Homework: Read through Romans 13 each day. Circle any words or phrases that you see frequently repeated. Mark what you think is the most important/key verse in Romans 13.

Notes

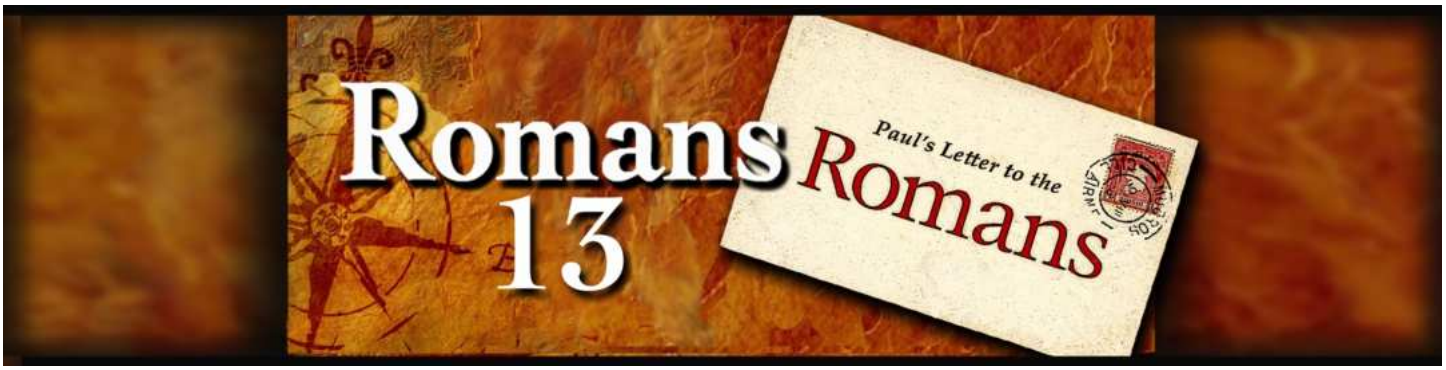
Romans 13

(ESV)

Chapter Title

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no
authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by
God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has
appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a
terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who
is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,
4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for
he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an
avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one
must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake
of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities
are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed
to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is
owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.
8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves

another has fulfilled the law. [9] For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. [11] Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. [12] The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. [14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.



REVIEW

The first 11 chapters of Romans are a very clear and detailed explanation of the **Doctrines of the Christian faith**, the New Covenant between God and His chosen/elect people from among both Jews and Gentiles, redeemed and eternally saved by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ alone who paid the price for the sins of His elect, rescuing them from eternal judgment and damnation. This is the only means to **become righteous in God's eyes**, by His work alone, with **nothing** added or provided by His people. These doctrines form the essential foundation of **what a Christian must understand, believe, and think**.

Romans 12 shifts from the doctrinal aspects of becoming righteous before God to **the practical aspects of how a Christian must act**, focusing on how to daily live out the righteousness that God has given, especially in relationship to others. **(JM–LFL-1)**

1. In 12:1, what does it mean to be in right relationship with God?

2. In 12:2, how does Paul characterize believers' relationship to the world?

3. How does he explain our relationship with the church? (12:3-8)

4. What details does Paul provide for governing our relationships with all people in general? (12:19-21)

Read Romans 13:1-5

Moving into Chapter 13, Paul continues to instruct believers about righteous living in their relationships with the rest of the world and what obligations believers have to the secular world, beginning with how they/we are to relate to the government. Christians faced persecution from various sources in first century AD and pressure from the Roman government in Rome, the Holy Land, and throughout Asia Minor. Paul knew that believers needed instruction for how to conduct themselves under such governance. Today they are just as relevant to us, but a twenty-first century modern, secular mindset can certainly chafe at the concept of submission/subjection.

Key Doctrine #16 in Romans

Submission/Subjection to Authority—Submission is a **conscious, purposeful** yielding of one's will or authority to another. To submit is to surrender to the choice or control of someone else. Broadly, submission involves participants organized into some type of hierarchy to serve a certain purpose, attain a goal, or fulfill a vision. Consequently, the success of that purpose, goal or vision cannot be achieved without this type of arrangement. Biblical submission requires a person to **intentionally** yield their life to God's will and choices. It further means **deliberately** yielding to the authority of the people and institutions which God has appointed. **(GQ-BDS)**

> "Christians have always had to face this issue, and even to struggle with it, where the church has found itself in all kinds of places, in all kinds of governments, under all kinds of rulers, with all kinds of perspectives and forms of leading and ruling." **(JM–CRG-1)**

Americans, as well as some other western societies, have been blessed to experience a Christian-influenced society, but most of the rest of the world have been forced, at best, to contend with less than benevolent forms of government and at the worst, extremely cruel, evil leaders—precisely the situation which the first-century Roman believers faced.

It might be easy for us to interpret these verses from our American cultural and biblical paradigm, but Paul is not thinking about any specific form of human government—democracy, aristocracy, oligarchy, monarchy, or socialism, communism or dictatorship—or saying that only one form of government is ordained by God. He's speaking in broad, general terms about **all** human government **anywhere** in the world and at **any time** in history (past, present, or future). **The institution of government comes from the mind and will of God.** **(RP)**

5. What are the key foundational principles for the believer's response to government addressed in this section? (1-5)

6. Generally, in what ways do believers tend to follow or not follow these standards? Why or why not?

7. What rationale does Paul give for **every** Christian to *"be subject to the governing authorities?"* (1) (**Daniel 2:21, Psalm 62:11, John 19:11**)

The word "authority" can have broad meaning, and can often be both misunderstood and misused. The Greek word, ***exousia***, means "privilege" or "right." Therefore, an authority is anyone who has the **right** to do something. Inherent within the meaning/understanding of authority is the premise that power and responsibility must be **GIVEN by someone greater** than the one who will exercise their authority or power over others. Practically, if your boss/job gives you the right and responsibility to make certain decisions while you are on the job, then you are an "authority" on the job, so simply, an authority is anyone who has the **right** to make decisions that directly affect the lives of others. In reality, each one of us lives in two 'worlds' at the same time—we **have** authority in certain areas of life, and we are **under** authority in other areas. **(RP)**

Key Points to Understanding Biblical Authority

1. **God's Authority is Above All other Authorities—**As Creator and Lord, He is sovereign over everything. Human institutions and positions of authority are subordinate to God, therefore submission to the government or other authorities is always **subject to ultimate allegiance and obedience to Him**. (**Acts 5:27-29, 33-42**) **(BH-OR)** God's will on earth extends to literally every aspect of life, for believers and unbelievers. His plans and purposes are absolute, and His will cannot be altered. What He has determined, He will fully accomplish; no government nor person can obstruct His will! (**Psalm 115:3, Daniel 4:34-35, Isaiah 14:26-27**) **(GQ-CVP)**

