

KINGDOM.

LESSON 42

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] JEREMIAH 32, 33, 36 and 37
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Take turns and share (or read from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Jeremiah 32, 33, 36 and 37). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) [GOD'S RESOURCES] REVIEW SERIES L
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Review two by two the **series L. "God's resources"**.

(1) Hebrews 13:5b-6. God said: Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence: "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

(2) Psalm 119:105. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

(3) God's strength. Isaiah 41:10. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

(4) God's wisdom. James 1:5. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

(5) God's healing. 2 Chronicles 7:14. 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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) [THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS] ROMANS 13:1-14
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Introduce. Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study **Romans 13:1-14** together.

Romans chapters 12 to 16 emphasises *practice* and deals with *practical holiness or sanctification*. Romans 12 taught the Christian's duty with respect to his body and mind and with respect to all kinds of relationships. Romans 13 teaches the Christian's duty with respect to institutions of authority, especially the government, the relationship to your neighbour and the relationship towards the realms of darkness and light.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
LET US READ Romans 13:1-14 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

13:1-7

Discovery 1. The responsibility of the Christian with respect to the different institutions of authority.

(1) The seven institutions of God with respect to authority and submission.

God has instituted seven authority-submission relationships on earth (Romans 13:1-2):

God in Christ has authority over all people and everything (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18).

Man has authority over God's creation: land, trees, plants and animals (Genesis 1:28; 2:15-16; Psalm 8:4-8).

The man has authority over the woman in the marriage relationship (Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6) and in the official meetings of the church (1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:33-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 3:2-5).

The parents have authority over their children that are still under age (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20).

The government of a country has authority over its citizens (Romans 13:3-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17);

The employer has authority over his employees (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; 1 Peter 2:18-23).

The elders of a church have authority over their church members (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17).

God has instituted all these seven authority-submission relationships. No man may change these seven institutions of authority or oppose them. All authority-submission relationships, except the first, have specific, but limited duties and also limited authority.

(2) The civil authorities.

The Bible certainly contains teachings about the governments of the world. Paul is here speaking of the civil authorities, because he mentions "bearing the sword" and "paying taxes and revenues". This teaching is very important, because all Christians in the world live under certain governments.

In the letter to the Romans this was also important, because in the Christian church at Rome, a considerable portion of the members were Jewish Christians. Many Jews in Paul's day were looking for an opportunity to shake off the yoke of subjection to Rome. They were eager to become politically independent once more. They wanted to have their own king and own governing authorities (John 6:15; 8:33; Acts 1:6; 5:36-37). Already in the first half of the first century A.D. there were political disturbances in the city of Rome. A Roman writer, Suetonius, wrote that the emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews from the city of Rome in A.D. 49, because of a continuous revolt of Jews inspired by a certain "Chrestus" (cf. Acts 18:2). When this edict was no longer in force, many Jews returned to Rome. The apostle Paul therefore wrote that Christians must submit themselves to the governing authorities in Rome. The reason why Christians must submit to the governing authorities is that God himself had established all governing authorities (Romans 13:12).

13:8-14

Discovery 2. The responsibility of the Christian with respect to his neighbour.

Romans 13:8-14 teaches that practical holiness or sanctification is above all characterised by living a life of love and by living a life in the light. "Living a life of love" means giving yourself every day as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Ephesians 5:1-2). "Living a life in the light" means finding out what pleases the Lord, exposing the fruitless deeds of darkness, living a transparent life and bearing fruit that consists of all goodness, righteousness and truth (Ephesians 5:8-14). Because the time of the end of human history and the complete salvation of Christians is nearing fast, sanctification is an urgent matter!

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 13:1-14 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

13:1-5

Question 1. What is the Christian's duty with respect to the governing authorities?

Notes.

(1) Submission to the authorities instituted by God is a part of sanctification.

Submission" to the institutions of authority (Greek: exousiai) is a part of "the good, acceptable and perfect will of God" as Romans 12:2 teaches.

