

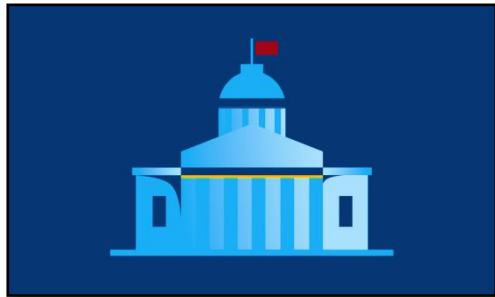


# ROMANS

## Lesson 12: The Believer and the State

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What is the relationship between the believer and the state<sup>1</sup>? The question has been debated down through the centuries. Which is supreme, the church or the state? God pulls no punches in dealing with the issue and what he has to say to the genuine believer is startling to some persons.



### A. CENTRAL QUESTION

What is the relationship between the believer and the state?

### B. ROMANS CHAPTER 13 (NLT)

#### The Believer and the State (13:1-7)

*Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. 2 So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. 3 For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. 4 The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. 5 So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. 6 Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.*

#### The Believer and His Fellow Citizens (13:8-10)

*Owe nothing to anyone-- except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. 9 For the*

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<sup>1</sup> "State" meaning the civil government of a country.

*commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These-- and other such commandments-- are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.)*

### **The Believer and the Threat of Time (13:11-14)**

*This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. 13 Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. 14 Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*

## **C. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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1. Romans 13:1 says, "Everyone must submit to governing authorities." Do you agree with this verse? If not, what are some specific situations when you might not submit to government authorities? For help with this question see: <https://www.gotquestions.org/civil-disobedience.html>.



2. Romans 13:4 says, "The authorities are God's servants." Does this mean all authorities, good and bad, are appointed by God? Why or why not?

3. Romans 13:8 says, "Owe nothing to anyone." Does that mean Christians should never take out a loan? Why or why not?

4. Romans 13:12 says "...the day of salvation (return of Jesus Christ) will soon be here." It's been over 2000 years since this was written and yet Jesus, our salvation, has not returned. Is this verse in error? Why or why not? For help with this question see: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-coming-soon.html>.



## D. SUMMARY

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1. There are three institutions established by God because God set them up as a means by which men are to relate to each other and to him as God. These are:
  - The \_\_\_\_\_
  - The \_\_\_\_\_
  - The \_\_\_\_\_
2. The will of God permeates and supersedes every aspect of life. It is God's will that takes precedence over \_\_\_\_\_  
(Matthew 6:33).
3. Remember, our salvation and security rests alone in God, not in \_\_\_\_\_.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS**

#### **"What is Separation of Church and State?"**

<https://www.freedomforum.org/separation-of-church-and-state/#:~:text=The%20idea%20of%20separation%20of,Americans'%20spiritual%20and%20religious%20lives.>

#### **Religion and the Founding of the American Republic**

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel06.html#:~:text=Religion%20was%20addressed%20in%20the,to%20a%20%22national%22%20religion.>

#### **The Church-State Relationship**

<https://gracevalley.org/sermon/the-church-state-relationship/>