

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Newsletter Theme: **Application of Romans 13**

Being Subject Unto Powers: What Does This Mean Practically?

Romans 13:1 begins with a directive, teaching us how to be under subjection to God, defining His authority: *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."* (Romans 13:1)

Through Paul's epistles, the Lord commands, orders, and admonishes, even in this dispensation of grace. We can trust it is always for our good, such as in *I Cor. 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."* (Also read: *I Cor. 10:11, I Cor. 7:10, and II Thess. 3:6*)

Romans 13:1 states that every individual is to be under the control or in obedience to God's ordained positions, which are contained in the institutions He created: marriage & family, government, and the gathering together for worship. Specifically, we are to be submissive to the powers He ordained in leadership positions i.e. the husband leads his wife and children, officials administrate, manage, or govern country/localities, and overseers have responsibility for the operation of the local assembly.

Being in subjection is not easy, convenient, nor does it seem fair at times. The reason is that it is not the person who is ordained, but the position. Every leader has a flesh with strongholds and weaknesses; some are saints (babes or mature), and some are unbelievers (good and bad). Only when God Himself reigns will there be perfect righteousness and holiness. So what are practical ways for us to submit under these conditions?

- 1. Do all things unto the Lord, not to men:** *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* (Col. 3:17) Pay taxes, doing it unto God, even if you have limited control over how much/how it's used.
- 2. Trust God to make all things right:** *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."* (Rom. 12:19) Patiently endure and return good for evil. God knows and sees all things!
- 3. Submit, obey, and don't resist:** *"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God..."* (Rom. 13:2) Humbly yield unto authority, unless it is contrary to God's instruction to you.

Subjection to God's power can be a place of rest for us, as we are humbled to His way, knowing He is just and powerful. We do not need to worry that someone is getting away with something. He is the all-knowing, perfect Judge, after all.

Subjection in Marriage

God knew that it was not good for a man to be alone, so He created the institution of marriage. *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."* (Genesis 2:24)

Observation reveals that marriage is the backbone of the family, society, and Church. Leading and raising godly children provide the foundation for saints to grow spiritually to be Christ's ambassadors.

God created man with particular characteristics and strengths, as he did the woman, to be a perfect fit, complimenting one another. *Genesis 2:20* reveals God made woman to be *"...an help meet for him."*

Let's review three ways subjection can help man within marriage:

1) Mankind is to submit to God's definition of marriage, between a man and woman. Observe in *Genesis 2:24* that genders are named in a marriage: man-wife, father-mother. A physical relationship between same-gender partners has always been an abomination to God. i.e. *"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination."* (Leviticus 18:22)

2) The wife is to be under the authority of her husband. In *Genesis 3:16*, God made the man to rule over the woman. Paul reinforced this hierarchy for the Body of Christ in *I Corinthians 11:3: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."*

(Continued on p. 3)



Search it out!

Choose Something to Study in This Section

Romans 13: Finding Topical Sections Can Help in Understanding

Examine verses!



Recognizing sections within a chapter can assist readers to see the organization in teaching, helping us to understand. This study tool is found on p.26 of "Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools," & can be purchased on Amazon.

Sections: Each chapter in the Bible can be broken up into topical sections, written in a precise way, strategically placing a new component of doctrine onto the last to edify us. These subject changes are called subtopics.

1. Find topical breaks: a) Read Romans 13 to find subtopics. (Some chapters are harder to see the breaks.) b) Look at this option for *Rom. 13: Vs 1-7, 8-10, and 11-14.*

2. Assign a heading for each section: As you read each section in Chapter 13, look for the general topic and determine the best title for each. It can be helpful to put these in your Bible for future reference.

3. Look back to Romans 1 and 2 to find their topical breaks: Read the chapter several times and notice the words that give an indication that there is a new idea being presented. Sometimes a new section starts with a question or key words like 'wherefore,' 'but now,' 'first,' 'therefore,' 'for,' or 'know ye not.'

4. Choose an epistle and look for the topical sections in the whole book: This can be a bit harder to do, so pick a familiar or small book (Titus or Philemon). One example: *Romans 1-5* Justification, *6-8* Sanctification, *9-11* What about Israel, *12-16* Godly service.

**Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.*

Should We Disagree With Authority?

Since men in God given-positions of authority are imperfect, grievous situations can result: Abusive or ungodly relationships (*1 Sam. 25*), evil dictators (*Acts 12:1-2, 19*) and religious leaders following another god or maltreating the just (*John 8:44-59*) i.e. The apostles made a tough decision in faith when the council angrily tried to silence them, contrary to God: "*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*" (*Acts 5:17-33*) **To Do:** Gain further insight into how the godly respond in difficult situations by examining the context of the verses in this article.

Let us consider how Paul dealt with authority in a few situations provided below.