2. **God is the Ultimate Source of Authority—**Paul clearly states that authorities have been **authorized and specifically appointed by God**; they are **responsible to keep order in society, raise taxes, govern business and society, maintain a standing army, protect life and property, etc.** Admittedly, not all authorities are godly, but they temporarily hold **legitimate positions determined by God**, and further, it's clear from God's Word that He has divinely placed those in authority, whether they are godly or tyrants, and they will serve God's own purposes, and He will ultimately hold them to account. (Hebrews 13:17) **(BH-OR)** Most laws and requirements delivered by honest and just authorities are typically impartial and advance societal and moral law (e.g. following traffic laws). Observing these laws preserves peace and order, and demonstrates good citizenship. (1 Peter 2:13-14) **(JDIL)**

3. **The Command is to Submit, Not to Worship—**Submission is not the same as unconditional obedience or commitment. Jesus, Paul, nor any of the other authors of Scripture supported or commanded worship or adulation to Caesar, any other person, or establishment. The command to submit was a demand for believers to **fulfill legitimate civic responsibilities** in order to lead responsible and peaceable lives. (Matthew 17:24-27, Matthew 22:17-21) **(BH-OR)**

4. **Civic Responsibility and Testimony—**Submission to properly operating civil authority demonstrates **good citizenship, support for a stable society, and provides a testimony** for the wider culture. Obedience shows integrity and diligence when those rules do not violate God's commands. (Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Peter 2:12) **(BH-OR)**

Christians most certainly have differing thoughts about submission. Paul's directives seem quite straightforward and unambiguous, even explicit—no ifs, ands, or buts—yet neither are they simple. The perspectives of **five Bible teachers** add some unique 'flavor' to the command to *"be subject to the governing authorities."*

John MacArthur

> "...throughout the history of the church, there have been revolutions in the name of Christianity where people decided that the Christian thing to do was to revolt militarily against the government that's in power, and demand their rights.... Christians have struggled with this, and sometimes they have rightly understood what their role was, and sometimes they have overturned their God-given role and become revolutionary.
>
> "Some Christians have decided that since they have received bad treatment from certain governments, it is justifiable for them to war against those governments.... There are those people who feel that America was borne out of a revolution which was justified, and we had every right to load up our guns and kill Englishmen for the sake of our religious freedom.... The truth of the matter is that our own nation was borne out of a violation of this biblical text... in the name of Christian freedom.
>
> "...our government no longer upholds the Bible as a source of truth, Biblical morality as a source of what is right, and we are fast seeing all of that kind of thing eroding from our country. And so some people believe that we, as Christians then, because America seems to be losing its Christian orientation, have a right to protest, have a right to defy the law, to break the law." **(JM–CRG-1)**

Ray Pritchard

> "Submission means believing that God is able to accomplish his will in my life through those he has placed in authority over me. That's a crucial definition because it focuses the attention on God, not on the person over you. We all have to contend at times with unsaved husbands, mean-spirited parents, cranky bosses, and teachers who can't wait for the end of the semester. Sometimes we'll work for people we can't stand. Or live with people who treat us cruelly. Or suffer under a government that consistently promotes evil.

"The most important thing is the attitude of your heart. You submit to the one in authority in the sense that you believe that God has put that person in your life for a purpose and that God's will is somehow being done in you through that person even if you don't see it and don't understand it." **(RP)**

John Piper

In verse four, the ruler is *'God's servant for your good . . . an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer'* (13:4). And that is the argument for why we should be submissive.... I think he wants to say to Christians, 'Don't get your back up so easily, because being wronged by a government sends nobody to hell, but being rebellious and angry and bitter and spiteful does send people to hell. And so it is a much greater evil for you to be rebellious than of the government to mistreat you.'" **(JP)**

Ardel Caneday

"We Christians are not exempt from being influenced to read Scripture from our contemporary situation and thus impose our perspective onto the text.

"Scripture calls on us Christians to submit to those who govern us, but this directive is often misunderstood.... **Submission does not mean silence**....[they] **are to follow Paul's example by speaking clearly and biblically to** political issues." (Examples in Paul's life: Acts 16:35–37, Acts 22:25–29, Acts 23:12–35, Acts 25:10–11)

"The gospel Paul preaches and which we Christians embrace with joy obligates us to confess, "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9)! This confession is all-inclusive.... The gospel's affirmation, "Jesus is Lord" is subversive to every human governing official who demands allegiance. Our confession obligates us to denounce ultimate allegiance to governing officials and to announce to the world that Jesus Christ is Lord over every realm, over every domain, over every place, and over every person...." (AC)

Michael Bird

It is worth remembering, though, that 13:1-7 does not give governments a license to do whatever they want to whomever they want and the citizens just have to take it.... 13:1-7 should not be seen as teaching unqualified obedience to the state.... there are occasions when opposition to government is not only required but even demanded by discipleship. Just as we have to submit to governing authorities on the basis of conscience, sometimes we have to resist and rebel against governments because of the same conscience. **(From Romans: The Story of God Bible Commentary, quoted from BM-12)**

8. In light of Scripture, what are your thoughts about MacArthur's, Pritchard's, Piper's, Caneday's, and Bird's perspectives?

"Submission is not the same as obedience, though the two are related. **Obedience relates to outward performance** while **submission touches the attitude of the heart toward those who are over you**. This distinction is critical because you may not always be able to obey those who are over you, but you can always have a heart attitude of submission." **(RP)**

MacArthur believes that there are significant consequences for the world, and obviously for eternity, when Christians become obsessed with purely political objectives, especially when the church is politicized. When the aim becomes national and personal freedom, even "freedom of religion," Biblical truth and priorities are set aside, and ultimately the ministry of the church is prostituted. Politics and individual liberties are not our calling; **we are to be the conscience of our nation by pursuing godly**

living and faithful preaching of God's Word. The Bible does not speak about Christians becoming **involved in politics** or **seeking to promote civil change**, but then it also does not specifically forbid it; God's Word only demands that we become model citizens in our attitudes, actions, and relationships with others, including the government. It's a matter of **the priority of our focus and energies**. **(JM–CRG-1)**

> "Many key people in government...are Christians. Thank God for that. Even in the Old Testament, thank God for Joseph in Egypt, or Daniel in Babylon and Medo-Persia, or Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego, princes in a pagan government. But wherever we are, whether we serve the government or not, we are to live as Christians whose preoccupation, whose priorities, whose perspective is at a different level, a different dimension, than to try to use political means to accomplish spiritual ends." **(JM–CRG-3)**

An interesting picture of Christians in the world can be illustrated by an analogy of a train station. A family of believers are waiting at the station to board the northbound train to heaven. They are surrounded by people who are preparing to board the southbound train, completely unaware of its tragic destination. Should they (we) spend time and energy pleading with them to switch trains? Or do we merely tidy up the train station instead? The answer is obvious, and those who would tidy up the culture for the culture's sake are not only missing the point, they are misunderstanding the reason God leaves us in the world—to be His witness to the lost and condemned. Such a mission is far more *"excellent and profitable for people"* than any amount of social or political activism. (Titus 3:8) **(GQ-CSI)**

Political systems and government at every level in our earthly world are not connected to the kingdom of Christ, in fact all such systems and institutions are in rebellion against God. **(GQ-CSI)** The priorities and responsibilities of the state and those of the church are quite different. The business and burdens entrusted to the state (civil government) require that they *"bear the sword."* (13:4) The Reformation Study Bible and the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith say the state has been "given the ***power* of the sword**"—the legal and legitimate right to enforce justice, including corporal and capital punishment on wrongdoers. **(RSB–CG, LBC, BH-BtS)**

