

## Session 4

# An Analysis of Romans 13 and Unlimited Submission to Civil Government

The Bible actually provides numerous examples of committed believers not only defying governmental authority but also receiving the approval of God in the process. Consider these examples:

- The Hebrew midwives defying the command of Pharaoh by saving the Jewish baby boys – including Moses’s parents saving him (Ex 1:15-21, 2:1-10)
- Moses refusing Pharaoh and siding with the Jews (Heb 11:27)
- Queen Esther approaching the king uninvited in order to save the Jewish people from annihilation (Est 4:10-16)
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refusing to bow to the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:1-23)
- Daniel defying the king by refusing to stop praying to the God of Israel (Daniel 6:1-13)
- Jesus refusing to abide by the Jewish Sabbath laws (Matt 12:1-14, Jn 18:31)
- The apostles and early Christians refusing to stop preaching the Gospel (Acts 5:27-29, 12:1-4, 16:19-24)
- Believers throughout the ages defying ungodly authorities (Heb 11:35-38)

1. Paul believed Christians should be known for their \_\_\_\_\_ for authority.
2. While the Bible teaches a principle of general submission to all in positions of authority, it also teaches that when those authorities \_\_\_\_\_ God’s higher laws, believers have no choice but to resist.
3. In our representative form of government, the PEOPLE are the governing authorities and it is to the \_\_\_\_\_ that Christians must submit – not to the governing bodies per se, unless those bodies are acting in accordance with God’s principles and are executing the will of the people.
4. In our constitutional republic, when a branch of the federal government, such as the U.S. Supreme Court, issues an unconstitutional ruling that makes the murder of the unborn “legal,” the Christian is duty bound to defy that ruling – mainly because God’s higher law commands, \_\_\_\_\_.

5. James Madison, the chief architect of the Constitution, said, "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the \_\_\_\_\_ are few and defined.
6. The Framers believed that the government closest to the people should be the\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Under Federalism, power is divided between the federal government and the states. In America, the thirteen sovereign states actually created a limited general (federal) government. If the Federal government ever acted outside its limited authority as given in the Constitution, then it was up to the sovereign states to say no. In James Madison's Virginia Resolution of 1798, : *"... in case of a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of other powers, not granted by the said compact, \_\_\_\_\_ who are parties thereto, have the right, and are in duty bound, to interpose for arresting the progress of the evil, ..."*
8. President John Adams said, *"Our Constitution was made only for a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."*
9. Clearly, Paul believed proper government, one worthy of a Christian's submission, is the kind of government that rewards the doers of \_\_\_\_\_ and punishes the doers of \_\_\_\_\_. Only this kind of government could legitimately be called "God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil."
10. Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," thus clarifying that the seat of governmental authority is "the people." Therefore, proper government answers to \_\_\_\_\_ – not the other way around.

**For your contemplation:** The Bible says that wives are to submit to their husbands. What if the husband becomes perverse and commands his wife to rob a bank? The Bible says that children are to obey their parents. What if parents become perverse and command a child to sell drugs? In every case, the admonition "in the Lord" is stated and understood. So is civil government. God created civil government to punish evil doers and protect those that do well. However, if a government becomes perverse and violates God's will, then its citizens are obligated to resist that which is evil.

## Answers

- 1) general respect
- 2) Violate
- 3) Consent of the governed
- 4) "Thou shall not murder."
- 5) federal government
- 6) strongest
- 7) *the states*
- 8) moral, religious
- 9) good, evil
- 10) the people