

What is Our

RESPONSIBILITY to the STATE?

Romans 13:1-7



Introduction

*“Everyone must submit himself
to the governing authorities.”*



Why would Paul say that?

What does submission look like?

Are there any exceptions?



I. Why does the Bible teach
that Christians are to be
submissive to the state?



Government has been established
by God for our good. Verses 1-2
Therefore to rebel against the
state would be to rebel against
what God has instituted.



Government's purpose is to keep
the peace – to maintain law and
order. Verses 3-4

- They are to reward those who do what is right and punish those who do what is wrong.
- They are God's servants.
- They are the ones who bear the sword to defend the people.



Good government is good for the people.

- The Pax Romana allowed the gospel to spread rapidly.
- American religious freedom has also been good for the gospel.



What about verse 3 – *“For rulers hold no terror for those who do right.”*?

That’s not always true. So why does Paul say that?

He is talking about government as it should be, as God intends.



II. What does submission mean? And when is it right to disobey?



The word submit means to place yourself under someone’s authority.

Paul did not use the word obey.

There are limits to authority.



Pastor Kent Hughes gives three examples.

1. When a believer is asked to violate a command of God. Acts 4-5
2. When a believer is asked to do something immoral.
3. When a believer is asked to go against their conscience.



Christians have wrestled through the centuries with the relationship between church and state.



James M. Boice, in his book Two Cities, Two Loves, summarizes the four ways Christians have tried to change their culture.

1. Christ over Culture – This is the view that wants to impose Christianity by force.



2. Christ apart from Culture – This is the view that wants nothing to do with culture.
3. Christ under Culture – This is the view that says the church needs to change and become more like the world.
4. Christ transforms Culture – This is the view that believes the best way to change the world is by the power of the gospel – one heart at a time.



How do we transform our world?



1. Presence – by our life.

*“You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world...
Let your light shine before men.”*
Matthew 5:13-16



2. Persuasion- by the truth of God's Word.

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
II Corinthians 10:4-5



3. Prayer – by the power of God.

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” II Chronicles 7:14