The mission of the church, however, as commanded specifically by Christ Himself, is to **preach the gospel, make disciples, administer the sacraments, build up the souls of its members**, etc. (Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, Acts 1:1-2) These are not the tasks of the state. **(RSB–CG)** The church has not been given the "power of the sword" to punish wrongdoers, nevertheless, believers have been given clear instructions in God's Word for responding to sin within the Body of Christ. (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 2 Thessalonians 3:14, Titus 3:10, Galatians 6:1)

9. In what ways is civil authority different from the authority of the church or church discipline?

Beginning in Romans 13:1, the Greek word for *"be subject"* is identical to the requirement of a soldier to be absolutely obedient to a superior officer; it carries the **obligation** to **submit oneself**, not to be **forced** to submit. A believer should submit to every position of civil authority, regardless of the competency, morality, or decency of that official, including how we may personally view him or think about the laws that are placed upon us. **(JMSB)** We can passionately disagree with our political leaders and strongly oppose their policies and practices, but that does not negate God's commands to submit to their authority and have rightful respect and honor for them. We can never place our faith, trust or hope in any politician or government department to fix the massive predicaments that we all see in society; only Jesus can remedy what's wrong with the world, and one day He will! (**Revelation 21:1-4**) **(SMH)**

And although Paul does not address it here, Scripture makes only one exception to this command to submit to the governing authorities: **when obedience to civil authority would require disobedience to God's Word**. (**Exodus 1:17, Daniel 3:16–18, 6:7, 10, Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29**)

While Paul doesn't explicitly address how Christians are to deal with opposing mandates from the government, bosses, parents, etc., we can learn much from the numerous examples of believers in OT and NT Scriptures who directly defied a law or government decree, or a man/woman of God standing up to an immoral or ungodly ruler. **(BM-12)** The following is a sample list:

- **The Hebrew midwives**—**Exodus 1:15-22**
- **The parents of Moses**—**Exodus 2:1-2**
- **Elijah**—**1 Kings 18**
- **Mordecai**—**Esther 3:1-6**
- **Esther**—**Esther 4**
- **Jeremiah**—**Jeremiah 38:1-6**
- **Daniel's friends**—**Daniel 3**
- **Daniel**—**Daniel 6**
- **The wise men**—**Matthew 2:1-12**
- **Jesus and the disciples**—**Mark 2:23-28**
- **Peter and John**—**Acts 4:1-22**
- **The apostles**—**Acts 5:17-42**
- **Paul and Silas**—**Acts 16:16–40** **(BM-12)**

10. What did you observe from the godly men and women above?

Jesus recognized that the church and the state were both necessary, yet separate; He recognized the **value of the government in society** as ordained by God for the purposes of **maintaining order, promoting peace, protecting the innocent and the good, restraining evil and punishing those who**

perpetrate evil in this fallen world. However, He also criticized the abuses of the government, calling Herod a *"fox"* (Luke 13:32) and warning the disciples of *"the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."* (Mark 8:15) He also condemned power for power's sake, making it clear that every ruler possesses **only the authority which is given to him from God.** (John 19:11) **(CB, JMSB)**

In Matthew 23, Jesus was teaching the crowds and the disciples, saying, *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others...."* (Matthew 23:1-5) In essence, Jesus is telling his disciples and the crowd to **do what the scribes and Pharisees tell them to do [when they are teaching truth from the Scriptures], just don't be like them [in their traditions and attitudes]**! **(JM—CRG-2)** The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites, and He continued to denounce them in very strong terms throughout the rest of chapter 23 (known today as 'The Seven Woes').

11. What do you notice about this encounter with the scribes and Pharisees?

> "Jesus came into a world dominated by slavery and by one man rule, the absolute antithesis of democracy, which we believe to be so dear." **(JM—CRG-1)**

Jesus did not come to the earth with power and force to overthrow the tyranny and abuses of Rome; He didn't come to cause social change or deal with political or economic issues, although He could have done all of those things. No; *"the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."* (Luke 19:10) If we are to reach the world for the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, we must exhibit the peaceable kind of life that we possess because of the godliness and virtue that Christ has given us. (**Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 5:8-11, Philippians 2:14-15**) **(JM—GBP)**

As our Sovereign, we are to worship Him alone, **and** we must also live as part of earthly civil society and are responsible to be good citizens. (**1 Peter 2:12, 1 Timothy 6:18-19, Titus 2:7-10**) The Christian is first and foremost a citizen of the Kingdom of God, which is infinitely more important, far and above our citizenship and responsibility to any country, state, city, or other entity. **(CB)**

Considering Paul's authoritative call to believers from Romans 12:1-2, to *"present your* [our] *bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your* [our] *spiritual worship,"* God, through Paul, is calling us to a life of submission—first to Him alone, the sovereign ruler of the universe, and then to the specific authorities on earth which He has instituted: (1) the government over all citizens, (2) the church over all believers, (3) the husband over his wife, (4) parents over all their children, and (5) masters over all their employees. **(JMSB)**

To better understand submission within closer personal relationships (not the government) which God has ordained, we're going to take a short wander to Ephesians 5 and 6, where Paul provides instruction and specific application. The foundation for our submission is found in **Ephesians 5:1-2**.

12. What is that foundation? What are we to do?

Because of **Christ's love for us**, and **our love for Him**, we are to also **walk in love toward others**. We cannot control the attitudes and motivations of other people in our lives, but we have a choice in our own attitudes towards others, specifically the authorities He has placed over us. Ephesians 5:15, 18, 20-21 requires that we *"15 look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.... 18 be filled with the Spirit, ... addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."*

13. How is our attitude visible/lived out in the passage above?

14. How is our attitude related to the attitudes of others toward us?

15. To whom are we to submit? Why? (21)

The Greek grammar of this passage indicates that this **mutual submission is associated with the filling of the Spirit** (verse 18). **(NIVSB)**

> "Spirit-filled people are submissive. That is to say, they are not dominating, they are not proud, they are not self-willed, they do not live by their own agenda - which is, of course, the way people in our culture and our society today live." **(JM–WS)**

The practical purpose of submission to authority in personal relationships is much the same as submission to the government—to maintain order which allows for the proper function of the whole group (family, business, etc.), to promote peace, harmony and cooperation, to protect the innocent or weaker ones who need to be protected, to restrain harmful or corrupting attitudes/actions which could cause destruction to individuals or the entire group, and to punish or guide those who need correction.

> "I guess the most important spiritual attribute that believers have in the assembly of God in the church is humility, because apart from humility, we would have chaos; we would have absolute chaos." (JM–WS)

Positive outcomes for the situations described in Ephesians 5-6, require **each person** in a relationship to have a **conciliatory (peaceable, willing) attitude** that will strengthen the relationship, however we cannot control others' attitudes or actions.

16. How can we keep a proper perspective if/when our authorities do not have a peaceable, willing attitude? (**Hebrews 13:17, Ezekiel 34:7-10**)

17. What is the heart and soul of mutual submission? (**Philippians 2:1-8**) How does Paul describe *"the same mind?"*

Read **Ephesians 5:22-24**.

