**July 28, 2021**

BIBLE STUDY

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**“THE POWER BELONGS TO GOD”**

**Romans 13:1-7**

***Romans 13:1 "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."***

God has ordered human history to operate according to a system of covenants, with the husband as the head of his wife, the parents as the head of their children, elders as the head of their congregations, and the government as the head of its citizenry. These heads are not to be dictatorial or to “lord it over” those whom God has placed under their authority. Rather, they are to exercise their headship for the good of those who submit to their legitimate authority. Since God has placed governmental rulers over us, we should submit to the governing authorities, recognizing them as God’s agents. Still, Paul offers a radical political statement in saying that our governments stand under another authority that of God.

***Matthew 20:25 “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.”***

***Psalm 62:11 “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”***

While there is an institutional separation between church and state, there must never be a separation between God and government. The closer God is to a government and its citizens, the more ordered the society will be. The further God is from a government and its citizens, the more chaotic the society will become. In our society today, authority of every kind is being challenged. It begins in the home. In God's plans, the daddy is the head of the house. Mother should be over the children, as well. Secular humanism has taught our children that they are the center of everything, and because of this, children are rebelling. In most large schools in our country today, crime is very evident. A few years ago, this was not true, because everyone had respect for the teachers and principal. Even in the military, we saw a breakdown of authority. We have even lost respect for our government officials. All of this was prophesied in scripture.

***II Timothy 3:1 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."***

***II Timothy 3:2 "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,"***

***II Timothy 3:3 "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,"***

***II Timothy 3:4 "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;"***

***II Timothy 3:5 "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."***

If we question the person in authority, we need to first stop and think who gave him or her that authority. We should examine everything in light of what God has revealed. If God gave them the authority, and we are fighting against them, we are fighting God.

***I Peter 2:13 "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;"***

***I Peter 2:14 "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."***

***I Peter 2:15 "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:"***

***I Peter 2:16 "As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God."***

***Romans 13:2 "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."***

In light of Paul’s statement that even governments are under God’s authority, we see that this verse applies to individuals and governments equally. The one who resists the authority of God whether that’s a person rebelling against the government or the government rebelling against God is opposing God’s command and will bring judgment on themselves. This is just one more word of caution, that we are not above the law just because we are Christians. The only time it is permissible to disobey authority is when it is in opposition to God's teachings.

***Titus 3:1 "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,"***

***Romans 13:3 "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:"***

This is a concise definition and summary of the role of civil government: resist evil and promote good. The challenge lies in defining evil and good. Much of the time, what the government promotes as good aligns with the Bible. But when it doesn’t, we must do what is good before God and trust him with the political results. God and ﻿his Word give us the definitive standard of what should be viewed as right and wrong. The biblical responsibility of civil government is to maintain a safe, just, righteous, and compassionately responsible environment in which freedom can flourish.

***Proverbs 14:35 "The king's favour [is] toward a wise servant: but his wrath is [against] him that causeth shame."***

***I Peter 3:13 "And who [is] he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"***

***Romans 13:4 "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil."***

***Romans 13:5 " Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."***

Twice in this passage Paul calls the governing authorities God’s servant, which reinforces their role. Whenever God is removed from government, a vacuum is created in which government seeks to be God. In a democratic republic like ours, we citizens get the honor of choosing many of God’s servants; thus, part of the responsibility of governing lies with us. We the people can be servants to God’s servants, pointing them ﻿to truth. If we don’t, then “one nation under God” will become “one nation under chaos.” This really is saying that if we have broken the law, we can expect to be punished. If we speed and are caught, we will probably pay a pretty large fine. Other sins require other punishment, but you can be sure God has marked it down for later review. In the Old Testament when someone was murdered, the closest relative went out and found the criminal and killed him. Pretty swift justice, wouldn't you say.

***Numbers 35:19 "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him."***

***Acts 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and [toward] men."***

***II Corinthians 1:12 "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you- ward."***

You have heard the expression [let your conscience be your guide] if you are a Christian that is very good advice. The Christian has the laws of God written on the fleshly part of his or her heart. We are guided by what is pleasing unto God.

***Psalms 37:31 "The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps shall slide."***

There will come a time when we will not be taught at all of man, but will be totally taught of God.

***Hebrews 10:16 "This [is] the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;"***

We can see from this that the heart of mankind is his conscience.

***Romans 13:6 "For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."***

***Romans 13:7 "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute [is due]; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."***

In our society today, it has become fashionable to disrespect authority of all kinds. A few years ago our mother taught us to respect others. This is the same thing God says in His Word. Even the world who does not have Jesus should be shown respect, if they are in higher office. It is really respect for the office we are showing. We must remember that a person is in that particular office because God put him there.

***Matthew 17:24 "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute [money] came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?"***

***Matthew 17:25 "He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?"***

***Matthew 17:26 "Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free."***

***Matthew 17:27 "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."***

We see in this that Jesus was not subject to these taxes, but He paid them anyway to keep down trouble. As Paul closes this brief section on government, his words intentionally echo those of Jesus. Paul commands us: Pay taxes to those you owe taxes and give honor to those you owe honor. Jesus said, “Give, then, to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt 22:21). We owe government leaders our taxes. We owe them earthly honor. But both Paul and Jesus remind us that we must never give them our hearts. They cannot have our ultimate allegiance since we are created in the image of God and not in the image of government rulers. God is above all.

***I Peter 2:17 "Honour all [men]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."***

In summing up this lesson, we can see the importance of having great respect for God. We must respect Him and trust Him enough that we will also respect the people He has put in authority. Remember if we do not respect those in authority, then we are saying that God was not wise in choosing that person for that job. We must not question or accuse God, He knows best.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Let every soul be subject to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. There is no power but of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. In God's plan, who is the head of the home?
4. What has taught our children that they are the center of everything?
5. In 2 Timothy chapter 3, this time is called what?
6. Describe the people of this day from 2 Timothy 3.
7. For whom should we submit to those in authority?
8. When we question the authority of someone, who are we really fighting?
9. In Romans ch.13 v.2, Whosoever resisteth the power will receive what?
10. In Titus ch.3 v.1, who are we reminded to obey?
11. Who are rulers a terror to?
12. Who are they who can harm you if you are good?
13. If we have broken the law, what can we expect?
14. In numbers ch.35 v.19, who shall do the punishing?
15. Why should a Christian let his or her conscience be their guide?
16. Where is the conscience located?
17. If Jesus did not owe taxes, why did He pay them?
18. Where did they find the money to pay the taxes for Jesus?
19. Render therefore to all their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
20. Honour all\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
21. Love the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
22. Fear\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
23. Honour the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
24. Who first taught us to show respect?
25. When we show respect for the president, what are we really showing respect for?