

Romans 13:1-14—How Believers Relate to Government And Culture

Memory Verse

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Introduction

In Romans chapter 12 we looked at how believers relate to each other and to their enemies. Now, in Romans chapter 13, we look at how believers relate to society, how we are to be engaged in our culture. Remember that there are three divinely ordained institutions: the family (Genesis 2), human government (Genesis 9), and the church (Acts 2). Paul's main points in Romans 13 are:

1. How believers relate or submit to governmental authority in a way that glorifies God (vs 1-7)
2. How Christians relate to others outside the church—love our neighbours who are a part of the worldly culture in which we live (vs 8-10)
3. How believers need to “wake up”, and learn to think and live like a believer, and not like the world (vs 11-14)

Also, we see an important contrast. Romans 12:17-21 tells us that the individual is to never seek vengeance, but to leave it to God. However, Romans 13:1-7 reaffirms God's purpose for government, which is primarily to punish evil, or to take vengeance on those who practice evil, so that we can live quiet and godly lives.

Outline

1. Submit to government because all authority is appointed by God (vs 1-2)
2. The government is God's servant for our good (vs 3-4a)
3. What does the bible say about capital punishment? (v 4b)
4. A higher motive—obeying the authorities because of conscience (vs 5-7)
5. The debt that all Christians have to pay: love for others (vs 8-10)
6. The greatest motivation for living a godly life and submitting to authority—our devotion to, and love for, Jesus (vs 11-14)

Romans 13:1-14 NKJV

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. ⁵ Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

1. Submit to government because all authority is appointed by God

Romans 13:1-2 NKJV

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

v 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities: Why? Because this is how God works. Even within the Godhead, there is the principle of submission to the one with the higher rank, exactly as happens in the military. Jesus submits to the Father, the Holy Spirit submits to Jesus, the church submits to Jesus, the wife submits to the husband, and the local church submits to the male leadership. This is also called ‘headship’ (see 1 Corinthians 11:3). Without submission, there is no order, only confusion and anarchy.

Another important aspect of biblical or godly submission, which is also very well illustrated by the military, is that we are ‘*sub*’ to the ‘*mission*’. That is, the mission, or goal, is what unites us—our submission has a purpose. What this means is that the wellbeing of the group is more important than our own—our goal and purpose in life is bigger than just ‘me’. If the group wins, then I win; just like if the Australian army wins then all of Australia wins. This is also how it works for marriage; if the marriage ‘wins’, then both spouses win, but if the marriage loses, then both spouses lose, regardless of what they accomplished individually. This is how the biblical honour/shame culture works, and how it is different to the western individualistic way of thinking.

Thus we need to understand that genuine biblical submission means that we are willing to cooperate and work with others to achieve a common goal. *This changes our attitude from that of grudging capitulation, where we feel forced to do things for someone else, to that of “what can I do to help, how can I best serve you”.* We need to realise that as Christians, we live in a bigger community than just the church, and we need to learn how to behave so that we are a blessing and not a curse to others around us, and also that we can be a good example to the world, which is intently watching us.

v 1 Governing authorities: This includes every form of authority, from the Australian Tax Office, to teachers, local governments and shires, and to the police and military etc.

v 1 For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God: This is the primary reason why we are to submit to authority—they are given and **appointed by God**. *Thus when we disobey the governing authorities, we are disobeying God. When we cheat on our taxes, we are cheating God.*

The second reason we submit to the governing authorities, and why God appointed them, is because it promotes the spread and cause of the gospel. Consider why Paul commanded us to pray for those in authority.

1 Timothy 2:1-3 NKJV

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Government is a gift from God to regulate society and make it possible to live a quiet and godly life. Consider how difficult it is to live the Christian life and share the gospel in countries or areas where the government is failing to execute justice and allows evil to prosper. So next time you think about our government, or our school system, first be thankful that we have them, and then pray that they will improve and become more godly.

Application: What about when the Government supports sinful things? Should we then cease to support the government? Why or why not?

Joh Courson has a good application that answers some questions that many people have concerning submitting to Government. “Who was on the throne when Paul wrote this epistle? ...Caesar Nero. We are told through church history that, after sentencing the apostle Paul to death, Nero went on a rampage, persecuting Christians, burning them in his garden, feeding them to the lions. Caesar Nero was a diabolic, terrible, brutal, evil individual. Yet here, even while Nero was in power, Paul says believers were to be subject to the higher powers, for there is no person in power but that God has ordained him to be there.

You might not respect the person who is in power, but you must realize the Lord has ordained him or her to be there—even if it’s a person as brutal as Caesar Nero—or Adolf Hitler.

“Come on,” you protest, “God would never ordain Adolf Hitler to come into power.”

