

# RELATIONAL SURVIVAL GUIDE



September 3, 2017

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## **Our Relationship to the State: Navigating our Dual Citizenship** Romans 13:1-8

### **Romans 13:1-8**

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup> for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup> Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. <sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

### **Absolute Submission?**

At first glance Paul seems to be calling us to absolute submission to the governing authorities.

Look at what the text says:

1. Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. 1a
2. ...there is no authority except from God... 1b
3. ...those [leaders] that exist have been instituted by God. 1c
4. ...whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed... 2a

### **The Context of Romans 13**

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord... Romans 1:1-4

*Thus, the state is a divine institution with divine authority. Christians are not anarchists or subversives. We need to be cautious, however, in our interpretation of Paul's statements. He cannot be taken to mean that all the Caligulas, Herods, Neros... of New Testament times, and all the Hitlers, Stalins, Amins and Saddams of our times, were personally appointed by God, that God is responsible for their behavior, or that their authority is in no circumstances to be resisted. John Stott*

## 1 Peter 2:12-16

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. <sup>13</sup> Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

### How to Navigate our Dual Citizenship:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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### Digging Deeper into Our Relationship to the State

#### This week's passages:

Monday – Romans 13:1-8

Tuesday – 1 Peter 2:11-16

Wednesday – 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Thursday – Acts 4:1-21 (notice the respectful way the Apostles oppose the authorities)

Friday – Daniel 3

Weekend – Review the most meaningful passages of the week.

*This Week's Big Idea: We are citizens of two kingdoms but our allegiance to Christ as Lord is ultimate.*

Each day this week you are invited to read the day's passage and then respond to the following questions. Take special note of what God's word says about our citizenship under Christ and under the state. You might find it beneficial to use a journal or notebook to record insights.

1. **Read** the passage prayerfully, listening for the voice of God and asking him to speak to you.
2. **Record** or write down the word, phrase, or verse that God impresses upon you.
3. **Reflect** and write down what it is about this word, phrase or verse that is meaningful to you.
4. **Respond** by writing a prayer or recording what it is that you think the Lord wants you to do in response to his word ("*Be doers of the word and not hearers only*" James 1:22).