

XIII

Christian Citizenship

ROMANS 13:1–7

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. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ 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, ⁴ 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. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ 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.

READ | ROMANS 13:1-7

THINK ABOUT

In 2017, *The Hill*, an American political newspaper, published an article titled “Respecting Government Is Harder When It Doesn’t Respect You.” Based on polls, author John M. DeMaggio observes a “declining confidence of government’s ability to equitably govern.” The article concludes with the question: “Are people losing respect for the law because the law and the government are losing respect for the people?”

Should our respect for authorities depend on how much the government respects us? As Christian ambassadors, how should we view the government? How did the apostle Paul view the Roman authorities?

In this passage, Paul teaches that the authorities over us are **divinely installed** (v. 1), for the purpose of **restraining what is bad** (v. 3), and **instruments of God’s wrath** (v. 4b).

APPLY

The government may not agree with our political ideologies, religious beliefs, or worldview; nevertheless, the government is established by God. Defiance and disrespect to the government are sins committed against God (v. 2). God is in complete control over all human authorities. Are you trusting Him and submitting to all authorities?

The positive command in this passage is to do good; do what is right. Will you keep a clear conscience before God by doing what is right in His eyes?

ASK

Paul teaches that all authorities are divinely installed. How does this change your view of your authorities/government? What are some of the things which hinder you from respecting and submitting to authority?

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Paul teaches that rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. However, we do see corrupt governments and authorities. Is it possible to submit to a corrupt government? How do we continue to do good? (See 1 Peter 2:18–23.)

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Paul teaches that our authorities are instruments of God’s wrath. Are there any examples in the Bible where God used governments as an instrument of wrath? (See 2 Chronicles 36:15–17.)

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How does the fear of authorities, mentioned in verse four, help us to become Christian citizens? How does submitting to authorities help us to have a clear conscience? (See 1 Peter 2:13–17.)

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PRAY

Lord I confess that I have disrespected the authorities (government, parents, teachers, and church leaders) that You have set over me by disobeying. Please forgive me. Please help me see authorities as Your instruments.

Lord, please help me to trust in You and continue to do what is right in Your eyes for Your glory.

1 PETER 2:13–23

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.



SING

“Trust and Obey” — *John Henry Sammis, Daniel Brink Towner*

“CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP”

Romans 13:1–7

Dotted lines for writing notes.

HYMN

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” — PROVERBS 3:5–6

Trust and Obey

1 When we walk with the Lord in the light of his Word, what a glo-ry he
2 Not a bur-den we bear, not a sor-row we share, but our toil he will
3 But we nev-er can prove the de-lights of his love un-til all on the
4 Then in fel-low-ship sweet we will sit at his feet, or we'll walk by his

sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he a-bides with us
rich-ly re-pay; not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a
al-tar we lay; for the fa-vor he shows and the joy he be-
side in the way; what he says we will do, where he sends we will

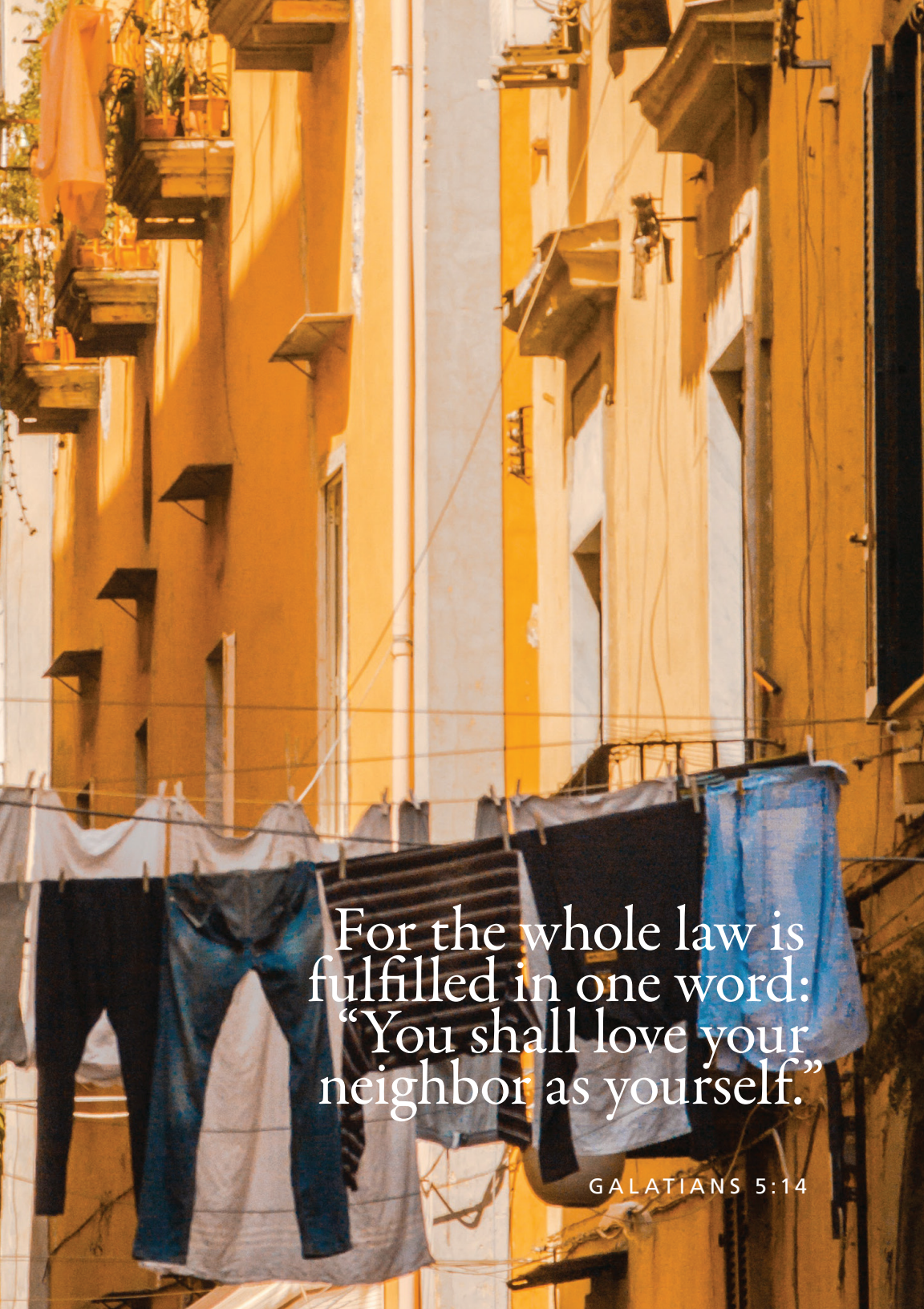
Refrain

still, and with all who will trust and o-bey.
cross, but is blest if we trust and o-bey. Trust and o-bey, for there's
stows are for them who will trust and o-bey.
go—nev-er fear, on-ly trust and o-bey.

no oth-er way to be hap-py in Je-sus, but to trust and o-bey.

Text: John H. Sammis, 1887 🌿 *Tune: Daniel B. Towner, 1887*



A photograph of a narrow alleyway between yellow buildings. In the foreground, a clothesline is strung across the alley, with various items of laundry hanging from it, including a pair of blue jeans, a white shirt, and a blue towel. The buildings are multi-story and have small balconies with plants. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

For the whole law is
fulfilled in one word:
“You shall love your
neighbor as yourself.”

GALATIANS 5:14