18. What do you notice about these verses? What thoughts do you have about these verses in light of the things already discussed in this section? (See also **1 Peter 3:1-6**)

Read **Ephesians 5:25-33**.

19. What do you notice about these verses? What thoughts do you have about these verses in light of the things already discussed in this section? (See also **1 Peter 3:7**)

MacArthur shared some enlightening perspective about the previous "troublesome" verses (for those of the "twenty-first century modern mindset").

> "Submission can be seen in the grace of humility, and in the way we respond to one another who serve the Lord, as well as to those who are over us in the Lord.... I really think this is the grace that most women are looking for in a man. You say, 'Wait a minute, aren't men supposed to be the authority in a relationship?' Yes, but it is a submissive kind of authority. I think most women are looking for a humble man, selfless man, a man who is not preoccupied with his own agenda, and his own needs, and his own expression, and his own will, and his own plans, and I know most men are looking for the same in a woman; humbly submissive.
>
> "It is this submissive attitude that makes a marriage work. I don't have any question about the fact that I'm supposed to be the head of Patricia, my wife, and she doesn't have any restraints placed upon her that, in and of itself, are abusive or harsh, because I understand that while I have authority over her given to me from God, I am also commanded to be submissive to her in every area of her needs. This is my objective in dealing with the wife that I adore - it is simply this: Whatever will bring her joy and be to her benefit, I will submit to do, happily, because all I want is her joy and spiritual benefit. It's that simple; it's not complicated, it's not brain surgery. Do I always achieve that end? Ask her - she will tell you no - but do I always desire to achieve that end? Of course. I submit to her joy, to her fulfillment, to what blesses her and encourages her, and exercise my leadership in that way." (JM–WS)

Read **Ephesians 6:1-4**.

20. What do you notice about these verses?

Read **Ephesians 6:5-9**.

21. What do you notice about these verses?

22. Do you have any further thoughts or questions about submission?

Let's merge back onto our main path in Romans 13, picking it up in verses 2-6.

23. What are the implications for resisting authorities? How does Paul connect submission to authorities with a Christian's relationship with God? (**1 Peter 2:13-14, Titus 3:1**)

24. What does Paul argue in verse 4 is one of God's purposes for placing rulers in authority? (**1 Timothy 2:1-2**)

25. What descriptions/terms does Paul use for authorities in verses 4 and 6?

A person who resists authority is setting themselves **against** that authority. **(JFB)** Simply put, one who resists or disobeys the authorities that God has put in place is rebelling against God. **(RSB)** In general terms, most rulers are not *"a terror"* to honest, quiet, and good citizens, but to lawbreakers; even the most wicked, godless governments function as a deterrent to crime. The power of sin and corruption is strong, and unfortunately, the fear of punishment will hold back only a few people from crimes that their hearts are intent on committing. (**1 Timothy 1:8-9**) We know from the whole context of God's Word that what a person says and does is not the measure of righteousness (here, submission), it's what is in the heart of man or woman that is the measure. (**Matthew 21:28-31, Matthew 15:18-19, Mark 7:20-23**) Being *"subject to the governing authorities"* is not JUST a question of NOT committing crimes, but it is, indeed, a question of honoring, respecting, and giving dignity to those in authority over us. **(JM—CRG-1)**

> Georgi Petrovich Vinz was a Russian Baptist pastor (the son of an American missionary), born in 1928, who lived under the tyranny of the Iron Curtain, becoming the Soviet Union's most famous religious prisoner. Through an agreement brokered by U.S. diplomats, he and a group of dissidents were expelled from the Soviet Union in 1979 in exchange for two convicted Soviet spies. When asked what it was like to live in a communist country with tyranny, repression, and total control, he responded, "We obey every law in our nation. Every law. Whether they appear to us to be just or unjust, we obey every law. Except when we are told that we cannot worship or obey the Scripture. But if we are persecuted and if we are imprisoned, and if we are killed, it will be because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Not because of a violation of some law in our nation." **(GV, JM—CRG-1)**

MacArthur defines the *"conscience"* (verse 5) as the **warning system of the soul**, which allows human beings to (1) **carefully consider their motives and actions** and (2) **make moral judgments** concerning what is right and wrong. In order for the conscience to function as God designed, it must be **submitted/conformed to the Holy Spirit through God's Word** because ultimately, only God can accurately judge a person's motives. **(JMSB)**

Read Romans 13:6-7

26. Much like *"Therefore,"* what does *"for because of this...."* refer to at the beginning of verse 6?

27. What is the command or response that believers are to take *"because of this?"*

The Romans taxed the Jews on a plethora of goods, at times to the point of the absurd; the Jews hated the Roman taxes. There are many recorded uprisings/rebellions, even revolts, against those taxes. In fact, the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D. occurred at least partially as a result of the Romans crushing a tax revolt. **(JM–CT)**

Jesus distinctly taught that taxes must be paid (**Mark 12:17**); He demonstrated that by paying taxes that were owed to the pagan Roman government (**Matthew 22:17–21**) as well as the Jewish temple taxes (**Matthew 17:24–27**), though the religious leaders were often as corrupt as the Romans. These taxes were required because the rulers and authorities were directly responsible for the function and benefits of society. Those services had/have to be financed by those who use or profit from them, in operating and maintaining both the civil government and the temple. **(NIVSB, JFB)** The Greek word for *"pay"* in verse 7 specifically means that something is **owed**—wages or debts, and including even non-financial, moral matters—oaths, respect, and honor—as the context of the rest of verse 7 indicates. *"Owed,"* in Greek **(opheilē)**, carries a **strong obligation**, even a **moral obligation** or **personal duty**. **(LW)**

Read Romans 13:8-10

"Owe no one anything" is also **opheilē**, so also a strong obligation. The NIV translates verse 8 as *"Let **no debt remain outstanding**, except the **continuing debt** to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law." "Owe no one anything"* does not mean that believers are prohibited from borrowing money or legal financial transactions that involve interest. Indeed, Scripture regulates how those transactions are to be handled. (**Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35–37, Deuteronomy 15:7–9, Psalm 15:5, Psalm 37:21, 25-26, Ezekiel 22:12-13, Matthew 5:42; Luke 6:34-36**) **(JMSB, PA–13:8)**

28. What are the requirements God places on borrowing and loaning money in these verses?

The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 provides the only instance in the NT when the Lord actually says that it is a wise investment when one puts money in a bank to be used to make interest. The assumption is that the servants are lending out the money their master gave them, making interest on it, which they will then pay back to the master. Obviously, the Lord understands that there are circumstances, especially in business, in which lending is a necessary reality. MacArthur mentions that most of us, believers or unbelievers, could not own a home, but for the fact that we can borrow money. He also reminds us that the borrower makes themselves a servant to the lender, so believers must be wise and prudent. **(JM–LFL-1)**

> "Christians must avoid useless expense, and be careful not to contract any debts they have not the power to discharge.... Do not spend that on yourselves, which you owe to others." **(MHC)**

Additionally, Matthew Henry warns, "Christians must not use any trick or fraud. All smuggling, dealing in contraband goods, withholding or evading duties, is rebellion against the express command of God." **(MHC)**