In the New Testament we read that the Jews had questions regarding the *rights* of the Roman government (Matthew 22:16-17; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21-22). The Jews had the tendency to *pride* themselves on their independence (John 8:33). Among the Jews there were seditious movements (Acts 5:36-37). There is evidence in secular history books with regard to the restlessness of the Jews under the Roman yoke. The Roman emperor, Claudius, actually expelled the Jews from Rome, probably because of their opposition or even insurrection (Acts 18:2).

In the mind of the Roman authorities, Christianity was associated with Judaism and any seditious temper attributed to Judaism would likewise be charged to Christians. This created a situation in which it was necessary for Christians to avoid all revolutionary aspirations or actions as well as insubordination to magistrates in the rightful exercise of their authority. The teaching is also against any possible perverted notion of “freedom” among Christians, especially in view of the fact that all Christians believe that true freedom is being bound to the kingship or reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. In view of these political realities, Paul teaches that a Christian’s relationship to all the seven institutions of authority is a part of sanctification!

(2) Submission to the institutions of authority is not without qualification.

On the one hand, the New Testament teaches the duties of Christians towards the institutions of authority. 1 Timothy 2:1 teaches that Christians should pray for all people in authority. Titus 3:1 teaches that Christians should submit to rulers and authorities by being obedient and by doing good in a peaceable manner and without slander.

On the other hand, the New Testament relates that the authorities in the world often persecuted Christians because they proclaimed the gospel (and called people to repent and change) and helped the poor, helpless and oppressed. Therefore the Bible had to draw a clear line between disobedience towards authorities that rule with injustice and obedience to authorities that rule with justice. Jesus Christ demanded loyalty in both cases.

Disobedience to authority is outlined in Acts 4:19-20 and 5:29 and obedience to authority is outlined in Romans 13:1-7! As a general rule, all Christians should obey the authorities in everything that is not against the teachings of the Bible. However, when the authorities overstep their authority and demand that Christians do things that are forbidden by God, or forbid Christians to do things that are commanded by God, Christians should respectfully refuse to obey the authorities. Whenever there is conflict between the demands of people in positions of authority and the commands of God, then the word of the apostle Peter in Acts 5:29 must take effect, “We must obey God rather than man.”

13:6-7

Question 2. What is the Christian duty with respect to taxes and revenues?

Notes.

(1) Christians must pay taxes to the government.

Because a government gives its full time to its task, it need to be supported financially. Also the people in government must eat and live. The government does good to the people in society by developing education of children and adults, by maintaining justice through the police and courts of law, and by developing towns and cities with streets and parks, etc. The government must fight crime and corruption, punish the evildoers in society and keep law and order in the society. The government needs money to do all this good. That is why God commands all people, including Christians, to pay their taxes and revenues to the government.

Taxes are levied on persons or on property gained or possessed (Luke 20:22-25) and revenues are levied on imported and exported goods, that is, on business transactions. The payment of taxes and revenues is not a tyrannical imposition of the government, but the necessary and proper participation on the part of the subjects in the support of government.

(2) Christians must show respect to the government.

Christians have the duty, not only to pay the government taxes and revenues, but also respect and honour. Christians should show respect to all people and certainly to people in authority. Christians should honour the government when it performs its duties in a good way.

But, not only citizens have the duty to support, respect and honour the government, also the government has the duty to perform its task in accordance to God’s laws and standards. The government does not have absolute power or rights, because it has received its tasks and authority from the God of the Bible! Therefore all rulers in governments and all people in positions of authority are already now accountable for how they perform their responsibilities.

On the final judgement day all people will have to give an account to God: the rulers in governments will have to give an account for how they have executed their authority and all subjects will have to give an account of how they have submitted themselves. All people will have to give an account of how they have paid or not paid their taxes and revenues and how they have shown respect or not shown respect to the governing authorities.

13:6-7

Question 3. What is the meaning of the word “law” in Romans?

Notes.

(1) The different meanings of the word “law”.

Paul has taught much about the law. It is noteworthy that Paul uses the word “law” with several different meanings.

