

Lesson 18 ~ Romans 13

NIV

1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. **2** Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. **3** For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. **4** For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. **5** Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. **6** This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. **7** Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. **9** The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. **12** The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13** Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. **14** Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

NLT

1 Obey the government, for God is the one who put it there. All governments have been placed in power by God. **2** So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow. **3** For the authorities do not frighten people who are doing right, but they frighten those who do wrong. So do what they say, and you will get along well. **4** The authorities are sent by God to help you. But if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for you will be punished. The authorities are established by God for that very purpose, to punish those who do wrong. **5** So you must obey the government for two reasons: to keep from being punished and to keep a clear conscience. **6** Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid so they can keep on doing the work God intended them to do. **7** Give to everyone what you owe

them: Pay your taxes and import duties, and give respect and honor to all to whom it is due. **8** Pay all your debts, except the debt of love for others. You can never finish paying that! If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill all the requirements of God's law. **9** For the commandments against adultery and murder and stealing and coveting—and any other commandment—are all summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to anyone, so love satisfies all of God's requirements. **11** Another reason for right living is that you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for the coming of our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. **12** The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So don't live in darkness. Get rid of your evil deeds. Shed them like dirty clothes. Clothe yourselves with the armor of right living, as those who live in the light. **13** We should be decent and true in everything we do, so that everyone can approve of our behavior. Don't participate in wild parties and getting drunk, or in adultery and immoral living, or in fighting and jealousy. **14** But let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you, and don't think of ways to indulge your evil desires.

The Message

1 Be a good citizen. All governments are under God. Insofar as there is peace and order, it's God's order. So live responsibly as a citizen. **2** If you're irresponsible to the state, then you're irresponsible with God, and God will hold you responsible. **3** Duly constituted authorities are only a threat if you're trying to get by with something. Decent citizens should have nothing to fear. Do you want to be on good terms with the government? Be a responsible citizen and you'll get on just fine. **4** The government working to your advantage. But if you're breaking the rules right and left, watch out. The police aren't there just to be admired in their uniforms. God also has an interest in keeping order, and he uses them to do it. **5** That's why you must live responsibly—not just to avoid punishment but also because it's the right way to live. **6** That's also why you pay taxes—so that an orderly way of life can be maintained. **7** Fulfill your obligations as a citizen. Pay your taxes, pay your bills, respect your leaders. **8** Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. **9** The law code—don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. **10** You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*. **11** But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. **12** The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed. **13** We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. **14** Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!