If you judge people, you have no time to love them.
Mother Teresa

ROMANS CHAPTER 13

Prayer Study #453
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

Romans 13 Amplified Bible (AMP)

13 *Let every person be loyally subject to the governing (civil) authorities. For there is no authority except from God [by His permission, His sanction], and those that exist do so by God's appointment.*
2 *Therefore he who resists and sets himself up against the authorities resists what God has appointed and arranged [in divine order]. And those who resist will bring down judgment upon themselves [receiving the penalty due them].*
3 *For civil authorities are not a terror to [people of] good conduct, but to [those of] bad behavior. Would you have no dread of him who is in authority? Then do what is right and you will receive his approval and commendation.*
4 *For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, [you should dread him and] be afraid, for he does not bear and wear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant to execute His wrath (punishment, vengeance) on the wrongdoer.*
5 *Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath and escape punishment, but also as a matter of principle and for the sake of conscience.*
6 *For this same reason you pay taxes, for [the civil authorities] are official servants under God, devoting themselves to attending to this very service.*
7 *Render to all men their dues. [Pay] taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, and honor to whom honor is due.*

This is a surprising passage for most Americans who are instilled in individualism, freedom of expression, and 1st amendment freedom of speech rights. Especially in the times we live in, the government has become more and more anti-Christian in its philosophy and is guilty of calling right *wrong* and wrong *right* (Isaiah 5:20-*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*)

Yet this theme runs throughout the New Testament. 1st Timothy 2:1-2 reads: "*I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and for all who are in high positions so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity."* Titus 3:1 says, *"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work."* 1st Peter 2:13-17: "*For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and*

to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of the foolish. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

Under the Noahic Covenant, God gave civil law and human government and delegated authority to men. Under the Mosaic Covenant, civil law-which really was just an amplification of the moral law-was placed in the hands of judges and elders.

There is a strong caveat to all this. We are NOT to obey those in authority above us when that authority asks us to do things contrary to the Word of God. Many times, governmental authority goes beyond its delegated authority and violates the authority of the Word. Thus, the Hebrew youth did not obey the command to bow to the image of the king and were thrown in the fiery furnace, and Peter and John refused to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, even though the authorities ask them to do so. The Word is always the higher authority.

Paul in verse 7 deals with taxes. The Roman government levied three taxes. First there was the ground tax (much like our property taxes) where the people had to pay either in cash or in kind, one-tenth of the grain and one-fifth of the wine and fruit produced by their land. The second tax was an income tax, which was one-tenth of a man's income. The final tax was a poll tax, which was paid by everyone who was between the ages of 14 and 65. There were also local taxes such as customs duties, toll road taxes, and vehicle (cart and wagon) taxes, etc.

8 *Keep out of debt and owe no man anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor [who practices loving others] has fulfilled the Law [relating to one's fellowmen, meeting all its requirements].*
9 *The commandments, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet (have an evil desire), and any other commandment, are summed up in the single command, You shall love your neighbor as [you do] yourself.*
10 *Love does no wrong to one's neighbor [it never hurts anybody]. Therefore, love meets all the requirements and is the fulfilling of the Law.*

In verse 8 Paul is speaking of private debts. Paul is saying that being a Christian does not absolve people from debts. In fact the Christian should be even more diligent to pay back debt. But there is a debt that we owe everyday and must pay, if we are Christians, and that is the debt of love towards one another.

Love is the climax of Paul's revelation on the subject of the "law." Kevin Connor summarizes the kinds of law in the Mosaic Covenant: The Moral law which consisted of the Ten Commandments. The commandments were given to the people three times. First, they were given orally to the nation (Deuteronomy 4-5). Then they were given on the tables of stone, written by the finger of God (Exodus 32-33) and broken by Moses. Finally, they were written on the second tables of stone and placed in the ark of God

(Exodus 34).

The second type of law was the civil law which was an amplification of the Ten Commandments, written in the book of the law or Old Covenant, and was placed at the side of the ark (Exodus 24; Deuteronomy 32-33)

The third type of law was the ceremonial law which consists of the law of the priesthood, the tabernacle, the feasts, the sacrificial system, and the laws of purification (Exodus 25-40; Leviticus 1-7, 9-10, 16, 23).

Connor points out that there is an addition type of law based on the work of the Cross and the perfect sinless Man. The law of the New Covenant is the Law of Love.

11 *Besides this you know what [a critical] hour this is, how it is high time now for you to wake up out of your sleep (rouse to reality). For salvation (final deliverance) is nearer to us now than when we first believed (adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Christ, the Messiah).*
12 *The night is far gone and the day is almost here. Let us then drop (fling away) the works and deeds of darkness and put on the [full] armor of light.*
13 *Let us live and conduct ourselves honorably and becomingly as in the [open light of] day, not in reveling (carousing) and drunkenness, not in immorality and debauchery (sensuality and licentiousness), not in quarreling and jealousy.*
14 *But clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah), and make no provision for [indulging] the flesh [put a stop to thinking about the evil cravings of your physical nature] to [gratify its] desires (lusts).*

Two words, among others, used for time in the Greek New Testament are *chronos* and k*airos*. *Chronos* is time in sequence (i.e,, first this happens, and then this happens and then this happens) and is the word from which we get the English word *chronological*. Then there is kairos. *Kairos* is much more difficult to define. It has to do with a set time or season or fullness of time. For example, Jesus came in a *kairos* time. *"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law"* (Galatians 4:4). His Second Coming also will be a *kairos* time: *"…That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-in Him"* (Ephesians 1:10). The best way I can explain the difference is this. When a woman gets pregnant, the doctor calculates the due date from the time that the baby was actually conceived. That is nine months and a *chronos* time. The baby, however, rarely comes on the due date and comes often unexpectedly in the fullness of time or a *kairos* time. The time being spoken of in these verses is a *kairos* time. Paul is not telling the people that on May 1st, 57 AD, they need to wake-up. He is telling them that they, and we, are in a *kairos* time or season when we must wake up out of our stupor.

The early church expected the Second Coming at any time. In our generation many have unbiblically predicted the Second Coming. He will come in the fullness of time, but we must be ready at all times. It certainly is nearer than when we first believed. Most prophetic people believe that He might well come in our lifetime and world events seem to be supporting that theory.

Paul warns against six sins that hinder the Christian walk and keep us from preparing for the Coming of the Lord:

a. Revelry: partying with friends
b. Drunkenness: All the Greeks and their children drank wine because the water supply was often unclean. They drank very diluted wine, however, and considered drunkenness an especially disgraceful thing.
c. Immorality: The word, translated *immorality* here, literally means a bed and speaks to people who see no value in fidelity and take pleasure in the bed whenever and wherever they can find it.
d. Shamelessness: Paul is speaking here of people who do shameful deeds and don't care who sees them. They have no shame.
e. Contention: This contention derives from uncontrolled and unholy competition. It comes from a desire for position and power.
f. Envy: This is a spirit of jealousy that covets what others have.

The last verse in this section is similar to Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24; and Galatians 5:16. Bishop Moule comments on this verse: "Put on, clothe, and arm yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. We can put Him on as *Lord*, surrendering ourselves to His absolute sovereignty and will. We can put Him on as *Jesus*, clasping the truth that He, our human brother, yet divine, saves His people from their sins. We can put Him on as *Christ*, our Head, anointed without measure by the eternal Spirit, and sending the same Spirit into His Body members so that we are indeed one with Him and receive into our being the resources of His life."