Lesson 15 Romans 13

Right Relationships

*Note: Paul was no stranger to the abuses of authority. He had experienced severe persecution at the hands of evil and religious authorities.*

1. What is Paul's view of authority and those who exercise it (vs. 1-5)?

1 Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God.

2 Therefore, whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves.

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear to good conduct, but to evil. Do you wish to have no fear of authority? Then do what is good and you will receive approval from it,

4 for it is a servant of God for your good. But if you do evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword without purpose; it is the servant of God to inflict wrath on the evildoer.

5 Therefore, it is necessary to be subject not only because of the wrath but also because of conscience.

2. *Challenge Question:* How do you think Paul's view of authorities apply to wicked and perverse rulers like Nero or Hitler?

3. What are some reasons Paul gives for submitting to those in authority (vs. 1-5)?

4. Read Acts 5:27-32. Do you think it is ever appropriate to resist rather than to submit to the authorities? Explain.

Acts 5:27-32

27 When they had brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them,

28 “We gave you strict orders [did we not?] to stop teaching in that name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man’s blood upon us.”

29 But Peter and the apostles said in reply, “We must obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree.

31 God exalted him at his right hand\* as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins.

32 We are witnesses of these things, as is the holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him.”

5. In verses 6-7, Paul suggests some practical ways we should submit to those in authority. Can you think of other examples?

6 This is why you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

7 Pay to all their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, toll to whom toll is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

6. How does the focus of the passage shift in verses 8-14?

8 Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, [namely] “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

10 Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

11 And do this because you know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed;

12 the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness [and] put on the armor of light;

13 let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

7. Do you think vs. 8 means that Christians should never incur any debts (mortgage, car, etc.)? Explain.

8. Why is love a debt that can never be fully paid (vs. 8-10)?

9. What does the "clothing" in verse 14 mean to you?

10. How could you use this section (vs. 11-14) to explain holiness?