Even though we may see paragraph divisions and subheadings in our Bibles, like all Scripture, Romans 13 was not divided into verses or paragraphs in the original letter, so we need to pay attention to context and understand when passages are closely connected. Verses 7 and 8 are linked; the exhortation of verse 7 stipulates that the Christian has a **financial obligation** to the state; then Paul expands that principle to include **all obligations**, which must be met when they are due (on time). (**Leviticus 19:13, Proverbs 3:27, Matthew 7:12**)

Financial obligations are usually temporary (or ongoing), but one obligation is permanent—to love others. **(RSB)** Love is the one debt that is never paid off. No matter how much people have loved, they are still obligated to continue to love one another, not just believers, but unbelievers as well. (**John 13:34-35, Matthew 22:38-40, Colossians 3:14**) **(NIVSB)** This verb **(agapao)** expresses the "purest, noblest form of love, which is volitional (personal choice), is not motivated by the recipient's superficial appearance, by one's emotional attraction, or by a sentimental relationship. This quality of love is **not just a feeling** but **ultimately can be known only by the actions it prompts in the one who displays agape love**." **(PA–13:8)**

Paul now demonstrates, in verses 9-10, **HOW** the Law is fulfilled by loving others; he cites four of the five Ten Commandments dealing with our relationships with others; Paul did not address bearing *"false witness against your neighbor."* (**Exodus 20:13-17**) We demonstrate love for our brother by keeping the four commandments Paul lists in verse 9, *"and any other commandment."* We are enabled to keep these commandments only by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us. There is simply no other way. Our sinful, selfish flesh can never truly love our brother! **(PA–13:8)**

The first four of the Ten Commandments focus on our relationship with God, our love for Him and our duties to Him. The 5th-9th commandments emphasize our duties toward our neighbors and govern various interactions and obligations to others. The 10th, (coveting), has to do with our own souls. Those who defy these latter commands reveal evidence for a deep lack of respect and fear for God, and there is certainly no love for their neighbor, whom they have directly violated. The law of God is the law of love (see Matt. 22:38-40 above); therefore, the believer's love for God and genuine love for their neighbor has satisfied the moral obligation expressed in *"that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us,"* by the Father's work through Christ. (**Romans 8:1-4**) **(RSB)**

Christians should be known in the world as people who love, (see John 13:35 above) but what does that mean? MacArthur described love-in-action:

- Love is a matter of teaching truth, saying what needs to be said from the Word of God—*"speaking the truth in love."* (Ephesians 4:15)
- Love involves ministering to the needs of others, giving them personal assistance right where the need is.
- Love is serving one another in a way that causes them to grow, through setting a positive example of the kind of life that leads others toward the Lord, not towards sin.
- Love also covers the sins of others. (**1 Peter 4:8**)
- Love forgives. (**Ephesians 4:32**)
- Love endures. (**Ephesians 4:2, 1 Corinthians 13**)
- Love sacrifices for others. (**John 15:12-15**) **(JM–LFL-1)**

> "All men are our neighbours, and we are to love them as ourselves. We are to do this on the basis of creation, even if they are not redeemed, for all men have value because they are made in the image of God. Therefore they are to be loved even at great cost." **Francis Schaeffer (PA–13:8)**

Love is the very heart of Christian living, the magnet that attracts those who don't yet believe. But how can we love like that? In and of ourselves, it is impossible for us, in our human flesh, to fulfill those 'love-in-action' steps, but God has given us a new capacity for love. (**Romans 5:5**) He has lavishly poured out His love into our hearts, love that is infinitely more than sufficient and beyond description. That love of God becomes the well from which we draw the kind of love we can pour out to others in their need. **(JM–LFL-1)**

Once again, MacArthur uses his own special twist to sum up the Ten Commandments, the whole law, in just two short phrases.

> "'Love Me, love men.' That's it. That is the fullness of the law. On that, hang all the law and the prophets.... I suppose when you look at the Bible, and it's thick, and you see so much in there, and you wonder, 'How can I keep the whole thing? How can I know what all the rules are?' it's very simple. **Love God, love men, do what you want.** You say, 'You're kidding.' No, that's exactly what I mean. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, love your neighbor as yourself, and just go do what you want. And believe me, if you're living in those conditions, what you want will be exactly what God wants. That's how the law is fulfilled. You're not going to kill anybody, you're not going to defile anybody, you're not going to steal from anybody, you're not going to covet what somebody has if you love them." **(JM–LFL-2)** (**Mark 12:28-31, Matthew 22:37-40**)

29. What contrast do you see in verses 9-10?

More than any other New Testament writer, Paul stressed the differences between law and grace. Verses 9-10 are a simple (though certainly not comprehensive) example of the contrast between law and grace—The Law = "You shall not....," and Grace = "You shall...." or "Do this...." Because he delighted in and taught the blessings of God's amazing grace found in the New Covenant, he, therefore, despised and condemned the heresy of antinomianism, which denies and devalues the significance of God's law in the life of the believer. It is the opposite of its twin heresy, legalism. **(RSB–A)**

Those who follow antinomianism ***wrongly assume that the Old Testament was strictly a covenant of law and the New Testament, strictly a covenant of grace***. They have the mistaken belief that they are not required to keep the moral law of God because Jesus freed them from it. **They contend that grace frees believers from the curse of God's law (which is absolutely true), but delivers them from any responsibility to obey God's law (which is absolutely false).** The Old Testament is, in fact, a tremendous confirmation of God's amazing love, restraint, and grace toward His people. Furthermore, the New Testament is full of commandments that believers must obey, not in order to receive God's favor and forgiveness, but in humble gratitude and love for the free gift of grace that God lavishly bestowed on His elect. (**John 14:15, 21, 23, John 15:10, 1 John 5:3, 2 John 6**). The result of antinomianism's destructive ideology is that grace becomes **a license for disobedience. (RSB–A)**

> "Antinomianism's primary error is confusing justification with sanctification. We are justified by faith alone, apart from works. However, all believers grow in faith by keeping God's holy commands—not to gain God's favor, but out of loving gratitude for the grace already bestowed on them through the work of Christ." **(RSB–A)**

In Romans 3:31 Paul wrote, *"Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law."* Love genuinely fulfills the law, accomplishes the true and original intent of the law. However, legalism can only **demand** obedience out of fear or self-interest; the exact opposite of love and grace. (**1 Corinthians 13:1-7**)

Read Romans 13:11-14

In these final verses in Romans 13, Paul shifts our focus from the practical details of how we are to live righteously before the rest of the world and zooms out to a wide-angle, panoramic view so we can remember where this whole process is leading us—the full realization of our salvation at the second coming of Jesus Christ! Each and every day brings us closer to His glorious appearing! **(NIVSB)** (**Romans 8:23, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 1:5**)

At times, the words selected in other Bible translations can help us get a variety of "flavors" for what a passage or verse is communicating. Verses 13:11-12 are excellent examples of the variety of flavors.

