

Sermon Title: The Christian's Responsibility To Human Authority, Part 1

Sermon Text: Romans 13:1-2

Sermon Purpose: To call the transformed minded Christian to a lifestyle of witnessing submission.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 realities that should cause a submissive response to governing authorities.

Introduction: The ideal is that salvation, sovereignty, and sanctification impacts relationships associated with the transformed mindset and lifestyle.

- I. The Christian's 1st responsibility to human authority is subjection. V.1a
- II. The Christian's 2nd responsibility to human authority is to realize the source. V.1b
- III. The Christian's 3rd responsibility to human authority is submissiveness. V.2

I. The Christian's 1st responsibility to human authority is subjection. V.1a

The Greek word for subjection is used of a soldier's absolute obedience to their superior officer because of the position they hold. Scripture provides one basic exception to this command: when obedience to civil authority would require disobedience to God or God's Word.

Exodus 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.

Daniel 3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. **17** "If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. **18** "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Daniel 6:7 "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Acts 4:19-20 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. **20** "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Acts 5:28-29 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" **29** But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

The term governing authorities would include every position of civil authority without regard to competency, morality, reasonableness, or any other criteria. (**Titus 3:1-2**)

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, **12** that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 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.

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.

Subjection to governing authorities is an aspect of the “good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.” That the believer is to approve of. (12:2)

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

To subject or submit oneself is to recognize the place of hierarchy of authority according to the plan of God. To acknowledge as a general rule that certain people or institutions have been delegated God ordained “authority” over others is the result of a transformed life and mind. In the Scriptures Paul urges Christians to subject themselves voluntarily to their governments (**Titus 3:1**), to spiritual leaders (**1 Corinthians 11:6**), and to “one another” (**Ephesians 5:21**) and he calls Christian slaves to submit to their masters (**Titus 2:9**).

II. The Christian’s 2nd responsibility to human authority is to realize the source. V.1b

A. God either allows or causes all authority to exist for His purposes.

This indicates God’s sovereignty over human affairs. God is the sovereign God of the universe, He is the ultimate ruler of the universe.

Psalm 62:11 God has spoken once, Twice I have heard this: That power *belongs* to God.

Psalm 103:19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.

1 Timothy 6:15 which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

God has instituted four basic institutions of authority on earth.

1. Government over all citizens.
2. The church over all believers.
3. The parents or home over all children.
4. Marriage

Daniel 4:17 `This decision *is* by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'
And

John 19:10-11 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" **11** Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

Demonstrates that there is a universally accepted and applicable truth about the ultimate source of the origin of authorities and rulers. No authority, ruler, or government hold their place except by permission of the God of the universe and everyone of them exist because of God.

B. God appoints all authorities that exist.

Human government’s authority derives from and is defined by God. God is the one who, has instituted the concept of human government to reward good and to restrain sin in an evil, fallen world. Those authorities are to be respected and honored as government officials as God’s agents for maintaining order and justice in human society. (**1 Peter 1:1; 2:13-17; Acts 16:25; 1 Peter 3:17; 4:15-16**)

“In his significant book *Toward a Biblical View of Civil Government*, Robert D. Culver writes, Churchmen whose Christian activism has taken mainly to placarding, marching, protesting, and shouting might well observe the author of these verses [Romans 13:1-7] and then they might observe him first at prayer, then in counsel with his friends, and, *after that*, preaching in the homes and marketplaces. When Paul came to be heard by the mighty, it was to defend his action as a preacher (albeit in the streets) of [the] way to heaven.”

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p. 213.]

III. The Christian's 3rd responsibility to human authority is submissiveness. V.2

A. Christians must realize the command applies to all believers and unbelievers. V.2a

B. Christians must realize violation of this command is really opposing God. V.2b

This illustrates why rebellion against government is really rebellion against God, and it does not matter whether it's violent or non-violent in its expression.

C. The Christian must realize your opposition to God ordained authority demands judgment. V.2c

This judgment can demonstrate itself in two ways.

1. First, the government bears the (sword) the power and right to judge those who violate the law or do evil. (Example – Peter) v.3

Matthew 26:52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

2. Secondly, the judgment here can be the eschatological judgment of God: those who regularly by attitude or action oppose the authorities established by God, (which are all governments, v.1) will be a risk of suffering condemnation for their opposition.

a) Under the Mosaic law punishment had several objectives.

1) It was administered as a matter of justice for appropriate retribution of a crime.

Deuteronomy 19:21 "Your eye shall not pity: life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

2) Punishment was to be a deterrent to crime, to discourage the guilty person from committing further crime and to discourage others from following his unlawful example.

3) The Mosaic law required impartiality.

Deuteronomy 13:6 "If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,

4) Punishment was to be without delay.

Deuteronomy 25:2 "then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

5) Again with the exception of execution, Old Testament law provided for pardon and rehabilitation. Once an offender paid his penalty, he was to be accepted back into society as a respectable citizen.

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p.221-222]

Conclusion: The proper Christian attitude about government and to government is subjection, because God is the source of the origin of all governments, therefore modeled submission that is reflective of a transformed life and mind is the proper response. The submission of Christ, the Apostles, and the early church provides an example for modern day times. This attitude and response will do more to win people to Jesus Christ, than all the rebellion, marches, protests, and slander in the world. Yes, we must try to improve government; but physical force, physical rebellion, burning, looting of the businesses, homes, and physical personhood of someone else is sin before a Holy, Sovereign God.