

ROMANS From Wretchedness to Righteousness

Study 20

How it Changes us on the Outside

Romans 13:1-14

True Worship Through Transformed Relationships

Recap

Romans 12:9-21 exhorts us to love one another and enemies. Romans 13 talks about our relationship with the government, society and times.

Part 1 of 3: How We Relate to Government (Romans 13:1-7)

Verse 1-4

Romans 13:1-4

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

1) a) Fill in the blanks. According to verses 1-4 and the video lecture, what is the reason for Christians to be subjected to governing authorities?

Rationale of Subjection

Authority delegated by God

Authority to maintain order

b) Discussion question. According to verse 4, governing authorities "are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." What are some examples that both God and governing authorities consider as wrong and deserve punishment?

Verse 5-7

Romans 13:5-7

Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

2) a) Discussion question. According to verse 6- 7 and Mark 12:17, we are to give back what we owe, taxes to the governments who are working as God’s servants, and to God, ourselves as the image of God. What does it mean to give ourselves to God as images of God?

Quick Verse Reference

Mark 12:17
 Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”
 And they were amazed at him.

b) Discussion question. In one of the slides in the video lecture, there are 7 human rights listed, list them here.

Information	Movement	Association	Speech
Religion	Culture	Education	

c) Discussion question. Verse 5 says Christians are to submit to laws under authority not just because of fear of punishment but because of conscience. However, there are times when the law under authority is against our conscience and God’s laws. Name examples of the laws that are different between God and the local government.

Governmental Laws	God’s Laws
Cannot spread the gospel to Muslims	Spread Gospel to everyone

Part 2 of 3: How We Relate to Society (Romans 13:8-10)

Verse 8-10

Romans 13:8-10
 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

3) a) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture and verse 8, Christians owe love to others because they have accepted Christ’s atonement for them. How does Christian love the state and community according to the slide in the video lecture?

Christian obligation to love		
Who?	State	Community
How?	Taxes and obedience	Service

Part 3 of 3: How We Relate to Our Time (Romans 13:11-14)

Verse 11-14

Romans 13:11-14
 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put 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. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

4) a) Fill in the blanks. There are do’s and dont’s listed in verses 11-14. Categorize them in the table below.

Verse	Do’s (Day)	Don’ts (Night)
11	wake up	slumber
12	put on the armor of light	deeds of darkness
13	behave decently	not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy
14	clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ	do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

b) Discussion question. How do we put on the armor of light or clothe ourselves with Jesus Christ? You may refer to the model answer below.

Model Answer

We must put on the armor of light (v.12b) "...let us behave... as in the daytime..."

Paul says that we must work out the implications of this perspective for our behavior. We must behave as in the daytime. This takes imagination and reflection! We are to imagine that the "day has dawned" and that Jesus is right before us. Now, how would I behave? What is really eternally important? What will last forever?

You must clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh (v.14).

This is a strong metaphor. There is one sense, of course, in which we have already "put on Christ" (Gal.3:27; Rom.6:3) in that we are legally righteous before God. We are legally "in him," "covered with him." We've seen this throughout the book of Romans. But the context indicates that this means that we have to live as if we are clothed in him. For example, if a man is in a tuxedo or a woman in long gown and heels, it has an effect upon their behavior. You look in the mirror and you see yourself dressed for an occasion of high dignity and formality, so you behave accordingly. If you forget, and move about and act as if you are in jogging clothes, you will look silly (and you will probably damage your clothes!). Work the illustration out for Christian living. We are supposed to remember "who we are wearing," what he did for us, what he wanted for us, what it cost him. This is much like Romans 6, in which we are told "you are dead to sin" and then told "now act dead to sin!" Remember who you are!

Takeaway for Romans 13:1-14

Part 1 of 3: How We Relate to Government (Romans 13:1-7)

Part 2 of 3: How We Relate to Society (Romans 13:8-10)

Part 3 of 3: How We Relate to Our Time (Romans 13:11-14)

Case Study

Case 1

Harold lived in Paris and was involved in the teaching of students in college. The recent French ruling in 2004, a new secularity law was passed with overwhelming support and a vote of 276 to 20. It banned the wearing of Muslim hijabs, Sikh head coverings, large Christian crosses or crucifixes, Jewish yarmulkes, etc.

Further to that, the French government all banned the full-faced burka which covered the entire face on the basis of it causing a security threat.

3) a) Discussion question. What do you think of the new ruling with the full-face burka?

It has to be noted that while imposing the ban, the government had also made "security of the society" as one of the justifications.

The other reason is the need for Muslims who come into the West to show some commitment to secularism which is the default mode of European society. Hence many feel that ethnic and religious minorities should be assimilated properly and the face veil would hinder assimilation.

The ban on full-face burka should be supported.

b) Discussion question. What do you think about the new secularity law of 2004 which banned the wearing of Muslim hijabs, Sikh's head coverings, large Christian crosses or crucifixes, Jewish yarmulkes, etc

The French law banning Islamic headscarves and other visible religious symbols in state schools would violate the rights to freedom of religion and expression. Under international law, states can only limit religious practices when there is a compelling public safety reason, when the manifestation of religious beliefs would impinge on the rights of others, or when it serves a legitimate educational function (such as prohibiting practices that preclude student-teacher interaction). Muslim headscarves, Sikh turbans, Jewish skullcaps, and large Christian crosses- which are among the visible religious symbols that would be prohibited-do not pose a threat to public health, order, or morals; they have no effect on the fundamental rights and freedoms of other students, and they do not undermine a school's educational function.

This law is an example of the state infringing into the public square and the church or mosque which is a multicultural liberal society that threatens the very nature of our religious freedoms. Oppose such infringements of the state on religion. Harold should teach his students to work to oppose this.

Case 2

Bersih 5 is being organized by Marina Chin to ask for the resignation of the person engulfed in a massive financial scandal.

The yellow tee shirt with Bersih on it has been deemed unlawful to wear by the government and is against the law.

4) a) Discussion question. Can and should a Christian wear such a tee shirt if it is deemed illegal?

b) Discussion question. Can and should a Christian go out and protest peacefully for the stated objectives of the Bersih rally?

c) Discussion question. Should the church as an official organization be involved in such a rally? Or be involved with a particular political party? Why or why not?

Case 3

There has been a massive influx of illegal immigrants and refugees like the Rhohingas from Myanmar. In Sabah it is the Sulus. It is illegal to employ them. They are usually being exploited by unscrupulous people. They have broken the law and have come here illegally.

5) a) Discussion question. In the name of love should we open our borders to take and provide for them all? What is your proposed solution?

b) Discussion question. Some refugees have no status at all being stateless people, what is the role of Christians like yourself towards these people taking into account the command to love in Romans 8-10?

c) Discussion question. Look in Matt 25:31-46 on the judgment on the last day. Do you think this passage applies to us on how we see illegal immigrants?

d) Discussion question. Look at the way our society pays our migrant workers who slave away at our restaurants and factories at low wages. How should we treat migrant workers in our country?

Meditation

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law (Romans 11:21-22 ESV)

What wrong attitudes do I need to repent of?

What is it in these verses that bring comfort?

What is it in these verses that build me up?

Meditate on these for the next week and come back to share with each other how God has spoken to you through the Holy Spirit.