Really? What does history tell us? The nation of Israel would never have been born had not world sentiment, for a short period of time, been sympathetic toward the Jew because of Hitler’s atrocities. As World War II came to a close, newsreels showed the bodies of Jews being bulldozed into ditches, the mounds of glasses, false teeth, and shoes producing horror in the heart of humanity. And so it was, that, although it went right down to the wire, the League of Nations voted in favour of the establishment of the nation of Israel.

Truly, this verse changes my perspective on everything that happens. “Lord,” I can say, “You know where we are on the prophetic calendar. You know exactly what time it is. And You’re lining up certain events that will fulfill prophecy, usher in Your coming, and establish Your kingdom. I might not like what’s happening, yet I realize ultimately that You are in control and that every power in place has been ordained by You. Therefore, I acknowledge that it’s all part of Your plan.” (Jon Courson)

“Your Saviour suffered under Pontius Pilate, one of the worst Roman governors Judea ever had; and Paul under Nero, the worst Roman Emperor. And neither our Lord nor His Apostle denied or reviled the ‘authority!’ ” (Newell)

v 1 **No authority except from God:** “God appoints a nation’s leaders, but not always to *bless* the people. Sometimes it is to judge the people or to ripen the nation for judgment.” (David Guzik) *Maybe, instead of complaining about our corrupt government, we should be asking for forgiveness, and repentance, as a nation.*

2 Corinthians 7:14 NKJV

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

v 2 **Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God:** So just how much authority does the government have? As the wife submits to her husband “as to the Lord” (see Ephesians 5:22), so does God expect believers to submit to all authority present in our culture. What this means is that the motivation for the wife to submit to her husband is because God told her to. If she doesn’t willingly submit to her husband, then the problem is with the wife’s relationship with God; she is out of fellowship with God, because she is disobeying God. The same applies to believers who are resisting the government, who are not willingly submitting to laws and regulations. Believers are to submit to any governmental authority, not because the government tells us to, but because *God* tells us to.

“As to the Lord” also means that God’s authority is greater than that of the husband, so if the husband asks his wife to do something sinful, then the wife’s first priority is to obey God rather than the sin that her husband may be asking her to do. The same applies to obeying government; God is the highest authority, and so if there is ever a conflict between what the government or school or local council, and what God says we should do, we must always obey God first. This is the biblical example.

Acts 4:18-20 NKJV

So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, “*Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.*” ²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

Acts 5:29 NKJV

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

v 2 **Those who resist will bring judgment on themselves:** As was mentioned previously, “God uses governing authorities as a check upon man’s sinful desires and tendencies. Government can be an effective tool in resisting the effects of man’s fallenness.” (David Guzik) Fighting against the government is the same as fighting against God. It doesn’t mean that we have to agree with or go along with everything they say, but when possible, we obey willingly, and leave the outcome to God.

2. The government is God’s servant for our good

Romans 13:3-4a NKJV

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God’s minister to you for good.

As bad as some governments are, they are always better than no government (when there is complete anarchy). If you want to know just how depraved mankind is, just look at how people behave when they are not restrained by effective governance. Look at inner city life in many cities and you will find lawlessness; gangs, thugs, and drug lords—many times the police are too scared to venture in. Don't take law and order for granted—it is a gift from God.

Also, this is a good reminder that those in authority will have to give an account to the King of Kings, as to what they did with the authority that was given to them. Did they use it for good, or for evil?

3. What does the bible say about capital punishment?

Romans 13:4b NKJV

But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

David Guzik states: "In the Roman Empire, criminals were typically executed by beheading with a **sword** (crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals of the lowest classes). Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has no doubt that the state has the legitimate authority to execute criminals."

Warren Wiersbe states, "Rulers must bear the sword; that is, they have the power to afflict punishment and even to take life. God established human government because man is a sinner and must have some kind of authority over him. God has given the sword to rulers, and with it the authority to punish and even to execute. Capital punishment was ordained in Genesis 9:5–6 [before the law was given], and it has not been abolished. Even though we cannot always respect the man in office, we must respect the office, for government was ordained by God."

Genesis 9:5-6 NLT

And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person's life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶ *If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image.*

Simply put, biblically, there is no debate regarding capital punishment—it is mandated by God because of the incredibly high value of human life—*If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image.* God commanded, unequivocally, that whenever a man's life is taken with evil intent (intentionally), the guilty man must also lose his life. We must value all human life like God does, even those who are still in the womb.

This is also the power of deterrence. Although this is not the only tool that governments have, it is an important one, and, when it is lost, people soon lose respect for those in authority and crime increases. Governments are the ones who obey the, "tooth for a tooth and and eye for an eye", proportional punishment command in the Old Testament. Below is an example of how God demands that justice be fair.

