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a *Grace Notes* course

## **The Epistle to the ROMANS**

an expositional Bible study

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### **Lesson 13**

**Romans 13:1-14**

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*Grace Notes*

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# The Epistle to the Romans

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## Chapter 13

### INTRODUCTION:

The introductory statement of Romans 13 is found in the last verse of Romans 12:

**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

It is on that statement that Paul now writes about the Christians relationship to human government (Romans 13:1-7).

### PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE GOOD:

1. This GOOD is AGATHOS the intrinsic, absolute good of God.
2. It cannot come out of evil: Romans 3:8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil that good may come?

Paul ridicules the very thought that you can begin with evil and end up with good. The ends do not justify the means.

3. This good cannot come out of the human nature: Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.
4. The heart of man is desperately wicked, the Sin Nature can produce a relative good but not a good of absolute value.

**Isaiah 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.**

5. The source of this good is God: James 1:17 Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.
6. At salvation God began a good work in us: Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
7. When we were born again, we were created with the divine intention of producing good works: Ephesians 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good

works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

8. This increase of this good in the believe is proportional to the amount of doctrine learned and used:

Colossians 1:10 That you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

9. We are to take the opportunity to do good (Galatians 6:10), we can have production which is good (III John 11), we can speak good to others (Ephesians 4:29), good produced leads to edification (Romans 15:2), and it allows us to share with others (Ephesians 4:28).

10. Only the believer has the opportunity to produce this good, and the ability to do so rests on doctrine, faith, and the freewill decision to do so by the power of Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:5 Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Philemon 1:14 But without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will.

11. To obey authority is good: Titus 3:1 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed.

Which brings us back to how we can overcome evil, not by rebellion, not by civil disobedience, not by revolution, but by sticking with the plan of God and His good and that good lived out in us.

Are attitudes and actions are to defensive, not offensive. We are to stick with the good of God to overcome the evil that is in the world and the evil that is promoted by Satan.

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The mandates for proper defensive action against the power of Satan are very important.

1. Ephesians 6:10ff, Pick up and put on the full armor from God that you may always be able to hold your ground in the evil day.

The evil day is the day of attack. The Roman soldier was able to get dressed for battle in a few minutes and be ready to defend himself.

2. James 4:7 Hold your ground against the devil and he will flee from you.
- 1 Peter 5:8-9 Be of sober spirit [clear thinking], be alert, your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for some believer to devour; therefore, hold your ground against him standing firm in doctrine.
3. What God has provided in grace for our defensive action has no weaknesses. When we use our human strengths and abilities against Satan, we are defeated and overrun.
4. Encouragement for defensive action against Satan is found in I John 4:4, where we are told,

Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

The believer who gets involved in fighting evil, in offensive action, is distracted away from the truth of God and the life that is to be dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

In Israel during the time of Jeremiah horrible things were going on at the Mount of Olives. Sexual sacrifice to pagan gods, child sacrifice.

**Jeremiah 32:35 And they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through {the fire} to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.**

But who solves the problem, not the people, not believers, but God: Jeremiah 32:28 Therefore thus says the Lord, Behold, I am about to give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it.

The Lord Jesus Christ submitted to the authority of the Roman government although it was a government that was imposing totalitarian rule on Palestine and the Jews.

His obedience was to the point of death on a Roman Cross.

In the Epistles we do not find any case of civil disobedience or offensive action taken against evil and in the beginning decades of the church, in both Greece and the rest of the Roman empire there were more social ills than today.

What is the point? As Christians it is not our responsibility to reform society to our standard. When we can legally and morally make a difference, we do. We run for office, we vote, we express our position. But we do not disobey the governing authorities.

Romans 13 The Christian's relationship to government

Why does Paul turn from his statement on how to overcome evil to human government? Because so much evil is manifest in human government. A quick look at history is all that is needed to demonstrate that point.

#### Romans 13:1

**Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.**

God has established the orderly function of man on the earth and instituted human government as part of the Law of Divine Establishment that are applied to all mankind.

