

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ROMANS 13****Romans 13**

God is sovereign over all the earth. He rules and overrules. According to this passage, God is the One who designed government so there might be order in society. Often, people foolishly say things like, "Well, that was well and good for Paul and the Apostles, but they did not live under the same government we do." This is correct. In almost every case, Paul and the other Apostles lived under the iron fist of Rome. More than likely, when Paul wrote these words, he was suffering under the cruel hand of Nero, one of the most bizarre rulers of the Roman empire and ruthless when it came to those who were followers of Jesus. Yet Paul said one should submit to those who are in authority.

Are there times when we must commit acts of civil disobedience? The simple answer is yes. But those times are not the norm in life. In the book of Acts, the apostles had to make choices at times to obey God rather than men. If we live during certain times in history, so will others. So, we may have to do so in the years ahead. In this short commentary, I cannot deal with the subject in a way to enter into the complexities of the issue. Still, I can tell you that we must not ever violate other direct commands by God Himself to obey this general teaching of Romans 13. Remember, it was during this same period that Paul wrote these words. He would have written to the Hebrews not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as some were doing. If we are going to be arrested for something, it is

better to suffer for doing good rather than doing evil. It is noteworthy that the Apostle Paul was arrested and ultimately found guilty of failure to submit to an earthly potentate and suffered the consequences of his choices. So, too, we may be called on to disobey to be faithful to God. If so, God will give us grace as He did the Apostles and tens of thousands of others through the centuries. Any of us might be called upon to seal our testimony with our blood. It is often said that the *"Blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."*

Paul ends the chapter with the admonition to love each other and treat one another with dignity and respect and reminds the Romans of the words of Jesus, to ***"love one another..."*** He instructs them to take off as old clothes the way they thought and lived before coming to Jesus and how we are to live since becoming a part of the family of God.

"And do this, understanding the occasion. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day has drawn near. So let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh." (Romans 13:11-14)

Prayer and Action Steps

Father in heaven, thank You that in the Lord Jesus, we have a choice and the power and grace to live a life of obedience to You. Please forgive us when we choose to live selfishly. Thank You for the Holy Spirit and His enablement to "Put on Jesus and make no provision for the flesh." Amen