tell us that Christ may return at any time. It is advice as to how we should live in consideration of this glorious event. The return of Christ, which may happen at any time causes us to fulfill our duty to human governments and to obey them. Our love to all people is our inspiration.

A. Verse 11 – *And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

1. Christians understand the time or times in which they live. They must understand how this is connected to the return of Christ. We should not be ignorant about all the many prophetic fulfillments that come to pass in our world which show that the end of the age is at hand (2 Timothy 3:1; 1 Timothy 4:1).
2. This passage is a warning about the shortness of time, the lateness of the hour, and the imminent return of Christ. "...the time is short..." (1 Corinthians 7:29) "But the end of all things is at hand..." (1 Peter 4:7). Note the constant emphasis in the Bible on imminency concerning Christ's return for His Church. (Imminency means that Christ may return at any time.)
3. Christ rebuked the Pharisees. He said, "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." The Pharisees, of all people, should know the prophecies about the first coming of Christ in Bethlehem, but they were "blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:14; 16:3,4). We must not be blind to the time in which we live in the same way.
4. *...it is high time to awake...* – Paul made a similar plea in Ephesians 5:14 with a free translation of Isaiah 60:1, "...awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Surely this is not the day for Christians to be stuck in the mud of laziness and indifference. If this warning was important in Paul's day, it is much more needed today.
5. Why? "Our salvation is nearer than when we believed." I believe that Paul lived with the expectation that Christ might come at any time. See also 1 Thessalonians 4:17. We should live in the same expectation because we must understand that we are much closer to the completion of our salvation.

B. Verse 12 – *The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

For us, the night of darkness of sin will soon pass away. Christ will soon appear. What should we do?

1. *...cast off the works of darkness...* – Ephesians 5:8 says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." Ephesians 4:22,24 says, "...put off concerning the former conversation (manner of life) of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...and...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Read also Colossians 3:8-10.
 - a. Hebrews 12:1 says, "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us..."
 - b. Before we met Christ we all lived in darkness and were a part of that darkness (Ephesians 5:8; Acts 26:18; 1 Peter 2:9). But now we are to put off and put on.
2. *...put on the armour of light...* – The armour is the uniform God gave us to wear. Ephesians 6:11-17 describes this uniform. Here in Romans it is called *the armour of light*.
 - a. In 1 Thessalonians 5:5, Paul says, "Ye are all the children of light... not...of darkness."
 - b. Ephesians 5:8 states "...but now are ye light in the Lord..."
 - c. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world.... Let your light so shine...."
 - d. We must shine for Christ in this dark world because we wear the uniform of truth, righteousness, preparedness, faith and salvation.

C. Verse 13 – Here Paul lists the sins and the way of living that we must put away: drunkenness, reveling, all immorality, wanton living, strife and envy should have no part in our lives.

D. Verse 14 – *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

1. In Galatians 3:27, Paul says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." He writes many times about our being "in Christ" (Philippians 3:9; Colossians 1:28, 2:7).

2. Christ, who is the Light of the World (John 8:12), said, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."
3. Christ Himself is the uniform which we use to stand against the evil of our day and fight against the desires of our flesh. Note Romans 8:3,4; Galatians 5:16 and Galatians 2:20.
 - ◆ *Concerning the word "provision," I must point out that this refers to an attitude of mind that is secretly planning to satisfy the flesh at some time. Don't do it! Remember the words of Galatians 5:24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."*
 - ◆ *Don't let your old flesh get a toe inside the door. Don't allow any situation in which the flesh can flourish.*

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS
EXAM - LESSON 21

Name _____

Address _____

-
1. Doctrine is of great value when it is: (Value 7 points)
 - a. known in the mind.
 - b. experienced in your heart.
 - c. studied in doctrine books.
 2. It was necessary for Paul to clarify the Christian's responsibility to human government because: (Value 7 points)
 - a. he did not want Christians to be killed.
 - b. the Roman government was very cruel.
 - c. many Jews had difficulty submitting to idolatrous Roman authority.
 3. God established human government: (Value 7 points)
 - a. in the days of Noah.
 - b. in the days of David.
 - c. in the days of Elijah.
 4. When an evil government asks a believer to do things he knows violate (or contradict) God's will, his responsibility is to: (Value 7 points)
 - a. obey the government anyway.
 - b. remember he has a greater obligation to obey God.
 - c. leave the country for another country.
 5. The meaning of Romans 13:2 is that: (Open Bible) (Value 7 points)
 - a. Christians may rebel against the government but they may not overthrow it.
 - b. Christians are not responsible to overthrow an existing government.
 - c. Christians may criticize the government at any time.
 6. Paul's reaction to abuse suffered from the government was that: (Value 7 points)
 - a. he tried to start a revolution to overthrow it.
 - b. he spoke out against those governments he did not agree with.
 - c. he never advocated the overthrow of even an abusive government.
 7. Concerning payment of taxes, the believer: (Value 7 points)
 - a. should pay taxes as required by the government.
 - b. is under no biblical obligation to pay taxes.
 - c. must decide for himself which taxes he will pay.
 8. A Christian finds grace to submit to human government by: (Value 7 points)
 - a. a personal decision.
 - b. the power of the love of God in his heart.
 - c. the power of the command of the church.

9. The believer's obligation to every person is that he should: (Value 7 points)
 - a. show love in his daily contacts.
 - b. become indebted to the world in material things.
 - c. gain as much material wealth as possible.

10. The believer's motivation in his relationship to others and the government should be: (Value 7 points)
 - a. the imminent return of Christ.
 - b. to try to win them to Christ.
 - c. to bring glory to God.

11. The warning in Romans 13:11 is that: (Value 7 points)
 - a. those who sleep spiritually will be lost.
 - b. a believer can lose his salvation.
 - c. Christ may return at any time.

12. According to Romans 13:14, to "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" means: (Open Bible) (Value 7 points)
 - a. to take the Lord's supper.
 - b. to obey the will of the Lord Jesus Christ in all things.
 - c. to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior.

13. "Make not provision for the flesh" in Romans 13:14 means: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
 - a. the believer should not worry about having enough food to feed his body.
 - b. the believer should not have an attitude of mind that thinks about giving in to his sinful nature.
 - c. the believer should not crucify the flesh with its lust for the things of the flesh.

14. According to Romans 13:12, two things Paul wanted every believer to do were to:
(Open Bible) (Value 10 points)
 - a. _____.
 - b. _____.