**I Peter 2:13-17 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but {use it} as bondslaves of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.**

In the creation of the human race God established certain divine institutions and then has added certain laws of divine establishment:

1. Volition: In the Garden
2. Marriage: In the Garden
3. Family: Both in and out of the Garden
4. Nationalism: Out of the Garden

Each is established for orderly function and maximum freedom. All but one functioned even in perfect environment. Even family had the potential of functions in that perfect sinless environment.

But one is necessitated by the presence of sin and evil after the fall and that is human government.

We cannot in this fallen world get along without human government and yet human government is so often the source of abuse and evil.

But we are called to a higher standard and a higher method of overcoming evil...stick with the good of God.

The word "be in subjection" is HUPOTASSW present, passive, imperative.

The passive voice indicates that we receive the ability to do this through faith in God's plan and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The IMPERATIVE makes this a command, not a sometimes option.

The word AUTHORITY is the word for delegated authority and there is no authority except by God.

Why can this be said? Because God is the absolute, final, sovereign authority and he has delegated the responsibility of human government to mankind.

QUESTION: Does He ever interfere? YES!!!

Nations were established as a result of God's interference in the affairs of human government.

What was Nimrod doing at the tower of Babel?

Trying to establish a totalitarian government and God interfered and confounded the languages and as a result, many nations.

DID GOD INTERFERE WITH ISRAEL, YES!!

With Rome? Yes. With us in the US? I believe so but history and being face to face will bear that out.

HERE IS THE POINT: God is in control, we are not.

### Romans 13:2

**Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.**

The AUTHORITY of verse 2 is the same as the AUTHORITY of verse one, human government.

To RESIST is the opposite of to SUBMIT.

TASSW with the negative prefix ANIT rather than UPO.

This is actively going against authority. It is not a passive concept but an active concept.

If it was passive or a casual lack of submission due to ignorance it would have been a simple A prefix which would negate submission. But it is ANTI authority.

To do this is the same as opposing the ordinance of God.

The word ORDINANCE is a singular dative of advantage.

The SINGLE ORDINANCE OF GOD is recognition and respect for authority.

To RESIST is a rejection of authority, God's authority.

And the believer doing so receives condemnation: From the government whose laws he or she is resisting and from God.

The issue that comes out of this is civil disobedience

PRINCIPLE: As Christians we have available to us an eternal solution to man's temporal problems. Most believers today are distracted from those eternal solutions and attempt to solve man's problems by temporal means.

**Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

### The Bible and Activism

There is a tremendous emphasis among evangelical Christians today to enter into activism, to practice social and political engineering. This

attitude and actions manifests the fact that most Christians do not understand that God is in control and do not have a clue about the life of faith.

Christian involvement in vigorous and often illegal activity to achieve political goals is manifestation of this arrogance.

- Christians stick their nose into other people's business.
- Christians intrude into the privacy of other people.
- Christians violate the constitutional rights of other people.
- Christians destroy property, e.g., abortion clinics.

Activism within a nation is a terrible cancer. Christian activism is a sign of a distracted life.

**Romans 12:1-3, I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your logical service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.**

Satan is the sponsor of Christian activism, which is the believer involved in the improvement of the devil's world. This sees the Church Age believer being involved in the temporal solutions to the problems of life when spiritual solutions are available.

**II Corinthians 2:11 In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his strategies. One of Satan's strategies is to get the believer involved in Christian activism.**

**II Corinthians 11:3 But I'm afraid, lest the serpent, who deceived Eve by his craftiness, deceive your minds, and that you should be**

**led astray from the purity and virtue which belongs to Christ.**

**James 4:6 He gives greater grace. Therefore, the Scripture says [Prov 3:34], God makes war against the arrogant, but He gives grace to the humble. Therefore, submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

The resistance of the devil referred to here means to avoid Christian activism. Christian activism combines arrogance with legalism, or self-righteous arrogance with crusader arrogance.

**I Peter 5:6-8 Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may promote you at the proper time. Casting all your cares [worries] on Him, because He cares for you. Be vigilant [alert], for your enemy the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking some believer to devour. But resist him, firm in doctrine.**

Activism finds the worldly Christian becoming humanistic in his philosophy. Therefore, in reversionism he becomes occupied with temporal solutions. He advocates systems to improve man's environment rather than his relationship to God.

