

Romans 13 Discussion Guide

In this last section of Romans, Paul writes what it looks like to do life God's way for those that are in Christ. So far we have studied what it means to be a proper believer in regards to ourselves (12:1-2), the church (12:3-8) and society (12:9-21). In today's study, we consider what it looks like to live as a citizen of God's kingdom, as a stranger and alien of this land, toward the government under which you live (13:1-7) and toward our neighbor (13:8-10). Paul knows that to live as proper citizens of this land and to love our neighbor as yourself takes another life working in and through us as he concludes this section with the exhortation to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh (13:14).

Questions for discussion

1. What is your gut reaction when being told to do something by someone else?
2. In what ways do we try to get around the challenge of submitting to authorities?
3. Read verses 1-5. What different reasons does Paul give as to why we should obey government authorities?
4. According to verses 3-4, what is one responsibility of governmental authorities?
5. According to verses 6-7, what does submission to authority look like in practice?
6. To what extent (if any) is it right to use satire, sarcasm, or ridicule toward government leaders in view of verse 7?
7. It is OK for a Christian in America to say the pledge of allegiance? It is possible to be allegiant to God and something else?
8. Scenario 1: Imagine you are a Christian farmer living in colonial America and hear about a bunch of politicians in Philadelphia have declared independence from Great Britain and now General Washington wants you to join his revolutionary army.

Scenario 2: You're living in Germany in the 1930's when Adolph Hitler comes to power. You watch with horror as he begins systematically exterminating the Jews. You hear about a plot to assassinate Hitler and you're invited to join the conspiracy. If Hitler could be killed, it could conceivably save the lives of millions of Jews.

Question: You are aware of Romans 13, which commands you to be subject to the governing authorities. What should and would you do in the above scenarios?

9. Is it ever OK, to act in disobedience to the government? How do we make this determination? Acts 4:19-20, 5:29; Daniel 3, Daniel 6.
10. How is it that love is the fulfillment of the law? John 13:34-35; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14
11. How does one practically put on the Lord Jesus Christ? make no provision for the flesh?