

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

X. Righteousness Applied To Life And Service, Romans 12:1-15:13

D. Righteousness Applied To Relating To The Government

(Romans 13:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. Having explained the theology of God's righteousness applied to justifying believers in Christ, Paul showed how that righteousness applies to one's life and service as a Christian in Romans 12:1-15:13.
- D. Romans 13:1-7 shows how God's righteousness is to be applied to relating to the government (as follows):

II. Righteousness Applied To Relating to the Government, Romans 13:1-7.

- A. As a general rule, a believer must submit himself to the authorities of the civil government, Romans 13:1a.
- B. The reasons for this submission involve God's use of such authorities to fulfill His purposes, Romans 13:1b-7:
 1. Every governing authority has been established by God (Romans 13:1b), making it imperative that the believer submit to God's ordaining of such authorities in obedience to the Lord Himself, Romans 13:2a.
 2. Thus, if a believer decides not to submit to the civil authorities, God can use those civil authorities or He can directly minister to punish the believer for disobeying the civil authorities, Romans 13:2b.
 3. Also, civil leaders are used of God to punish lawless people while also praising law-abiding citizens, so believers need to obey civil authorities to avoid punishment and be rewarded with praise, Romans 13:3.
 4. In addition, being ordained by God, civil authorities are servants of God to do good for society, but also to punish up to the level of capital punishment those in society who are lawless, Romans 13:4. Thus, a believer must obey the civil authorities for his welfare and to avoid punishment.
 5. Furthermore, believers must obey the civil authorities not only to escape the wrath of those authorities and God's discipline, but to heed them for the sake of conscience, Romans 13:5. If civil authorities are actually God's servants, believers need to obey those authorities in indirect obedience to God.
 6. Paul applied these principles of submission to civil authorities to the specific matter of obeying tax laws, Romans 13:6-7: Whatever legal taxes by the civil authorities are leveled at us believers, we are responsible to pay those taxes in obedience to the civil authorities involved, and thus also in obedience to the Lord.
- C. However, a significant exception to these Romans 13:1-7 admonitions arises if the civil authorities fail to align with God's will to where they direct believers to violate God's Biblical will for them! In such a case, it is better for a believer to obey God than the civil authorities, Acts 5:29. We illustrate such cases (as follows):
 1. In communist China, the civil authorities have ruled that if a woman gets pregnant with her second child, she must abort that child for population control. However, Exodus 21:22-23 with Psalm 51:5 oppose this law, revealing that abortion at any trimester takes a human life, making abortion on demand murder.
 2. When the COVID-19 pandemic was raging and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with The American Medical Association strongly urged people to get vaccinated with the COVID-19 shots that we found had **all** been produced by use of aborted fetal cell lines, we urged people to align with their consciences as to whether they should get the shots in view of the Bible's opposition to abortion.
 3. When a believer is summoned to jury duty in the state of Connecticut, and he watches a video in the jury pool room before being examined for possible seating on a jury for a trial, and he sees the video direct him to obey whatever command the presiding judge orders him regardless of his personal religious beliefs to the contrary, the believer should not obey that video's order! Acts 5:29 directs the believer to obey God rather than man, and if the judge orders a believer to do what he knows Scripture prohibits him from doing, he must disobey that judge to heed the Lord instead. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 7:23 directs that we believers were bought by God with a price, so we should not be the slaves of men in disobedience to God.

Lesson: *Civil authorities are God's servants ordained by Him to maintain law and order in society, so a believer is obliged to obey all such authorities and their laws with the exception being the believer's need to obey God over the civil authorities when God and the civil authorities differ in their requirements of the believer.*

Application: *May we relate to the civil authorities as ministers of God, giving priority to obeying the Lord Himself.*