Christian activism includes the social Gospel, social engineering, social crusades related to moral degeneracy, civil disobedience, violence, destruction of property, and even revolution.

**CIVIL-DISOBEDIENCE:** When and where is it legitimate?

The evangelical Christian is becoming increasingly involved in civil-disobedience. This is being done to the point of a major distraction from the advance in doctrine that should characterize the believer's life.

When is a Christian obligated to obey man's laws?

While there is no precedent in the Bible for civil disobedience, we also must see that there is a strong biblical mandate for obedience to man's laws:

Romans 13:1-5

I Peter 2:13-17

The apostles make several important points in their message:

- Christians are to subject themselves to the governing authorities
- Governing authorities, whether saved or unsaved, are appointed by God. Remember that Paul wrote this during the Roman rule of Nero.
- Resisting governing authorities is the same as resisting God and will bring discipline
- The governing authorities are God's servants, even when they are atheist or pagan. God demonstrated that to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel, chapter four.

However, the greater loyalty for the believer is to God's law and when the two laws, God's and man's, are in conflict we are to obey God's law:

**Acts 4:19-20 But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.**

#### EXAMPLES OF CIVIL-DISOBEDIENCE:

Exodus 1:15-21 The Pharaoh of Egypt made slaves of the people of Israel. Since Israel was growing in population while in Egypt to over 2,000,000 people, the Pharaoh charged two Hebrew midwives with population control. This was government sponsored planned parenthood. They were instructed to kill any male children when they were born.

Because the midwives feared God more than Pharaoh, they disobeyed the law and did not kill any male children. They were commanded by law to do something that violated God's law and they disobeyed and even lied to the authorities regarding what they did.

There are certain inalienable rights we have as human beings: Life, liberty, and the ownership of property.

These rights are given by God not man and present a higher law that we are to follow.

Joshua 2:1-6 and 15. Rahab of Jericho refused to give up the spies of Israel who were hiding in her home and even lied to the authorities regarding their whereabouts.

She protected the lives of the spies because she was following a higher law from God. Hebrews 11:31 lists her as an OT hero because she was a believer in Jehovah and chose to obey God rather than men.

Had she told the whereabouts of the spies, they would have killed, she would have been killed. Thus the higher law of life enters in.

Daniel 3: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disobeyed the law of Nebuchadnezzar in refusing to bow down to an idol. They refused. This is an act of civil-disobedience but in doing so they obeyed God.

AND NOTE: They disobeyed that law but did not resist the penalty that awaited them.

They were thrown into a fiery furnace, but God protected them...they did not protect themselves.

Daniel 6:10-13. Daniel broke a law that said no one could pray or petition anyone but king Darius. He was caught, accused, and thrown into the lion's den. He disobeyed man and obeyed God and God spared his life.

The Magi of Matthew 2:7-8. The wise men of Persia were ordered by Herod to report back to him when they found the Christ child. But they were warned by God in a dream not to obey this law of Herod. Herod was the king and his orders carried the force of law and penalties for disobedience. They chose to obey God.

Acts 4:19-20. Peter and John were taken before the Sanhedrin and were ordered to not preach the Gospel or teach about Jesus Christ. Since Christ had commissioned them to do just that, they chose to obey God rather than men.

Acts 16. Paul in Philippi was thrown in Jail along with Silas. After their miraculous release and the conversion of the jailer, they were ordered to leave town. Instead they staged a sit in. But what was the issue? They were being forbidden to preach the Gospel and that was even a violation of Paul's rights of free speech as a Roman citizen, so he refused to get out of town by sundown.

### Analysis of these examples

The Scriptures provide examples of proper time and situations in which believers broke civil laws and royal edicts.

In each case the believer and a civil or royal authority are all who are involved. Only two parties. The believer is being ordered by man's law to do something which violates God's law and they chose to break that law. No one else is involved.

In every case the issue at law is very clearly a violation of God's higher law. Asked to murder babies, ask to bow down to an idol, ordered not to pray, commanded not to witness, or preach the Gospel and truth of Christ.

