



Romans 13:1-7

SUBMITTING TO AUTHORITY

Outrage is weakness. It is the muting of rational thinking and the triumph of emotion. Despite what you've been hearing and seeing as of late, it is not a virtue. It is not something to be celebrated, nor praised, nor aspired to. It is a deeply human emotion—even understandable at times—but rarely is it productive, virtuous, or useful. It is an emotion to overcome, not accept, and overcoming it requires mental strength. ...Outrage is the newfound tendency to reflexively assume the worst of intentions when reacting to news or commentary or political discourse, and default into an emotionally driven hatred of the "other," whoever that may be. ...[My] basic message to you is this: if you are losing your cool, you are losing. If you are triggered, it is because you allowed someone else to dictate your emotional state. If you are outraged, it is because you lack discipline and self-control. These are personal defeats, not the fault of anyone else. And each defeat shapes who you are as a person, and in the collective sense, who we are as a people.

—Dan Crenshaw, US Representative and Former Navy SEAL

Paul's exhortations in Romans 12 remind us that the only logical response to the abundant mercies of God are a complete surrender to Him, a daily renewal of our minds with His truth, a humble assessment of ourselves, a focus on using our gifts for the benefit of others, a genuine love for one another, a giving of blessing, even to our enemies, a pursuit of peace with everyone, and a resolve to not be overcome with evil but to overcome evil with good.

Now, in Romans 13, Paul hits a topic that would have been on the minds of the believers who lived in Rome. *How do we respond to the governing authorities who rule over us?*

This is highly relevant to our own day as well since we live in an increasingly politicized, polarized society, with access to 24/7 news from every imaginable source, which tends to push us toward more and more fear, hatred, and cynicism.

THE OVERRIDING PRINCIPLE

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities (13:1a).

WHY SHOULD WE SUBMIT?

1. **Theological Reason: God is a God of _____.**

In submitting to authority, we are acknowledging God's authority over all of life and His design of authority structures within society.

Let not the evil of any provocation that is given you have such a power over you, or make such an impression upon you, as to dispossess you or yourselves, to disturb your peace, to destroy your love, to ruffle and discompose your spirits, to transport you to any indecencies, or to bring you to study or attempt any revenge. —Matthew Henry

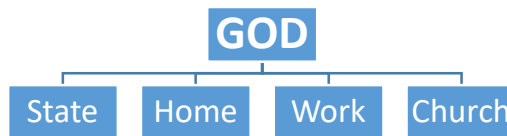
The default position of the Christian (every Christian) to the state (any state) is to submit. —Timothy Keller

The state is a divine institution with divine authority. Christians are not anarchists or subversives. ...We are to submit right up to the point where obedience to the state would entail disobedience to God. —John R. W. Stott

There are four main models of the church-state relationship:

1. State over Church
2. Church over State
3. State and Church Merged Together
4. State and Church Separate but Working in Partnership

The Trinity is the model of equality in essence with hierarchy in order (Father-Son-Holy Spirit). God has provided an order (*tasso*) for all of life. To live within this order is to live in submission (*hupotasso*, “under the arrangement”) while to resist/fight this order is to live in rebellion (*antitasso*, “against the arrangement”).



2. Practical Reasons

- You do not have to live in _____ of “being caught” (13:3a).
- You will receive _____ from the authority (13:3b).
- You will not have to face _____ (13:4).
- You can have a clear _____ (13:5).

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?

Paul is speaking of a general principle that should be our “default” position in all of life. Government, in God’s design, has the God-given responsibility of promoting good actions and punishing evil actions. When government turns this on its head and demands that which is against God’s commands, then we respectfully choose to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29; cf. Exodus 1; Daniel 3, 6; Acts 4).

HOW DO WE SUBMIT?

- **P** _____ your taxes (cf. Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25).
- **R** _____ your leaders (cf. 1 Peter 2:17; James 3:5-10).
- **A** _____ your gifts, freedoms, and rights and utilize them for the advance of the gospel (cf. Acts 22:25; 25:9-12).
- **Y** _____ to God above all (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; Ps. 46:10-11).

PRAY for your leaders in all spheres of life! (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

Those who serve the state as legislators, civil servants, magistrates, police, social workers, or tax collectors are just as much “ministers of God” as those who serve the church as pastors, teachers, evangelists, or administrators. —John R. W. Stott

Rightly exercised, civil disobedience is divine obedience. When Christians engage in such activities, it must always be to demonstrate their submissiveness to God not their defiance of government. —Charles W. Colson

You cannot make men good by law; and without good men you cannot have a good society. —C. S. Lewis

Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other. —John Adams

There is no doubt that the church of the Reformation is not encouraged to get involved directly in specific political actions of the state...because the true church of Christ lives by the gospel alone. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*When the distinctive duties of pastors are canvassed, the priority of the ministry of the Word and prayer is paramount. These ministers preach and teach and evangelize. Yet at the same time Christians are busy serving as salt in a corrupt world, as light in a dark world. ...[We must] distinguish between the forms of ministry and service in which the church **as a church** engages and the forms of ministry and service in which Christians belonging to those churches engage.* —D. A. Carson