



Politics and Purity

Lesson 17 | Romans 13

It has been said that some people are “so heavenly minded they are no earthly good.” Yet when the gospel is properly understood, it not only focuses our attention on the future but also makes us more effective here on earth. In this chapter of Romans we see how Christians should interact with a government that is often hostile to them, and how Christians should respond to the out-of-control sinful lifestyle of the culture around them.

Christians Should Be Submissive (1-7)

Paul begins this chapter by dealing with the question of politics, an issue that was no doubt quite divisive in the capital city of Rome!

The _____ of Government (1-2)

Paul makes some statements that might have surprised some of the Christians in Rome (and some Christians today). He demands that they be subject to higher powers, to the government, because God designated who those authorities would be. This means that if we resist the government, we are resisting God Himself.

The _____ of Government (3-4)

God gave governments the responsibility to punish wrongdoing and to promote righteousness. Every government does this to some extent, even if the government itself has major problems. None of this excuses corruption or evil on the part of a government. God will hold everyone accountable for the authority that He gave them. But it does mean that as believers we have an obligation to obey the government as much as possible.



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The _____ to Government (5-7)

We are all called upon to be subject unto higher authorities, to submit to the government. Practically this looks like paying taxes and showing honor and respect to those who are our leaders.

Christians Should Be Pure (8-14)

Paul is also concerned about the possibility that the sinful lifestyle of those who don't know Christ will continue to have a pull on young (and old) believers.

The _____ of Love (8-10)

Our fundamental duty to one another is to love. In one form or another all of God's laws are a way of practically showing love for others. This is what Jesus meant when he said that "on these two commands [love God and love others] hang all the law and the prophets [i.e., the Old Testament]." God's commands are not arbitrary; they are closely connected to love for God and for others.

The Need of the _____ (11-12)

The need to follow God's law and love others is all the more urgent because of the situation in the world right now. Paul says that the fulfillment of the promise of our salvation is getting closer and closer, and the hope of Christ's imminent return should motivate holy living. When we realize that Christ's kingdom is coming, and all the sin and wickedness around us will be brought to a dramatic end, it ought to motivate us to live rightly.

The Practicalities of _____ (13-14)

In this final section, Paul calls on us to put off "rioting and drunkenness" [the party lifestyle]; "chambering and wantonness" [sensuality and sexual immorality] and "strife and envying" [fighting and jealousy]. Paul then gives us a two-step procedure for living rightly in a crazy world: "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" and "make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

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