There was no subjectivity involved and each person could stand solidly upon clear Scriptures that needed not extraneous interpretation or application.

Civil disobedience today is taken by many Christians to involve a third party. The person they perceive as being harmed by that law.

It is not a matter between the Christian and the governing authority, it is between someone else and then the Christian and then the government.

Also, in current civil disobedience today, the laws that is in question are in question in the Bible also and are only laws that opposes God's law as perceived by these activists.

The result is often that they break a clear law of God, a good law, and get involved in activity that clearly violates the word of God. Such as murdering an abortion doctor.

The biblical examples of civil disobedience would apply in a situation where the government attempted to deny you of your inalienable rights to life, liberty, property.

Part of those rights include the right to worship God. And to obey the higher laws God has established for His people.

If the government told us we could not meet, we would meet but the choice to do so would be between each believer and the Lord. Not a third party demonstrating for our rights.

In any case of civil disobedience the one who chooses to break a law that is contrary to God's

law must do so out of a personal firm conviction from doctrine resident in their soul. Not out of the persuasion of others or out of peer pressure.

**Romans 14:5 One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind.**

### Christian involvement in political and social activity:

As Christians we are to be responsible citizens. We are to obey laws, and support the concept of authority and order (Romans 13:1-5 and I Peter 2:13-17).

Any involvement we may desire to take on political or social issues must be within the law and within our rights and privileges as citizens.

We must at all times bear in mind that this is the Devil's world. That man is influenced by systems of evil and that things are going to get worse not better.

We are not, however, to be fatalistic, and think that we can do nothing to improve our quality of life in our periphery.

We can support honest candidates, we can help keep our city safe, we can support police department personnel, we can work to keep our city clean and our environment stable.

**BUT:** Whenever any of those activities become a distraction to our primary purpose in life, we have stumbled in our spiritual walk, and are setting aside the purpose for which we have been left on the face of the earth...which is:

**II Peter 3:18 To grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.**

We may enjoy as an avocation involvement in politics, economics, environmental concerns, PTA, school boards, city government.

But when we get involved in those activities at the expense of Bible class we are trying to function in the Devil's world spiritually unarmed and ill prepared.

Hebrews 12:1-2 very clearly tells us where our focus should be as Christians:

**Hebrews 12:1-2** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

PRINCIPLE: Do not be distracted from the truth

**Philippians 3:13-14** Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what {lies} ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 13:3**

**For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;**

In this verse the ones who rule within a human system of government are in view.

They are not a cause for fear for the one who is doing good works.

GOOD is AGATHOS, as in Romans 12:21. If we are about our business we will be doing the good and if so we have no reason to fear.

If the GOOD of God conflicts with the authority of the rulers we still have no reason to fear.

**Matthew 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

**Hebrews 13:6** We confidently say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?

No reason to fear: Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

But who should fear? The ones who are involved in Evil and that can be extended to even those who

are trying to overcome evil in anyway other than through doing the good.

v 3 Continued: Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;

The way to avoid fearing authority is by doing what is the good, again with the definite article and the same word we had in Romans 12:21.

When we do the good of God, we can even expect in the future, praise from authority.

Interesting way this is said. Paul uses a future tense and with that shows that what is occurring in the present, the doing of the good of God, will result in praise from authority...in the future.

Now since the ultimate authority is God and all other authority is delegated, this praise may not come until we are face to face with Him, who is the ultimate authority.

**Romans 13:4**

**For [you see] it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.**

The NAS does a good job here. At the end of v 3 a third person feminine pronoun is used and the antecedent is the word AUTHORITY, a feminine noun.

Now in v 4 we have a verb that assume the pronoun HE IS or IT IS.

The wording is a bit ambiguous but the preferred rendering would be a the NASV has it, IT IS, referring to AUTHORITY rather than to RULER.

And it is this AUTHORITY that ministers to us.

What ministers to us for the GOOD is authority. If we do EVIL instead of GOOD we should be afraid of authority.

Authority bears the sword, of punishment, and it avenger who brings wrath upon the one doing EVIL.

In the OT the word SWORD was used as a synonym for discipline.