Exodus 21:22-25 NKJV

"If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. ²³ But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

What this means is that the punishment must fit the crime. When capital punishment is abolished, then all other punishments also become less severe, and the whole system starts to collapse because deterrence is lost. Notice also that life begins in the womb—God considers the killing of an unborn baby to be murder. May God help our sick nation and world and end the holocaust of the unborn.

4. A higher motive—obeying the authorities because of conscience

Romans 13:5-7 NKJV

Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

v 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake: Deterrence (fear of punishment—**because of wrath**) is needed because some people's conscience is dull or seared—it won't keep them from breaking the law. For these people, the only thing that keeps them in check is the fear of punishment—**because of wrath**.

This also applies to raising children; they also need a deterrent—their conscience is God given but shaped by the environment they grow up in—therefore parents cannot rely on a child's conscience to motivate them to do what is right—Fathers need to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—*"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4 NLT). Deterrence created by natural and proportional consequences will help train a child's conscience.

However, for the Christian, his motivation for submitting to authority, is not primarily because he fears what will happen to him if he gets caught (**not only because of wrath**), but because he has a soft and tender conscience that loves to do what is right (**for conscience' sake**). It's been wisely said that, "a clean conscience makes a good pillow".

v 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing: Consider that our taxes are supporting God's work in maintaining and protecting society. This is what our tax money *should* be used for. This is what God is going to hold those in positions of authority accountable to when they finally stand before Him. Remember, they will be held responsible for every wasted cent, any money that was not used for the public good.

v 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour: To whom do we owe **taxes** (income tax), **customs** (sales tax), **fear** (respect), and **honour** (esteem, reverence) to?

Matthew 22:17-21 NKJV

Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

¹⁸ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?"

¹⁹ Show Me the tax money."

So they brought Him a denarius.

²⁰ And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"

²¹ They said to Him, "Caesar's."

And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

“We are to give to the state the money, honour, and proper reverence which are due to the state, all the while reserving our right to give to God that which is due to God alone (Matthew 22:21).” (David Guzik)

“Romans 13:7 commands us to pay what we owe: taxes, revenue, respect, honour. If we do not pay our taxes, we show disrespect to the law, the officials, and the Lord. And this cannot but affect the conscience of the believer. We may not agree with all that is done with the money we pay in taxes, but we dare not violate our conscience by refusing to pay.” (Warren Wiersbe)

5. The debt that all Christians have to pay: love for others

Romans 13:8-10 NKJV

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

v 8 Owe no one anything except to love one another: In his teaching about how believers are to relate to the world around them, Paul expands our responsibilities to include loving other people.

vs 8-10 For he who loves another has fulfilled the law... Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law: Remember that back in Romans 12:17-21, Paul taught that believers should not get back at those who hurt them, but rather give place to God’s wrath. We all know that human government is fallible and sinful, and in a similar thought to how we deal with enemies, Paul tells us to leave the judgement of corrupt government to Him, while we get on with sharing the love of Christ with the goal of reconciling people back to God (see 1 Corinthians 5:21). Once again, this takes the responsibility off us, and puts it back on God. God put those people in positions of power and authority, so let Him deal with the problems that come about, remembering that God knows best and will use it for our good, ultimately. This is how Paul could submit to Caesar Nero, and Jesus could submit to Pontius Pilate, both very corrupt officials.

“All of the laws God has given—six hundred thirteen according to the Rabbis—are summed up in a singular word: love. “Vengeance is mine,” saith the Lord (Romans 12:19). “I know what I’m doing. Therefore, let Me be the Lord while you minister reconciliation, telling people what I’ve done for them and the glory awaiting them. You love people and leave the judging to Me.” In the midst of this dissertation on government, Paul’s reminder to love puts everything in perspective.” (Jon Courson)

Proverbs 20:22 NKJV

Do not say, “I will recompense evil”; Wait for the Lord, and He will save you.

v 9 You shall love your neighbour as yourself: Remember that our neighbour is anyone we come in contact with, including our enemies.

“**Love your neighbour** means to love the people you actually meet with and deal with every day. It is easy for us to love in the theoretical and the abstract, but God demands that we love *real* people.” (David Guzik)

“No man can compass the ends of life by drawing a little line around himself upon the ground. No man can fulfill his calling as a Christian by seeking the welfare of his wife and family only, for these are only a sort of greater self.” (Spurgeon)

Application: Living in a democracy—the Christians responsibility to be salt and light

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing” (Edmund Burke)

Proverbs 25:26 AMP

Like a muddied fountain and a polluted spring is a righteous man who yields, falls down, and compromises his integrity before the wicked.

