

THE TRANSFORMED MIND SUBMITS TO GOVERNING AUTHORITY (Romans 13:1-5)

I. The requirement of God (vs. 1a).

- A. God requires every person to submit to his or her rulers.
 - 1. One version renders this first phrase “Every person, let him range himself under superior authority.”
 - 2. All people, especially the Christian whose mind has been transformed, is to submit to all those that govern him or her.
- B. The word “subject” means “to place in an orderly fashion under something.”
 - 1. We place ourselves in an orderly manner under the government of the United States.
 - 2. This includes all levels of government, from the federal down to the local.
- C. In other words, Christians are called to be obedient to the governing powers of whatever nation in which we may find ourselves.
- D. Paul didn’t say every soul is subject to the higher powers that follow God.
 - 1. He didn’t say to the higher powers that promote and allow Christianity.
 - 2. It doesn’t matter the form of government, you and I are to place ourselves under its authority.
- E. We may not like our government or the laws it enacts.
 - 1. That’s fine that we don’t like those laws.
 - 2. We aren’t asked to like them, only to submit to them.
- F. Think of the government in existence in Paul’s day.
 - 1. Overall, there was the Roman government.
 - a. It was overseen by a caesar.
 - b. He was a king that could do as he pleased and they even offered him worship, viewing him as a deity.
 - c. It was a government that allowed and promoted slavery.
 - d. It allowed and promoted the violence that went on in the sporting arenas and that which was used against others.
 - 2. In Palestine, there was the rule of the Herods.
 - a. This line of rulers were bloodthirsty individuals.
 - b. They had no moral compass, only doing that which they deemed best for themselves.
- G. As you can tell, the governments weren’t all that great.
- H. Despite that fact, Paul told Christians they were to be subject to those powers.
 - 1. He didn’t say to rise up and fight against them.
 - 2. He said be subject to them.
- I. Our Lord taught the same thing.
 - 1. The reason is, the church is spiritual in nature.
 - 2. Jesus didn’t come to establish a temporal, social government but a spiritual government.

3. Jesus was well aware of the circumstances of the governments and those under them in His day.
 4. The fact that things weren't great politically was not important to Jesus.
- J. You and I may or may not like our governing officials or their policies.
1. We don't have to like them.
 2. However, as long as they don't call us into conflict with God's laws, we do have to submit to them.
 3. Even then, we aren't to physically fight against them.
 4. You never see where a Christian is called to rise up physically against the governing officials under whom he or she may find him/herself.
 5. We are simply called to submit.

II. The reason to submit (vs. 1b-2).

- A. The government derives its power from God.
- B. If we were to refuse to submit to the government, we would be rebelling against God.
1. The ESV renders the next phrase in verse 1 as "For there is no authority except from God."
 2. Another translation has, "For authority does not exist except by God."
- C. This is what Jesus told Pilate.
1. This is what God told Moses about Pharaoh in Exodus 9.
 2. This is what God told Isaiah about Babylon.
 3. This is what God told other prophets about Assyria before Babylon.
 4. This is what God told Nebuchadnezzar: "God rules in the affairs of men."
- D. The word "ordained" means "to set in order, in its proper category."
- E. In other words, government is a divinely ordained institution.
1. Notice that it is not a certain type of government.
 2. This command is not dependent upon if the government is a monarchy, democracy, imperial, or dictatorial type of government.
 3. All governmental power is set in order by God.
 4. The latter phrase of verse 1 literally says, "and those existing exist as having been arranged by God."
 5. There were different types then, just as there are different types now.
- F. When we resist God's ordained powers, we resist the commandment of God.
1. When we resist God we will receive damnation.
 2. The word receive means "to take in whatever manner."
 3. The word "damnation" means "a judicial sentence."
 4. In other words, we will take the judicial sentence in whatever manner the powers that be decide as well as the judgment of God.
- G. We submit to whatever form of government under which we may find ourselves because those powers are ordained by God and we would be

rebelling against Him we refused to submit.

III. **The role of government (vs. 3-4).**

- A. The government is to provide the role of protector to those that do good.
1. Those that are in authority are to never be a terror or afflictor of those that do what is morally and religiously right.
 2. Throughout history this can be seen as having taken place.
 3. The vast majority of governments that are not dominated by either communism or some man-made religion such as Islam have treated Christians well.
 4. Of course, there are some that haven't, particularly in its infancy when it was misunderstood.
 5. Laws and penalties are put in place to curb man's sinfulness against his fellow man.
 6. Those that live right should have nothing to fear from the government.
 7. Fear of punishment keeps even those that would do evil from doing it.
 8. When we do good, we should have no fear of the government.
 9. The reason is, the authority of God is behind the government and it is to do us good as we do good.
 10. Government is there for our benefit because man needs rule and order or there will be chaos.
 11. It should easily be seen that God is the creator of government because we know He is a God of order and not chaos.
- B. The government is to provide the role of punisher of those who do evil.
1. When wrong is done, there should be a fear of punishment.
 - a. This is one of the things wrong in our world today.
 - b. There is not much fear of persecution for wrongdoing.
 2. The authority of the government has the God-given responsibility and right to punish those that are evil doers.
 3. The government has the authority from God to use capital punishment as a means of dispensing justice to protect those that do good.
 - a. Capital punishment is the ultimate fear inducer to keep evil doers in check.
 - b. God called for Israel to use execution as a means of punishment.
 - c. Lenski, in his commentary, stated of the word sword, "which is here not a mere symbol of power, but the actual sword in the hands of the executioner who inflicts the death penalty on criminals."
 4. The use of the sword in the passage should make it clear to us that execution is under consideration.
 - a. Why else would a sword be used?
 - b. Also, the sword mentioned is the Roman short sword that was used in executions in that day.

5. The reason the authority is there is because the government is God's servant to exact revenge on earth against the evil doer.
 - a. God is the avenger of all.
 - b. In this life, one way that He repays evil doers, is by the sword being used by governments to avenge the innocent harmed by the evil doer.
 - c. The wrath of God is seen be rained down upon an evil doer who has committed a crime against his fellow man that is heinous enough to warrant death.
6. Really, what is under consideration here is all punishment, not just the death penalty.
 - a. The government, if it has authority to execute evil doers, then has the right to punish in any way it sees fit all evil doers.
 - b. Paul simply, by inspiration, states the extent of the power of the government.
 - c. If it can kill evil doers, then it certainly has the right and authority to inflict other types of punishment for various offenses.

IV. The response of the Christian (vs. 5).

- A. The response of the Christian is subjection to government for two reasons.
- B. The first is the avoidance of wrath.
 1. We fear punishment so we drive the speed limit or at least something reasonably close to it.
 2. We fear punishment so we don't take something that doesn't belong to us.
 3. God has given authority to show His wrath to the government and we don't want to feel that wrath so we do right.
- C. The second is that it would go against our conscience to do evil.
 1. The trained conscience would be violated by breaking the laws the government has put in place.
 2. We realize, when our conscience has been trained by God's word, that it is a sin to fail to submit to the laws of the land.