The SWORD removes the one doing evil in a society from society either by incarceration or by capital punishment.

### Principles regarding Authority

INTRODUCTION: Responsibility requires function and function requires authority to carry out the responsibilities. Authority can be abused but God is in control and can and will intervene in the affairs of mankind on earth.

Responsibility without authority is ineffective and frustrating

Authority without responsibility is despotism

There are five basic things that every child must learn from his parents or church before he is launched on society.

The Principle of Respect for Authority:

- Authority of the Word of God: Heb 4:12
- Authority of God the Father: Deut 6:4
- Authority of a pastor-teacher: Eph 4; Heb 13
- Authority of rulers of state under D.I. #4, Nationalism
- Authority of a Judge on the Bench--local to national. 1 Cor 6:1-8
- Authority of parents under institution of family. Genesis 4-10, Eph 6:1-4, 2 Tim 1
- Authority of business: Boss, employee, Col 3, Eph 5, 1 Tim 6
- Authority of the coach: Athletics. 1 Cor 9:24-27
- Authority of the military: Chain of Command Matt 8:8-10
- Authority of Education: Teacher in a classroom.
- Authority of human volition: The right to make certain choices for yourself under certain conditions.

The Principle of Self-Control: Doing the pleasant, as well as the unpleasant. 2 Thess 3:8-15, Gal 5:23, the word temperance means self control. The entire book of Proverbs.

The Respect for the Privacy of Others: Gal 6:5, various passages in Proverbs, 1 Peter 3:1-7 (wife winning her unbelieving husband to the Lord).

A believer is not to stick his nose into other peoples business, to malign, gossip, etc. Any passage that condemns gossip is an privacy (invasion of privacy).

Respect for the Property of Others: Any one of the many passages on stealing, protection of property.

Respect for the Rights of Others: The right of another person to make a volitional decision (when adult) or the right of parents to make volitional decisions for their children.

### Romans 13:5

**Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.**

Subjection and authority orientation is necessary because we live in a fallen world with fallen men. There is a need for structure and order in order to have freedom.

In anarchy there is no freedom, only fear.

Paul gives two reasons for this need for submitting to delegated authorities:

External: Human government had the right to wield the sword for the purpose of wrath. We should have a respect for authority, a submission to it because if we do not we may feel the sword.

That is why you always check your speedometer when you look into your rear view mirror and find that you are being followed by a Highway Patrol car.

The second reason is internal, for conscience sake: The conscience of the soul is the place for our norms and standards. We all have them, some higher than others, so lower, but we all have norms and standards.

In submitting to governing authorities, we do so because we know, in our souls, that we must. We know that standards must be observed and obeyed.

The slightest norm or standard in the soul requires us to obey, and if we obey the individual norms and standards we set, then we must also obey the collective norms and standards set by society.

**Romans 13:6**

**For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.**

Because of the two fold reason for submitting to authorities we are also to pay taxes.

Now no one likes to pay taxes. They did not in Rome in Paul's day and we do not like paying them today. But we know they are necessary. There are abuses in nay tax system. Some systems are better than others but no system is perfect.

In Jesus' day there was a poll tax or head tax. A tax that was levied simply because you exists.

Matthew 17:24-27

**v 24 And when they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter, and said, Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?**

**v 25 He said, Yes. And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons [royal family members] from strangers [citizens of the realm]?**

Jesus was saying that because He was the King of kings He should be exempt and His disciples, family, should be exempt.

**v 26 And upon his saying, From strangers, Jesus said to him, Consequently the sons are exempt.**

**v 27 But, lest we give them offense, go to the sea, and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a stater [a four drachma coin]. Take that and give it to them for you and Me.**

The word RULERS is LEITOURGOS, a public minister or servant of the state. This is the government official and he is here described as one who is set in place by God.

**Romans 13:7**

**Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.**

Taxation, custom payments, fear or respect of authority, honor to the office of leadership.

All expressions of the way (v 1) Every soul is to be subject unto the higher authorities.

**Romans 13:8**

**Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.**

The word OWE is OFEWILETE and is a present, active, imperative.

