

In-House Wednesday Night Bible Study, 6:00 PM

“BEING SUBJECT TO AUTHORITIES”

ROMANS CHAPTER 13

May 27, 2026

The book of Romans was written by Paul to Christians living in a city he had not yet visited. Although he knew some people there (see Romans 16), most did not know him personally.

The book itself (actually, a letter) is well organized. The sequence of thought in the first 11 of its 16 chapters begins with an exposition of the origin and scope of sin, follows with an explanation of the remedy for sin, and wraps up with a discussion of the fate of the unbelieving Jewish nation. Due to the nature of their content, these first 11 chapters are often referred to as *the doctrinal section*, meaning that they present teaching that is foundational to our understanding of the Christian faith.

In Romans 12, the apostle Paul moves to what is often called *the practical section* of the letter. Here we see concerns for how the great truths of the church are to be worked out in the lives of its members. Paul instructs in such things as the use of spiritual gifts (12:3-8), how to relate to governing authorities (13:1-7), and the dangers of judging others (14:10-13). These closing chapters are characterized by key summary statements such as “Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good” (12:21) and “Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us” (15:7).

Chapter 13 of Paul’s letter to the church at Rome teaches many important points for spiritual living such as:

Divine Sovereignty - Recognize that all authority is established by God, and trust in His ultimate plan and purpose, even when earthly authorities seem unjust or corrupt.

Christian Conduct - As Christians, we are called to live in a way that respects and honors the authorities placed over us, reflecting our faith and trust in God's order.

Prayer for Leaders - Regularly pray for those in authority, asking God to guide their decisions and lead them in righteousness.

Civil Obedience and Witness - Understand that our submission to authorities is a form of witness to the world, demonstrating our commitment to peace and order as followers of Christ.

Discernment and Limits - While submission is important, discernment is necessary to know when civil disobedience is required in cases where obeying human authority

would mean disobeying God.

The Debt of Love - Christians are called to live free from financial and moral debts, except for the perpetual obligation to love others. This love is not a one-time act but a continuous commitment.

Love as Fulfillment of the Law - Loving others is not just a moral duty but a fulfillment of God's law. This means that true obedience to God is expressed through genuine love for others.

Practical Love in Action - Love should be active and practical, manifesting in acts of kindness, forgiveness, and service. It is not merely an emotion but a deliberate choice to seek the well-being of others.

Community and Relationships - The command to love one another fosters unity and harmony within the Christian community. It encourages believers to prioritize relationships and community well-being.

Reflecting Christ's Love - As followers of Christ, believers are called to reflect His love in their interactions, serving as a testament to the transformative power of the Gospel.

Walking in the Light - As Christians, we are called to live transparently and honorably, reflecting the light of Christ in our daily actions.

Avoiding Worldly Temptations - The behaviors listed by Paul—carousing, drunkenness, sexual immorality, debauchery, dissension, and jealousy—are temptations that can lead us away from a Christ-centered life.

Living with Integrity - Our conduct should be consistent with our faith, demonstrating integrity and decency in all circumstances.

Community and Accountability - Being part of a Christian community helps us stay accountable and encourages us to live according to God's standards.

Transformation through Renewal - By renewing our minds and focusing on spiritual growth, we can overcome the temptations of the flesh and live a life pleasing to God.