Unto God: Paul had an immediate faith response on the road to Damascus: "*And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do...*" (*Acts 9:6*) (*Had the fear of the Lord and instantly submitted*)

Unto the Church: a) Paul submits himself unto the leaders of the Little Flock, going to them so they could consider his new gospel message: "*When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*" (*Acts 15:2*) (*Respectfully yielded to others in authority to gain agreement*) b) When Paul is smitten contrary to the law, he spoke against the smiter, but recants when he's told he was speaking to the high priest: "*And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of the people.*" (*Acts 23:4-5*) (*Submits unto God, even to an ungodly ruler. Paul cites Scripture and submits when wrong.*)

Unto government: Paul does not fight when being bound, but does appeal for fairness by their own law: "*And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?*" (*Acts 22:25*)

Romans 13:2 teaches we're not to resist what God set in place: "*Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*" This damnation refers to what will happen when we disobey the rulers who were appointed by God to keep order and execute wrath (Vs 4). Notice however, Peter, the apostles, and Paul's godly, but confident responses in these examples, even when maltreated, contrary to their own laws. They maintained obedience and respect, addressing authorities strategically, but also humbly apologizing when wrong.

There are times we can disagree, but we are to do it respectfully, within the confines of the situation, obeying God. The challenge of dealing with imperfect leaders won't be taken away or resolved until we are in Heaven with God. Therefore, we're given grace and wisdom to learn how to handle situations.

Subjection in Marriage

Continued

In the family, the man is under Christ's authority, while the woman and children are under the man. Further, he is an umbrella of protection for his family, and the parents work together to raise their children in the Scriptures.

3) Submission unto all members, one to another: *Ephesians 5:21* relays a general direction to the Body: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Submission is something we are all to do, one to another. We learn submission first in our biological family, being under parental authority (*Eph 6:1*). Learning continues in the Church family and in our society.

God uses *Romans* to teach and prepare the Body of Christ to learn godly love for ourselves and others, enabling us to prefer others in relationships, especially marriage. This makes it clear: the husband, as well as the wife, are to submit to one another.

Submission, then, is an important aspect of godly service as saints, yet why does our Father only mention it in *Ephesians 5* for wives? "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Paul instructs: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (*Eph. 5:22,25*) And, why is this admonition only to the man? Of course, God realizes both need to submit and love one another (*Rom. 13:8*). However, each will have particular tendencies and challenges in marriage. Knowing our nature, and for our good, God instructs the man to love his wife and not to be bitter (*Col. 3:19*), and encourages the woman to submit in everything (*Eph. 5:24*). These reminders are helpful for us all.

Being Awake And Not Making Provision For the Flesh

To be painfully honest, we live in a time and society where man's ungodly, sinful ways are spiraling downward, out of control, and gaining momentum; observable even to the novice. Many look for the Rapture as it promises real relief, and it could very well happen in our lifetime. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (*1 Cor. 15:52*) Yet, what does God desire for us to focus on during this challenging time in history?

Scripture instructs us to 'wake up' from being lulled asleep with the world, and focus above. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (*Romans 13:11*) It is high time to live what we know. We are Christ's ambassadors and our time, each moment on earth, is like liquid gold. Scripture teaches us what to wisely do with the time and resources God provides. Notice *Romans 13:12-14*:

-We are to wear the garments of wisdom and power: "...let us put on the armour of light." (*Vs. 12*) (Do you know how to do this?)

-We are to live our new identity in Christ: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day..." (*Vs 13*) (Are we doing this and can we improve?)

-We are to know how to put on Christ: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ..." (*Vs 14*) (Do we yield to allow Christ to live in us?)

-We are to avoid living in the flesh: "...make not provision for the flesh..." (*Vs 14*) (Do we provide Satan & sin a place in our lives?)

The flesh will war against a godly mind and without the armor of light, we will be blind to what's happening. Paul provides foundational teaching to help us learn how to deal with this. We cannot live this life with the natural mind, for this is enmity against God. The only way is to believe the Word in the inner man, then yield to God. This is to be a walk by faith, being led by the Spirit: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (*Gal. 5:16*)

The motive that enables us to maintain a godly walk is thankfulness and love for God: being constrained by the love of Christ, doing all for God and His glory (*Col. 3:24*). Let us think about *Romans 13:14*, which provides our instruction: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Having a transformed mind by the daily intake of the Word prepares us to live godly in this sinful world and not walk after the insatiable lust of the flesh. God uses Christ the Word to empower us to stand against the wiles of the devil and not give him a place to control us. We are to wake up and yield to Christ the Word.

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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)



As members of the Body of Christ we are called to give glory to God in everything that we do. God has a specific way set up for how we are to submit to one another and likewise submit to His will.

In *Romans 13:1*, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Our role to submit to our government can be used as an example for how God wants the Body of Christ to submit to Him. The roles of men and women also play an important role. *Colossians 3:18*: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.” and *Colossians 3:19*: “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” These roles of men and women are similar to the relationship we have with God.

The Body of Christ submits to God and He loves the Body. Submitting to a higher authority and playing a certain role can be difficult. We may feel at odds with those we are to submit to, or don’t like the role and positions we are put into. However, this is all by God’s glorious design.

The Scriptures can help us with learning how to play our roles effectively: “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” (*Rom. 13:5*) And, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” (*Rom. 13:8*) If we do our best to do everything with a sound mind and with love, it can help us to better understand our roles here on earth. It can also enable us to appreciate who we are in Christ.

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