It is found throughout the NT often translated owe, debt, that which we ought to do.

Found in Four Areas of the Christian Life:

1. We are to forgive others the debt of sin towards us because God forgave us the debt of our sin towards Him.

Jesus came to pay a debt he did not owe for those who owed a debt they could not pay.

**John 13:14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.**

2. We are under debt to be thankful to God. This is the attitude of gratitude we all should have. Especially for other believers who are growing in grace and doctrine.

**I Thessalonians 2:13 And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.**

3. In marriage there is the owing of debt to one another. This begins with the husband who owes love to his wife.

**Ephesians 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;**

But it is also reciprocal in the marriage relationship, I Corinthians 7:3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4. And then as stated here in Romans 13:8 we owe love to one another:

**I John 3:16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

**I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**

**Romans 15:1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.**

The statement is very strong and is a double negative in the Greek text: Own no one, no thing, except:

The exception of our debt to others is that we owe them love to one another.

Except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled [the] law.

Paul brings together both categories of love, spiritual love and the love of the believer to all others.

ONE ANOTHER is the believer loving other believers.

NEIGHBOR and the FULFILLING OF LAW looks all the way back to the OT Law and brings the principle up to the present where this love fulfills all law.

LAW is without the definite article and is used for the OT Law as well as any other Law system.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Love is violated when we sin against one another. Sins against others is an intrusion of our self centeredness into relationships.
2. Sins are relational, they intrude upon our relationship with God, with others, and even our attitude towards ourselves through guilt and shame.
3. God desires for us not to sin because He desires for us to have good, healthy, supportive, encouraging relationships with others.
4. All sin is ultimately against God. I Corinthians 8:12 And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

God is the one who has told us what sin is and what it will do so although it is against others it is a violation of God's word.

5. The antithesis of sinning against others is obedience to the Word of God. This obedience is accomplished and motivated out of our Love for Christ:

**John 14:15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.**

6. Therefore, the primary direction of our love must be to God but this is only a response to His love for us:

**I John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.**

7. Then and only then can we love others and in doing so fulfill all law of any kind.

**Romans 13:9**

**For this, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

Murder, adultery, theft, covetousness (sixth, seventh, eighth, and tenth commandments)...Two big sins, and one that many are guilty of, and one that nails us all.

We may exclude ourselves from adultery and murder but at one time or another most of us have been guilty of appropriating something that was not ours and all of us, all of mankind has coveted something, sometime.

So we are all guilty...

Then Paul throws in a catch all: And if [1st cc] any other commandment...

There is of course many others, even a part from the OT Law, even in the NT epistles to the Church.

But notice how they diminish when set alongside LOVE.

In light of love, law does not stand a chance.

SUMMED UP is a pres pass ind of a ANA-KE-FALA-IOW which at its root means to hit on the head, and with ANA would mean to do it again. Came to mean a brief, but very accurate statement

that summed up or gathered up many complex concepts.

it was also used in Ephesians 1:10 to gather all things together in Christ, specifically in this present dispensation.

**SO THIS STATEMENT HITS IT ON THE HEAD:** You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18). It fulfills all systems of law.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

1. In marriage the love of husband and wife is mentioned in the Bible by way of Law and Mandates
2. However, husbands do not love wives nor wives husbands because the law tells them they must
3. Love is superior to any mandate regarding marriage love
4. When a husband loves his wife and a wife her husband, everything will fall into place
5. When love is willing to sacrifice, it is willing to give so that the one loved will have the benefit of that love
6. When love is replaced by self centeredness and selfishness, there is no benefit
7. That is true in marriage and it is true in all the relationships we have...if love is there, there is no need for law.

This is stated in the next verse...

#### **Romans 13:10**

**Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.**

The word for WRONG is KAKOS EVIL.

Love as per verse 8, both spiritual love for one another and Christian love for all others, fulfills law.

**PRINCIPLE:** It is love that should distinguish us, not law.

**Romans 13:11-14 THE ISSUE OF URGENCY:**

Paul sees as a motive in fulfilling the law of love the fact that we do not know how much time we have left.