Our ESV passage is—[11]*"Besides **this** you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.* [12]*The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."*

The NLT puts it this way, [11]*"**This** is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* [12]*The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living."*

The NIV says, [11]*"And do **this**, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* [12]*The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."*

The LSB tells us, [11]*"And do **this**, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.* [12]*The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light."*

30. What is *"**this**"* referring to that is so urgent?

In these two verses, Paul is almost literally "piling up" time phrases which strongly emphasize the time sensitivity of his message. **(BH)**

31. Mark or list all of the time words/phrases in the four translations above.

Americans are obsessed with time! "What time is it?" may be our very first cognitive thought in the morning, perhaps even before we open our eyes! How many clocks do you have in your house, or on your person? How often do you check your phone or watch to see what time it is, or how much time you have before you need to be at the next place? We are fixated with time! But the most important aspect of time for us is—are we measuring time *correctly*? We seem to be most concerned with what time it is **now**. However, in these verses, and many others, Paul seems to be most interested in what future time is fast approaching—**the end of the present age**. **(BH-BB)**

"What Paul describes in verses 11-14 has happened to me all too often. I go to bed at night. Then in my first waking moments I become increasingly aware of the light. Suddenly it dawns upon me. It is morning! Good grief, what time is it? I grab the clock. Oh no! I have overslept. The day has begun, but I have not. I shed my bed clothes and hastily dress, running from my bedroom to get to the day's duties. I think this is the picture Paul is painting. We have been oversleeping. We need to wake up. The night has passed. The new day is dawning—the day of our Lord's return. We must get about doing those things which remain to be done. We must put off our night clothes and put on clothes appropriate for the work our Lord calls us to do."

Bob Deffinbaugh (BH)

"Sleep" refers to a lack of interest in spiritual things (apathy), laziness, when one is unresponsive and desensitized to the things of the Lord, "stupid, fatal indifference to eternal things." **(JFB)**

32. What is "the night/darkness?" What is "the day/light?" (**John 3:20-21, Ephesians 5:8-9**)

British Theologian John Stott spoke about the use of *"day"* and *"night"* in Scripture, explaining that the Bible divides history into two ages—called ***"the present age"*** ("evil" in **Galatians 1:4**) and ***"the age to come"*** (the time of the Messiah, **Luke 18:29-30**). The *"present age"* in the OT, before Christ, was "like a long dark night, but when the Messiah came [*'the age to come'*], the sun would rise, the day would break, and the world would be flooded with light." (**Isaiah 9:2, Matthew 4:16, John 1:6-9, John 8:12**) We know that Jesus Christ was that long-awaited Messiah, so the new age **began** when He came to earth. He proclaimed that the Kingdom of God had **arrived**! (**Luke 17:20, Mark 1:14-15**) However, the old age has not come to an end, at least not yet! For the time being, the old age and the new age overlap. **(BH–JS)**

At the beginning of Acts (1:1-2), Luke leads with a reminder from his Gospel— ***"…I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen."*** John's Gospel records Jesus' final words from the cross, *"It is finished."* (19:30) On the cross, He finished His work of redemption for us, but the account of Jesus' teaching and deeds continued on through the preaching of "*the apostles whom he had chosen,"* the writing of the New Testament, and continued preaching of the Gospel throughout the world to this very day, this *"present age."*

Ephesians 2:4-6 tells us that *"even when we were dead in our trespasses*, [God] *made us alive together with Christ.... and raised us up with him and seated us with him* [Christ] *in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" These are past events, completed by Christ—finished, done, settled, concluded, accomplished. Christ is NOW seated *"in the heavenly places,"* but where are we? We were raised up and seated WITH Him, and we are still there—seated with Him.

- *God made us alive together with Christ in His resurrection – it is by grace we are saved.* **All who are in Christ are considered spiritually alive, joined again to God for the endless flow of His life.** We cannot lose our salvation because that spiritual connection can only be severed by God, and He won't sever it.
- *God raised us up with Christ.* **All who are in Christ are now considered to be heavenly, not earthly, spiritual, not mortal.** Our place with Christ, where He is, is eternally assured.
- *God seated us with Himself in the heavenly places in Christ.* **All who are in Christ are considered to be once and for all time seated in the heavenly places with God. (GPL)**

We exist in that 'overlap,' living in this *"present age,"* still waiting for *"the age to come"*—for His Second Coming, for the completion of His redemption. (**Romans 8:18-24a**) "Only when Christ comes in glory will the present overlap, then end (**Matthew 24:30-31, Matthew 16:27, Daniel 7:13-14**). The transition period will be over. The old age will finally vanish, and those who belong to it will be

destroyed. The new age will be consummated, and those who belong to it will be fully and finally redeemed." **(BH–JS)**

Today, unbelievers belong **only** to the *"present age,"* and are still in the darkness. But those who belong to Jesus Christ have been transferred into *"the age to come,"* into the light, but our physical, temporal beings are in the overlap, the "now and not yet." **(BH–JS)** (**Colossians 1:13-14**)

33. What are we exhorted to DO as a result of the time? (11-12) (**John 9:4, Titus 2:11-14, 2 Peter 3: 11-14, 1 John 2:28, 1 John 3:2**)

> "Christians are addressed as those who know the seasons, who discern the signs of the times, who regard the present as a period of probation, of discipline, of education, and whose gaze is ever forwards, whose hope is in their Lord's return to judge and to save." **From The Pulpit Commentary (BH–PC)**

Matthew Henry identifies four applications from this passage for us to direct our daily activities.

1. **Wake up Now!** We are to wake up out of the sleep of our temporal preoccupation with the things of this world—security, ease, and entertainment; wake out of the sleep of spiritual deadness. We must consider the times in which we live and the time that is yet to come—busy, consequential, and even perilous times—because we are nearing our journey's end. (**Mark 13:33-37, Luke 21:36, 1 Thessalonians 5:6**)

2. **Make ourselves ready; get out of those pjs!** Time is of the essence—"*the hour has come.... time is running out."* We need to get up, get dressed, and be ready to move! We need to get rid of anything that makes us vulnerable to Satan's temptations and the attacks from this present evil world. (**Matthew 25:1-13**)

34. What do we need to 'take off?' (12) Notice the different verbs in our four translations above; what do they imply? (**Ephesians 4:20-22, Colossians 3:8-9, 1 Peter 2:1**)

3. **Get dressed for the day of work ahead, and don't forget to put on your big girl pants!**

35. What are we instructed to *"put on?"* What does it mean? (14) (**Galatians 3:27, James 1:21, Hebrews 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:24, Ephesians 6:11-17**)

36. What does it mean to *"make no provision for the flesh?"*

4. **Know how to walk as we head out; don't forget to bring your comfortable walking shoes.** When we are up and ready, we are not to sit still, but are to get out and walk with Christ in doing the *"good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:10) **(MHC)** *"The day of the Lord is near."* (**Ezekiel 30:3, 2 Peter 3:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:3**) Therefore, as His chosen elect children, looking forward to that great day, our behavior should be easily

distinguishable from those living with a temporal worldview. **(BH–12)** (**1 Peter 4:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 5:5-9, Ephesians 5:15-21**)

In verse 13, Paul lists six sins that characterize a life without Christ.

1. Orgies—The Greek word is *"komos."* This meant a noisy band of revelers who roamed the city streets at night. They became a nuisance, disturbing others.

