

HOW THEN SHALL WE NOW LIVE?

Studies of Romans chapters 13 to 16

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1.

Romans 13:1-5

Be Law Abiding

Paul's epistle to the Romans is a powerful explanation of salvation. If anyone ever asks you what does it mean to be a Christian, the *Romans Road* is a great starting point -

- i. Romans 3:10, 23 - The problem
- ii. Romans 6:23 - The penalty and the promise
- iii. Romans 5:8 - The privilege
- iv. Romans 10:9 - The profession

And for many Christians, this is *all* Christianity is - "getting saved". But Paul's epistle to the Romans shows us that being a Christian is much more than this. In chapter 12 verses 9 to 21 he makes it non-negotiably clear that surrendering to and following Christ involves a commitment to a local church, a *covenant community of believers*. Now, from chapter 13 he shows us that Christianity is not just a matter of what we do Sunday mornings, it effects how we live *Monday* morning as well!

God's Sovereignty

In the world in which the Roman Christians lived, 'governing authorities' included the Emperor, his representatives, and the soldiers who patrolled the streets and towns enforcing Roman law (today we have police doing that).

1. According to Romans 13:1, how should the believer interact with today's governing authorities?
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2. Why might Paul's original audience have struggled with this injunction from Paul in Romans 13:1?
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3. What reason does Paul give for this in Romans 13:1b - 2a?
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4. Does Romans 13:2 mean that the believer should always comply with everything their governing authorities order? Explain. (Note Acts 4:16-20)
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For those of us living in nations where the Christian worldview has shaped our laws and the scope of government, we should be grateful to God. Sadly though, this is not everyone's experience of government. There are nations where its people are oppressed and denied universal human rights.

5. For those of us who live in nations where human rights are enshrined, how should we apply Romans 13:3-4?
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One of the greatest blights on any society is criminal activity. It diverts a society's resources from doing good into preventing wrong. In the United States alone, the average cost of housing a prisoner is \$41,000 per annum (in California its \$95,000) [Source: Encyclopedia.com]. When you add policing, the court system, and security services, the cost of crime to a society can be crippling! To make matters worse, it is largely a broken system. According to the National Institute of Justice, the recidivism rate of those imprisoned is that 56% of all released prisoners will re-offend and be imprisoned again within their first year of release! (76.6% will do so within the first 3-5 years of their release!)

6. What could happen if there was a 'revival' among recently released prisoners who then understood and applied Romans 13:1-5?
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Amen.