#### **Romans 13:11**

**And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.**

We KNOW the time: The word KNOW is a word that is used in the Greek text for our understanding of something that is only possible because we know God. This is one of the things that human beings cannot know intuitively but can only know because we are believers.

Because of our relationship with Christ, we know that He is coming again...and thus it is time to wake up.

SLEEP looks at inactivity, lack of life, lack of decisions, lack of love which is the context.

We are challenged to wake up because SALVATION, that is being with Christ face to face, is closer now than when we first believed in Christ for salvation number one.

That is true of any generation, of any time, we are closer now than we were even a moment ago.

**TIME, FOR ALL OF US, IS OF THE ESSENCE:**

And it is time right now to take the opportunities all around to show this love.

Now as I look around I see some here who have a lot of gray hair, and I have a bit myself. Once you get to a certain age you realize that the night is nearly over and the day is at hand.

But we also have a lot of young people here who are fresh and strong and full of energy and perhaps do not even give a passing thought to the end of life.

George Bernard Shaw said Youth is such a wonderful thing. it is a shame to waste it on the young.

But let me ask the young men, the young women, the young couples...how much time do you have left?

**THAT IS RIGHT, YOU DO NOT KNOW.** None of us know.

All of us live on the edge of eternity, the Lord could come any moment.

So Paul's reasoning is very powerful, let's get on with loving one another right now. Don't plan on it for later because later may never come.

So every person in ever generation can be challenged to wake up:

**Ephesians 5:14** For this reason it says,  
Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead,  
And Christ will shine on you.

**I Thess. 5:6** So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

BY WAY OF APPLICATION: Man today and in every age must redeem the time.

We may not have another chance. The unbeliever may not have another day to believe in Christ and as Christians we may not have another day to take in Bible Doctrine.

The NT abounds with mandates to consider and use wisely the time we have.

**Ephesians 5:16** Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

**Colossians 4:5** Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

**James 4:14** You [your lives] are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

**Revelation 22:10** Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST the resounding chorus will be if I had only used the time the Lord gave me to seek Him.

AND AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (all unbeliever of all the ages) will be saying the same thing...why did I not seek the Lord when I had the TIME.

In Luke 13 the Lord gives us a parable regarding time:

**LUK 13:23-30** And someone said to Him, Lord, are there just a few who are being saved? And He said to them, Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door,

and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, I do not know where you are from. Then you will begin to say, We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets. And He will say, I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from Me, all you evildoers. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last.

#### Romans 13:12

**The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.**

The next two verses really describe what is said in this verse. And answers the question How to Love?

What are the deeds of darkness? v 13

What is the armor of light? v 14

#### Romans 13:13

Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

We have three couplets each preceded by the negative MJ and within each couplets the connective KAI...

1. Revellings and Drunken Bouts: Those sins that seem to hurt no one except the one doing them
2. Beds and Excesses: Those sins that are a distortion of love
3. Strife and Jealousy: Those sins that no one can see or are easily masked

The first two look at two sins that are both associated with alcohol and intoxication. And look at living for pleasure, living for the party.

REVELLINGS were the custom of people, in the evening, to get drunk, then form a line and dance through the city stopping off at friends home, singing loudly and drinking more. This was all done in honor to Bacchus, the god of wine and drink. So this was a pagan celebration.

DRUNKEN BOUTS looks at drunkenness a part from any pagan celebration. It is just plain out getting drunk.

The next two look at sexual sins. And these look at living for sex. Sex is a powerful force but like any powerful force it can cause tremendous hurt and pain to others.

And Paul uses some very interesting words here. Now many of the GNT words that are associated with sexual sins are related to cultic or pagan temple practices.

The word FORNICATION for example is PORVEIA and is most often used for temple prostitution.

So to make it more basic, Paul avoids that word and used the word for BED...KOITEI

While this can refer to legitimate sexual activity such as in Hebrews 13:4 where it said that the marriage bed is honorable and cannot be defiled by husband and wife.

However this word can also refer to sexual activity that is not legitimate.

So Paul uses this broader word to describe all categories of sexual sins, ones occurring at the pagan temple and ones not related to Greek and Roman paganism.