2. Drunkenness—For the **well-being of others**, a Christian must not allow their own habits or "freedom" to bring destruction to individuals and society. A Christian shows an insensitivity to the welfare of others when he sells or consumes alcoholic drinks or other substances.

3. Immorality—This may take many forms. It is primarily concerned with fidelity in marriage, adultery, and perversion of sex. The pagan world is marked by sexual perversion.

4. Indecency—This describes the person who knows no shame. He does not care who sees him in his sin. He feels no need to keep his sins secret. He has fallen so deeply into sin that he is no longer ashamed of anything he does.

5. Fighting—This is a spirit that comes from an uncontrolled and unholy competition. It comes from the strong desire for place, power, and prestige. This characterizes the person who cannot take second place. Self must be exalted above all else.

6. Jealousy—This speaks of the person who cannot be content with what he has. He looks with a jealous eye on every blessing given to someone else and denied to himself. **(CB)**

37. Look back at where we began in **Romans 1:28-32** many months/years ago! What is the connection to Romans 13:10?

Before we close out Romans 13, let's take a look at a sentence we nearly skipped over in 13:11—*"For **salvation** is nearer to us now than when we first believed,"* and a closely related phrase in 13:12—*"...the day is at hand."* This salvation does not refer to our **justification**, which has already been accomplished, but the **final act** of our redemption—our **glorification**. *"Salvation," **sōtēria***, means "deliverance and preservation as **more fully realized in the future**." **(LW)** (**Isaiah 56:1, Luke 21:25-28, Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 1:3-5**)

Jesus clearly taught that He would return for His elect in **John 14:1-3, 18, 28** (and elsewhere). Paul and other NT writers' exhortations carry a sense of urgency, also seen in 1 Peter 4:7-8—*"The **end of all things** is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."*

The Greek word for *"end"* (***telos***) in the NT is not used in the sense that something simply stops or reaches a chronological end. Instead, ***telos*** means the consummation, conclusion, a goal achieved, a result attained, or the realization of an aim or purpose. (**Romans 10:4, Matthew 24:6, James 5:9, Hebrews 10:25**) It is, therefore, looking toward and eagerly anticipating the "End Times," especially the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ. **(LW, NIVSB)** Paul, Peter, and all of the apostles expected the Lord's imminent return (impending, happening at any moment) and taught it as truth revealed to them by Jesus Christ.

Key Doctrine #17 in Romans
The Imminence of Christ's Return—Imminence describes the belief that the future coming/return of Jesus Christ for His Church could happen at any moment; it doesn't necessarily mean that it must be immediate or even soon. Imminence asserts that His coming is "next" on the **prophetic** timeline of God, meaning that nothing more in Biblical prophecy **NEEDS** to happen before Jesus comes again. That doesn't necessarily mean that nothing more **CAN** happen before His return. Jesus spoke of His return repeatedly during His ministry and taught His disciples to eagerly watch for His return. **(GQ-RCI)**

The Bible describes the "last days" as beginning with the incarnation of Christ, so the church has been living in the "last days" since then. (**Hebrews 1:1-2**) The NT does not say specifically when Christ will return, but it's certainty is not questioned; the final verses of the Bible end with Jesus' wonderful promise, *"Surely I am coming soon."* (Revelation 22:20)

3 Important Truths Concerning Imminency

1. **There will be no advance warning, signs, or prophets in the streets to proclaim the arrival of the Rapture; it will be unannounced and largely unexpected, except by those who are longing and watching for His coming.** In Matthew 24, Jesus' disciples asked Him, *"What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"* (Matthew 24:3) He described many different signs and, frankly, disturbing occurrences which would take place at some point in the future, but He also admonished them, *"See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet,"* and *"All these are but the beginning of the birth pains."* (Matthew 24:6, 8) Scripture presents Christ's return in such a way that every generation may enjoy the hope, longing, and challenges of waiting expectantly for Him.
2. **While no one knows the time of Christ's return, He may come at any moment, and it is possible that He might come today.** In Matthew 24, when asked, *"When will these things be?"* Jesus replied, *"... concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."* (Matthew 24:36-39) It is this hope of Christ's imminent return which never fails to encourage the troubled heart, the weariness of life's difficulties, the physical and emotional pain of living in these "earthly tents," and the constant failure to conquer the sin in our lives. This privilege of waiting for this *"blessed hope"* (**Titus 2:13**) has been given to every believer in every generation since Christ ascended into Heaven.

3. **No clearly prophesied event must occur prior to the Rapture, for this might point to a specific date of His coming.** (Many have tried to forecast a date, but all have failed!) Based on the Scriptures we have just studied (and many more), if we believe the return of Christ for His Church is imminent, then obviously the Rapture of the Church must occur before the Tribulation (because the Tribulation has detailed, predicted signs, events, and judgments, many of which are sequential in nature. (**Matthew 24:29-31**) Theologically (and just plain logically), the tribulation is a barrier to the rapture. Jesus did not tell us to watch for an invasion of the Holy Land by Russia or Iran, nor the revealing of the Antichrist, nor the prophesied Battle of Armageddon with its vast devastation. We

are to be watching and preparing for the coming of Christ from heaven to take His own to the Father's house. (**Matthew 24:42-46, 1 Peter 4:7, James 5:9, Philippians 4:5, 1 John 2:18**) **(GS, ST)**

This type of "any-moment" language doesn't fit a post-trib rapture. If Jesus were prevented from coming until after the battle of Magog, the rise of Antichrist, and the Mark of the Beast, we would have no need to watch for Him before the tribulation. (ST)

Why is the imminence of Christ's return so important? First of all, we are told dozens of times to be watching and waiting because *"the end of all things is **at hand**"*—within reach, so close we can almost touch it! Additionally, expecting Jesus' imminent return causes four attitudes and priorities to be foremost in our hearts and minds:

1. **Spiritual awareness—**It could happen today; this might be the last chance to....
2. **Mission urgency—**Knowing that the end could be today or tomorrow rearranges our priorities toward what we do with our lives.
3. **Power to Forgive—**We long for justice, but we are not in charge of justice (in this world or the next). By knowing that Jesus is coming soon, we can endure the injustice we face here and now.
4. **Hope in Suffering—**In the midst of hard, even horrible, circumstances, Jesus has promised to come back and make everything right; it won't last forever. **(JDG)**

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)

38. What did you select as the Key Verse(s) in Romans 13? Why?

39. Create a basic outline for Romans 13.

40. Write a summary of Romans 13.

Romans 13 Bibliography

References:

"Antinomianism." The Reformation Study Bible. Edited by R.C. Sproul. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Pub. a division of Ligonier Ministries, 2015. **(RSB—A)**

Brock, Charles. *Romans: The Road to Righteousness (A Bible Study Guide).* Church Growth International, Inc., 1996. **(CB)**

Bell, Brian. *"Romans 13:10-11 Commentary."* Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1310-11#13:11. **(BH—BB)**

Caneday, Ardel. *"What Romans 13 Does (Not) Mean."* Article. November 14, 2023. Christ Over All website. https://christoverall.com/article/concise/what-romans-13-does-not-mean/. **(AC)**

"Can the Return of Christ Truly Be Said to Be Imminent?" Article. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/imminent-return-Christ.html. **(GQ-RCI)**