Proverbs 28:12 AMP

When the [uncompromisingly] righteous triumph, there is great glory and celebration; but when the wicked rise [to power], men hide themselves.

Proverbs 29:2 NKJV

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.

Living in a democracy is very different to living in a monarchy or a dictatorship. For us who are blessed to live in a country with a democratic government, *we are the government, because it's the people who get to elect their representatives*. Therefore, we have a greater responsibility to make the most of the opportunities we have to proclaim the truth in a public setting. In a democracy, Christians have a unique opportunity to publicly defend and promote truth, especially moral issues (e.g. life begins at conception, marriage is for one man and one woman for life, God created the world and therefore we are accountable to Him etc).

Consider that the wicked will never stop pushing their agenda, and if believers remain silent, lazy, and complacent, then minority groups (e.g. the homosexuals, greenies, abortionists, evolutionists etc), will have a much greater influence than they should. This is not about overthrowing the government, the Bible never supports that. But, rather, since God has given us the opportunity to influence the country through our vote, and through our participation in the political process, we should take advantage of this. If we don't, if we fail to take a stand against the woke, leftist, evil political activists who are trying to silence the truth, then believers will be silenced—we will lose our ability to publicly and openly proclaim the gospel and the truth found in the word of God. Consider the example of William Wilberforce, who in the early 1800's, almost entirely single handedly, brought about the abolition of slavery in England, which was probably the most powerful country in the world at the time.

God knows that we are getting very close to the time when it will be illegal to speak the truth, with some Australian states already making it illegal to speak against homosexuality, and the federal government wanting to force christian schools and churches to employ anyone, regardless of what they believe—this is the fastest way to destroy Christian schooling in Australia. We need to wake up and stand against the lies. Support bible based Christian political organisations and parties like the ACL (Australian Christian Lobby), the ACP (Australian Christian Party), and those genuine believers who are in the conservative parties. It is because of their voice, their salt and light influence, that Australia is not in a much worse state than it already is. The truth is powerful, the word of God is powerful, it just needs to be spoken and defended. Again, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” (Edmund Burke)

6. The greatest motivation for living a godly life and submitting to authority—our devotion to, and love for, Jesus

Romans 13:11-14 NKJV

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

“We have come a long way in our reasons for obeying the law: from fear (vs 1-4) to conscience (vs 5-7) to love (vs 8-10) to our devotion to Jesus Christ (vs 11-14)! The emphasis is on the imminent return of Christ. As His servants, we want to be found faithful when He returns. The completion of our salvation is near! The light is dawning! Therefore, be ready!” (Warren Wiersbe)

Before we break down these verses (which we will do next time), it’s important to see Paul’s progression of reasons to submit to governmental authorities and be salt and light in the world. We can look at these and see where we are at in our relationship with God. We can evaluate just how mature we are as believers in our walk with God.

1. I obey the law and submit to authority because I don’t want to get punished (vs 1-4)

Romans 13:1-4 NKJV

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴ For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

This is the lowest and most selfish reason for being a good citizen. If this is a believer’s main reason for obeying the law, then there is real reason for concern regarding their fellowship with God.

2. I obey the law and submit to authority because my conscience tells me that I should (vs 5-7)

Romans 13:5-7 NKJV

Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷ Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

This is better, but consider that even many non-Christians live good lives as guided by their conscience—they choose to live by godly principles like having integrity, being generous, and treating others fairly. If conscience is all that motivates a Christian to live a godly life, then they still have a long way to go.

3. I obey the law and submit to authority because I love other people and want to do what is best for them (vs 8-10)

Romans 13:8-10 NKJV

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Now we are starting to look beyond ourselves. We are starting to have a genuine concern for other’s wellbeing. We aren’t just being nice because it makes us feel good (conscience), but rather we sincerely care for others and look for ways to bless them. While this is good and biblical, there is still a greater or better motive for obedience.

4. I obey the law and submit to authority because of my devotion to Jesus and my genuine desire to please Him (vs 11-14)

Romans 13:11-14 NKJV

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

This is true kingdom living, where our first concern is to please God and bring honour to His name. Here, our love for God is what drives us and motivates us to love other people and live in submission to governmental authority. We are submitted to, and therefore empowered by (or filled with), the Holy Spirit who lives in us. This is the highest, purest, and best motivation for obedience. Pray that God would help us to mature to this kind of thinking, loving, and living, that we would grow and mature to be like Christ who only had one concern in life—to please the Father.

John 8:28-29 NKJV

Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹ And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”

May we be walking in sweet fellowship with our Heavenly Father like Jesus did—may we be guided and motivated by the Holy Spirit to live a life that pleases God.