The second word is ASELGIA and while this can describe sexual excess it can also be used in a broader way for insatiable desires of any kind.

In Ephesians 4:19 this word is used of the reversionists who...having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

They are callous in that they seek to fulfill their desires at the expense of others. They have gone past feelings for the ones they hurt.

The final couplet looks at strife and jealousy. This is the person who lives to cause a stir, cause a

problem, an excitement seeker who vehicle is his need to be right by way of position or possessions:

STRIFE is ERIS and looks at contention, argumentation, a person who wants to quarrel about anything and everything.

The root of this word is TO STRIVE and in secular Greek could be a positive virtue but here it is a negative attitude of argumentation.

JEALOUSY is ZEILOS and as we have seen in the past can be the positive virtue of ZEAL, or as here, the negative idea of jealousy.

BOTH THESE are indicative of the life that is not secure or satisfied. Its security is sought in putting others down because of their ideas and its satisfaction is built not on fulfilled dreams and hopes but on a jealousy that try to keep others from having what they have and the jealous person wants.

NOW LET'S ANALYZE THESE THREE COUPLETS OF DARKNESS:

As believers we are children of light:

**Ephesians 5:8 For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light**

**I Thessalonians 5:5 For you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness.**

**I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.**

To be children of light and yet to be instructed to walk in light indicates that light is a position as well as a potential in the Christian Life.

In Romans 13:8-10 the subject is our love. In verses 11-14 the subject is sins, the works of darkness.

This same pattern is found in Ephesians 5:

v 1-2 The love of the believer

v 3-18 Walking not in darkness and its deeds but in the light, F/HS

This same pattern is found in I John. The subject of John's first epistle is the believers Spiritual love.

But in Chapter one he talks of darkness:

**I John 1:5-7 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

In all three passages, two from Paul's pen, one from John's, the one thing that can block our spiritual love is to walk in darkness, to engage in the deeds of darkness.

In Romans 13 and in Ephesians 5 Paul paints with a broad brush as he describes sins. In Romans 13:13 he even uses some words that can have a positive or at least casual interpretation.

In John 1 John does not even get involved in listing sins that describe walking in darkness but rather states that it is not practicing the truth.

This approach is taken because we are not to get involved with fighting the sin, but rather with dependence upon the Lord.

Our solution from Ephesians 5 is to be F/HS

In I John 1:9 it is to stop denying and instead acknowledge

And here in Romans 13 it is to put on the armor of light.

#### **Romans 13:14**

**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**

When you got up this morning you put on your clothes and as you did so you did so with the intention that your clothing would be suitable for the day. They go where you go and do what you do.

In the same way we are told to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Making Him a part of wherever you go and whatever you do. Live In Christ and that is the way you overcome and that is the way you love.

Paul get very formal, using all three titles of our Savior:

LORD looks at his power to rule, his authority, his power to control and to change lives

JESUS looks at our Savior's love for us, His desire to be our personal Savior, and our very best friend. This name also looks at His humanity and that He never calls upon us to do anything that He has not done and that He has not given us the power to do.

CHRIST looks at his power to deliver. The name Christ is the translation of the word anointed, He is the Messiah and has delivered us at salvation and continues to deliver us in sanctification.

We have three synonymous concepts: Here we see that putting on the armor of light is putting on Jesus Christ. So we take that to the Christian armor in Ephesians 6 and we can see that this is putting on Christ, His character.

Also we have the idea of putting on the new man in Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10. This is also is synonymous with putting on the armor and putting on Christ.

When we put on the armor, put on the light, put on Christ, we are making a volitional decision to depend upon God and what he provides for us.

THE METHOD OF OVERCOMING the darkness is the same method we saw in the topic sentence of Romans 12:21

We do not overcome evil, or sin, or the deeds of darkness by fighting against them...but rather by sticking with God, His good, His Son, Jesus Christ.

The solution is dependence, putting on the Lord Jesus.

And only then can we make no provision for the flesh in regard to lusts.

**I John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith.**

I like the way J.B. Phillips expands this last verse of Romans 13:

Let us be Christ's men, from head to foot, and give no chance for the flesh to have its fling.