

Study 13

PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Romans 13

In The Group

- ◆ If you were to describe yourself as a car, what type of car are you?
- ◆ If you were a super-hero, what two super-hero powers would you have (and you can't pick any that someone in the group has already chosen)?
- ◆ If you were marooned on a deserted island (as distinct from a dessert island, or even a desert island :)) what are two things you would like to have with you that you brought in your pocket?

Christians live in the real world. A world where there is crime. A world where there is violence, injustice, and corruption. You may think that I am describing our present day but I am particularly thinking of the first century AD when the Epistles to The Romans was written! You can well imagine the Christians of the first century who were viewed by the Roman authorities with great suspicion. But you can also imagine how these Christians viewed the Roman authorities! The throne of Rome was occupied at the time this Epistle was written by a very young and devilish madman: *Caesar Nero*. Just a few years after this Epistle was delivered, Nero would launch an atrocious and murderous rampage against Christians that would go from 64AD up until the time the Roman Senate and Praetorian Guard “invited” the now lunatic Emperor to commit suicide in 68AD (a period of 1260 days, or 3½ years).

1. Knowing this, why would Paul's statements in Romans 13:1 been to shocking to his audience?

God appoints people to positions of authorities - including the incompetent and the corrupt!

2. Consider Romans 13:2. This must have been quite a challenge for these original recipients who would soon suffer some of the most vicious persecution ever. But how does it apply today? Based on this verse, in what way should Christians speak of their political leaders - especially in public?

If you serve with the Police, Military, or in Politics, you are there because God has placed you there (Romans 13:2).

3. Romans 13:3 assumes that Governments and its agents (Police, Military, Public Servants) are there to uphold law and order and protect its citizens. In light of this verse, how should followers of Christ interact with these agencies and the laws they seek to uphold?
- a) They should always obey the law only whenever a policeman is present or a Highway Patrol Car is nearby
 - b) Followers of Christ should especially seek to cooperate with Government agencies, such as the Police, even when no officer of the Law is present.
 - c) Cheating on Taxes, speeding on the motorway, running red lights, are all perfectly fine for Christians because we have been saved by *grace*.
4. What should happen to a follower of Christ according Romans 13:4 if they are caught breaking the Law? (Is it proper to pray that a guilty Christian gets a lower sentence from the Judge?)

Followers of Christ do the right thing not just because the Law of the Land demands it, but because we represent God. We are to conduct ourselves in society with a clear conscience.

5. In what way do our consciences help us to grow in Christ? (Rom. 13:5)

The believer may not like those who govern or rule over them (Rom. 13:7). Even *wicked* leaders, let alone *incompetent* ones, serve God's purpose. Believers do have an obligation to be salt and light in the world which, at times, demands that we take a 'prophetic' stand when engaging with civic/political leaders. But even this should be done with winsomeness and respect (1Peter 3:15).

6. What might disobeying Romans 13:7 look like?

7. Is it possible to honour the office/position of a person rather than the person?

It's not possible to live in this world without incurring debt of *some* kind, but it is possible, and even imperative, that we live without unnecessary debt - and especially without non-repaid debt.

8. Does Romans 13:8 prohibit the believer from borrowing money? Explain.

9. Why are we to live as "love-debtors"? (Rom. 13:8)

Each of the Ten commandments are an expression of *love*. Jesus summed up all of the Law with just two commands.

10. What are these two great commandments which Christ gave? (Matt. 22:37-39)

1.

2.

11. In what way is all the Law summed up in the command to love?

In just a few short years, the Church would undergo the most horrific period of martyrdom and terror it would ever experience. This was not the time for *retreating*, but the time for *standing* up for Christ!

We may not be facing impending martyrdom in our day, but we are responsible for taking advantage of the many and wonderful advantages that our present time affords us. It is daylight Church! Let's wake up and be earnest about our role as ambassadors for Christ.

Just because someone has become a believer does not mean that they have yet been perfectly transformed into a fully devoted follower of Christ (Rom. 13:12).

12. Since Paul is writing to the Christians of Rome and instructing them to put off the works of darkness, what does this reveal about the process of Christ-likeness in a (new) believer? (Romans 13:12)

13. Since Christian growth necessarily involves laying aside the works of darkness, what fruit should fellow believers expect to see in their brothers and sisters in Christ? (Rom. 13:12)

14. What does Paul particularly list as deeds of darkness in Romans 13:13 and which of these perhaps seem out of place?

In Romans 13:13, it seems that Paul has *two* spheres of conduct in mind here. Firstly, how we live in the *world*. Secondly, how we live with each other. Both spheres are critical for our mission and witness.

15. Consider Romans 13:14. How does this verse inform us about what a new Christian must do and what a mature Christian must model?

16. Write out your prayer to God in response to what you studied in this examination of Romans 13 -

Amen.