



73 Twenty Ministries
BIBLE STUDIES FOR THE ENTHUSIAST

RENDER TO CAESAR, SUBMIT TO CHRIST: BIBLICAL CITIZENSHIP IN A FALLEN WORLD

EXPLORING ROMANS 13 IN THE CONTEXT OF TODAY'S MORAL
CHALLENGES

73 TWENTY MINISTRIES

A TEACHING MINISTRY OF DR. ROBERT C CROWDER

73TWENTY MINISTRIES: CHARTING THE WORD, NAVIGATING FAITH

Rooted in a lifelong passion for teaching and guiding others in Biblical truth, 73Twenty Ministries is devoted to helping believers navigate the depths of Scripture with both clarity and conviction.

The name 73Twenty holds deep personal significance: it comes from my childhood home at 7320 Greenwood Boulevard in Denver, Colorado. It was here that the foundations of my faith, study, and service were first laid. With the majestic Rocky Mountains ever-present on my horizons, God's Word has been a constant guide and presence throughout my life. The logo of 73Twenty Ministries, with its three mountain peaks in gray, blue, and orange, symbolizes not only the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but also the unwavering foundation of Biblical truth upon which our faith is built.

For more than twenty years, I've served as a pastor, teacher, mentor, and author, committed to making Biblical truths accessible and applicable. Through sermons, Bible studies, books, articles, and other teaching resources, 73Twenty Ministries exists to equip believers, strengthen churches, and proclaim the Gospel. Our mission is both simple and profound: to chart the Word, guiding faith, and helping others anchor their lives in Scripture.

At 73Twenty Ministries, we believe that faithful Biblical study should engage the mind, transform the heart, and shape daily life. Whether through exegetical teaching, character studies, theological exploration, or practical application, every resource is crafted to deepen understanding, strengthen conviction, and encourage obedience to God's Word.

As a ministry grounded in a conservative Baptist, dispensationalist approach, we focus on Biblical exposition, doctrinal clarity, and practical discipleship. We uphold the belief that Scripture is the authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God, and it's our privilege to help others navigate its timeless truths.

I invite you to explore the resources at 73TwentyMinistries.com and join us on this journey of discovery, growth, and unwavering faith. Together, let's stand on the mountain of God's truths and proclaim His name to every generation.

For His glory alone,

Dr. Robert C. Crowder, Th.D.

Founder, 73Twenty Ministries

RENDER TO CAESAR, SUBMIT TO CHRIST: BIBLICAL CITIZENSHIP IN A FALLEN WORLD

Question:

I struggle with this passage when there are people in the government who promote wickedness like sex change for children, identify as whatever you want to be, using taxes for evil causes. Yet we are told not to resist their authority. I know that Daniel and Joseph were close to pagan kings and God used them in these roles. But how far do we regular citizens have to go in submission to evil leaders?

Text:

Romans 13:1-7 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. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

INTRODUCTION

Woodrow Kroll's introduction to Romans 13¹ highlights an important truth—the tension between believers and civil authority is nothing new. Believers today wrestle with how to live under governments that do not always uphold righteousness.

We must understand Paul's teaching in Romans 13:1–7 within its historical and biblical context. The Roman Empire, under which Paul wrote, was a pagan, often unjust regime. Yet, Paul still instructed believers to submit to governing authorities because God has ordained government to maintain order. However, this submission was not without limits. The early church knew well that when human law conflicted with God's law, obedience to God took precedence (Acts 5:29).

Living a sacrificed and servant life requires submission to God-ordained authority. But that submission is never an excuse for moral compromise. The examples of Jesus (Mark 12:13–17), Paul (Acts 18:12–13), and the Thessalonian believers (Acts 17:6–7) demonstrate that while others falsely accused Christians of rebellion, these Christians prioritized advancing God's kingdom, not overthrowing earthly rulers.

¹ Kroll, Woodrow. *The Book of Romans: Righteousness in Christ*. 21st Century Biblical Commentary Series, Volume 6. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002.

For today's believers, the challenge is obvious:

- Obey the government in matters that do not contradict Scripture.
- Resist peacefully and biblically when laws contradict God's commands.
- Live as faithful citizens of both earthly nations and God's kingdom.

As Paul unfolds in this chapter, the Christian's primary allegiance is to God, but within that, they are to be exemplary citizens—not as a matter of passive compliance, but as a testimony to the transforming power of Christ in a fallen world.

How are believers to apply Romans 13:1–7 when governing authorities seem to promote wickedness? As a conservative Baptist who holds to biblical authority, individual soul liberty, and the separation of church and state, I want to address your question with both scriptural clarity and doctrinal soundness.

UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT

Romans 13:1 states, “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.” This passage teaches that government is part of God's divine order. Even though rulers may be ungodly, God establishes the institution of government for order and justice (cf. 1 Peter 2:13–17). Paul wrote these words during the reign of Nero, one of the most wicked Roman emperors, yet he still upheld submission to the governing authorities.

THE LIMITS OF SUBMISSION

While Romans 13 calls for submission, it does not teach blind obedience to all governmental decrees. There are clear biblical exceptions when governing authorities command what is contrary to God's Word:

- The Hebrew Midwives (Exodus 1:17) disobeyed Pharaoh's order to kill Hebrew baby boys.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3) refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's idol.
- Daniel (Daniel 6) continued to pray despite the king's decree.
- The Apostles (Acts 5:29) said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” when commanded to stop preaching about Christ.

When the government commands something that violates God's Word, believers must obey God rather than men while accepting any consequences that may come.

APPLYING THIS TO TODAY'S WICKED GOVERNMENTS

You mentioned issues such as promoting gender ideology, using taxes for evil causes, and immoral policies. Here's how a conservative Baptist should approach these concerns:

- Pray for Leaders (1 Timothy 2:1–2). Even when rulers are ungodly, we are commanded to pray for them. This does not mean we approve of their wickedness, but we pray for God's intervention.

- Engage in Lawful Resistance (Acts 16:37–39). Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship when he was treated unlawfully. In democratic societies, Christians should vote, petition, and speak against evil policies while remaining within the bounds of the law.
- Refuse to Comply with Immorality (Daniel 6:10). If the government mandates participation in sinful practices (e.g., forcing churches to recognize same-sex marriages, compelling medical professionals to perform gender transition surgeries, etc.), we must refuse and accept the cost.
- Continue to Preach the Gospel Boldly (Acts 4:19–20). The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) is always our primary mission, regardless of government policies.

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER WICKED LEADERS

While we must stand against wickedness, we also trust that God is ultimately in control (Proverbs 21:1). He has used Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Pilate, and other wicked rulers to accomplish His divine purposes. Joseph and Daniel did not compromise their faith, yet they worked within pagan governments to influence righteousness where they could.

THE BAPTIST PERSPECTIVE ON CHURCH AND STATE

Historically, Baptists have supported religious liberty and the separation of church and state, not in the modern secular sense, but in the biblical sense that the government should not dictate the church’s faith and practice (Matthew 22:21). However, this does not mean the church remains silent on moral issues. Christians must speak truth to power as John the Baptist did (Luke 3:19).

CONCLUSION: A BALANCED APPROACH

- Submit to government in matters that do not contradict Scripture.
- Resist peacefully and biblically when government mandates sin.
- Use legal avenues to fight against wicked policies.
- Trust in God’s sovereignty and continue to spread the Gospel.

If a time comes when the government demands complete compliance with evil, believers must be prepared to suffer for righteousness’ sake (2 Timothy 3:12). But until then, we must stand firm, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16), and proclaim the truth boldly in a dark world.

FOR FURTHER READING

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