

Romans 13

Good Citizens, Loving Citizens, Hopeful Citizens

Context

Paul is continuing to provide a picture of what it looks like for us to live lives of worship to God in view of his rich mercy to us in Christ by being transformed through the renewing of our minds so that we live according to his will (Romans 12:1-2). Here he focuses on how we relate to worldly, governing authorities and to each other.

Read Verses 1-7

What is the primary reason Paul urges us to be subject to governing authorities?

What motivations does he point to?

What practical implications does Paul outline?

Paul makes it sound like all rulers are 'good and fair' in this passage, but he is not naïve. What should we do when rulers don't seem as committed to justice and truth as they should be?

(Compare 1 Peter 3:13-17 with Acts 4:18-20)

How are you most tempted to rebel against the authorities that God has established?

How does this passage help you think differently about these situations?

What do you think political activism should and shouldn't look like for Christians?

Verses 8-10

How does the command to 'love one another' relate to the discussion about authorities?

How is 'love' the fulfilment of the law?

Sometimes Christians seem to think God just wants us to 'not do the wrong thing'. What kind of life is he really calling us to?

Think of some concrete examples of what that might look like this week...

Verses 11-14

What does Paul want us to understand about the present time?

What are the implications of this understanding for how we live now?

How does Paul use the imagery of day and night to link our behaviour with our identity?

How does this relate to the previous two sections (v1-10)?

'Thinking about how to gratify the desires of the flesh' is not just about the extremes of sexual immorality and debauchery. What does this kind of thinking look like for you?

What would help you 'clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ' instead?