"Civil Government." Chapter 24 *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689).* Founder's Ministries website. https://founders.org/library/chapter-24-civil-government/. **(LBC)**

"Civil Government." The Reformation Study Bible. Edited by R.C. Sproul. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Pub. a division of Ligonier Ministries, 2015. **(RSB—CG)**

Cole, Steven. *"Romans 13:10-11 Commentary."* Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1310-11#13:11. **(BH—SC)**

English Standard Version with Strong's Numbers. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008. **(ESVSC)**

"Georgi Vins." Biographical article. Updated October 2, 2024. Alchetron website. https://alchetron.com/Georgi-Vins. **(GV)**

Greear, JD. *"Jesus' Imminent Return."* Article. January 2, 2015. Lingonier Website. https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/jesus-imminent-return. **(JDG)**

Hart, Bruce. *"Romans 13:10-11 Commentary."* Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1310-11#13:11. **(BH)**

Hart, Bruce. *"Romans 13:10-11 Commentary."* From The Pulpit Commentary on the Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1310-11#13:11 **(BH—PC)**

Hart, Bruce. *"Romans 13:12 Commentary."* Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1312#13:12. **(BH—12)**

Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*. Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2022. **(MHC)**

Houdmann, S. Michael. "Is There a Correct Political Persuasion for Christians?" Blog. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.blog/Christians-and-politics.html. **(SMH)**

"How Justify Disobedience to Immoral Laws?" Bible Hub Questions and Answers website. https://biblehub.com/q/how_justify_disobedience_to_immoral_laws.htm. **(JDIL)**

"How Should a Christian View Politics?" Article and Podcast. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-politics.html. **(GQ-CVP)**

Jamieson, Robert, AR Fausset and David Brown. *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary*. 1871. **(JFB)**

Lawhorn, Gregory. *"Back to the Basics: Peace."* Sermon and Notes. December 7, 2025. One Hope Fellowship website. https://onehopefellowship.org/sermon-transcripts/f/back-to-the-basics-peace. **(GPL)**

Literal Word Bible app **(LW)**

MacArthur, John and Richard Mayhue. Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2017. **(MacMay)**

MacArthur, John. *ESV MacArthur Study Bible Notes*, 2nd Edition. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2021. **(JMSB)**

MacArthur, John. *"The Christian and Taxes."* Sermon and Study Guide. January 23, 2011. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/print/80-365/the-christian-and-taxes. **(JM—CT)**

MacArthur, John. *"The Christian's Responsibility to Government, Part 1."* Sermon and Study Guide. January 6, 1985. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/45-97/the-christians-responsibility-to-government-part-1. **(JM—CRG-1)**

MacArthur, John. *"The Christian's Responsibility to Government, Part 2."* Sermon and Study Guide. January 13, 1985. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/45-98/the-christians-responsibility-to-government-part-2. **(JM—CRG-2)**

MacArthur, John. *"The Christian's Responsibility to Government, Part 3."* Sermon and Study Guide. January 27, 1985. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/45-99/the-christians-responsibility-to-government-part-3. **(JM—CRG-3)**

MacArthur, John. *"Government in Biblical Perspective."* Sermon and Study Guide. January 23, 2011. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/print/80-363/government-in-biblical-perspective. **(JM–GBP)**

MacArthur, John. *"Love Fulfills the Law, Part 1."* Sermon and Study Guide. March 3, 1985. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/print/45-104/love-fulfills-the-law-part-1. **(JM–LFL-1)**

MacArthur, John. *"Love Fulfills the Law, Part 2."* Sermon and Study Guide. March 17, 1985. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/print/45-105/love-fulfills-the-law-part-2. **(JM–LFL-2)**

MacArthur, John. *"The Willful Submission of a Christian Wife."* Sermon and Study Guide. February 19, 2012. Grace to You website. https://www.gty.org/sermons/80-382/the-willful-submission-of-a-christian-wife. **(JM–WS)**

Muehlenberg, Bill. *"12 Biblical Cases of Civil Disobedience."* Blog/Commentary. March 24, 2021. Culture Watch website. https://billmuehlenberg.com/2021/03/24/12-biblical-cases-of-civil-disobedience/. **(BM-12)**

The NIV Study Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011. **(NIVSB)**

Piper, John. *"Does Romans 13 Prohibit All Civil Disobedience?"* Interview. March 8, 2013. Desiring God website. https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/does-romans-13-prohibit-all-civil-disobedience. **(JP)**

"Romans 13:8-9 Commentary." Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_13_notes_pt2#13:8. **(PA–13:8)**

"Romans 13:10-11 Commentary." Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1310-11#13:11. **(PA–13:10-11)**

Pritchard, Ray. *"How to be a Godly Rebel?"* Sermon. December 8, 2006. Keep Believing website. https://www.keep believing.com/sermon/2006-12-08-How-to-be-a-Godly-Rebel/. **(RP)**

The Reformation Study Bible. Edited by R.C. Sproul. Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Pub. a division of Ligonier Ministries, 2015. **(RSB)**

"Should the Church Get Involved in Social Issues and Causes?" Article. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/church-social.html. **(GQ-CSI)**

Stott, John. *"Romans 13:12 Commentary."* Precept Austin website. https://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1312#13:12. **(BH–JS)**

Strandbert, Todd. *"Imminency."* Article. July 19, 2016. Rapture Ready website. https://www.raptureready.com/2016/07/19/imminency/. **(ST)**

Stanton, Dr. Gerald. *"The Doctrine of Imminency: Is it Biblical?"* Article. Pre-Trib Research Center website. https://www.pre-trib.org/dr-robert-thomas/message/the-doctrine-of-imminency-is-it-biblical/read. **(GS)**

"What does "Bear the Sword" Mean in Romans 13:4?" Bible Hub Questions and Answers website. https://biblehub.com/q/what_does_'bear_the_sword'_mean.htm. **(BH-BtS)**

"Why does Romans 13 Stress Obeying Rulers?" Bible Hub Questions and Answers website. https://biblehub.com/q/why_does_romans_13_stress_obeying_rulers.htm. **(BH-OR)**

"What is the Biblical Definition of Submission?" Article. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/definition-of-submission.html. **(GQ-BDS)**

Articles for Further Study and Thought

Houdmann, S. Michael. "Is There a Correct Political Persuasion for Christians?" Blog. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.blog/Christians-and-politics.html.

"How Justify Disobedience to Immoral Laws?" Bible Hub Questions and Answers website. https://biblehub.com/q/how_justify_disobedience_to_immoral_laws.htm.

"How Should a Christian View Politics?" Article and Podcast. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-politics.html.

"Should a Christian Be Involved in Protests?" Article. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-protests.html.

"Should a Christian Run for Political Office?" Article. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-political.html.

"Should the Church Get Involved in Social Issues and Causes?" Article. Got Questions website. https://www.gotquestions.org/church-social.html.

Strandbert, Todd. *"Imminency."* Article. July 19, 2016. Rapture Ready website. https://www.raptureready.com/2016/07/19/imminency/.

"What Should Be a Christian's Attitude Toward Politics? Involvement w/o Obsession?" Podcast. Got Questions website. https://podcast.gotquestions.org/episode-229.html.