The law is God’s absolute righteous demand for salvation and judgment. The law is God’s absolute requirement and condition for righteousness and holiness (salvation) and judgement (doom). Because the God of the Bible is 100% righteous and holy, he demands that all people live 100% righteous and holy lives and he demands that all transgressions be 100% judged and punished. This law addresses the position of man in relationship to God.

The law of God has been revealed to all people in the world and in history (Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-5). People know that whoever transgresses God's law, deserves to die (Romans 1:32). All people will be judged by their works in the light of what they know concerning God's law (Romans 2:12). Every human being lives in the sphere in which God's law operates and has relevance. The law condemns all people as guilty, silences their arguments, holds them accountable to God and cannot justify or save them (Romans 3:19-20).

The Ten Commandments. The law of God is God's absolute demands and condition for sanctification (living a holy life). The word "law" is also used to indicate the moral law or the Ten Commandments and has the following two functions:

The first function of the moral law of God is to activate sin within the sinful nature of man (Romans 7:8-9). Apart from the moral law sin within the sinful nature of man is "dead" or inactive. The law of God reveals what is right and wrong in the eyes of God. When a person consciously thinks about the moral law of God or the Ten Commandments, sin within his sinful nature springs alive and becomes very active. This usually happens shortly before, during and after this person converts.

The second function of the moral law of God is to teach the justified (saved) person (the Christian) how to live righteously, that is, how to live the life of love (Romans 13:8-10).

The Old Testament. The law of God consists in written form within the Old Testament Scriptures. The law of God is the Book of the Old Testament, because it contains the specific revelation of God, his words, his deeds, his will and his requirements. Previously only Jews possessed this special revelation of God (Romans 2:12). The Old Testament already revealed that the righteousness of God cannot be obtained by the works of the law, but only through faith (in the Messiah and his completed work of salvation) (Romans 3:21-22; 4:3-8). Today, the Old Testament and the New Testament are available to Jews as well as non-Jews in almost every language in the world.

(2) The division of the law.

The law may be divided into three parts:

The moral law. God's requirements for how people should live are expressed in his moral commandments. They consist of the Ten Commandments and all other moral laws in the Bible. The moral law remains valid in the New Testament period.

The ceremonial law. During the Old Testament period, God's requirements for approaching him, fellowshiping with him, worshipping him and serving him were expressed in God's ceremonial (ritual) laws. They consisted of laws with respect to holy people (priests and Levites); holy places (tabernacle and temple); holy times (Sabbath days and religious festivals); and holy actions (sacrifices, circumcision, clean foods, first-born, first fruits, tithes, freewill gifts, etc). The ceremonial laws have been *fulfilled* (Matthew 5:17), *cancelled* (Colossians 2:14) and *abrogated* (*abolished*) (Ephesians 2:15). The ceremonial laws may not be re-introduced into the Christian Church!

The civil law. During the Old Testament period, God's requirements for the theocratic nation of Israel were expressed in social (civil) laws. These consisted of laws concerning the kings, the judges, wars, property, punishments, etc. Because the theocratic nation of Israel passed over into the kingdom of God that encompasses every nation on earth, the civil laws of Israel are no longer applicable and are replaced by the principles of the kingdom of God as taught in Matthew chapters 5-7 and in all the parables of Jesus Christ.

13:8-10

Question 4. What is the responsibility of the Christian with respect to his neighbour?

Notes. Romans 13:8 says, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law." The emphasis in this passage is not on financial debts, but on the obligation of every Christian to love his neighbour. Romans 13 teaches that to love one's neighbour is also a part of sanctification.

(1) To love your neighbour is a continuing obligation for Christians.

Love is not regarded as a debt that Christians have not yet paid. Love is also not regarded as an inexhaustible debt, a debt that can never be fully paid. Paul is simply reminding the Christians that love is a perpetual obligation.

(2) To love your neighbour is the fulfilment of the law.

"He who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law". In this passage, Paul uses the word "law" in the sense of the moral law of God, which is summarised in the Ten Commandments. In this passage, Paul quotes four of the Ten Commandments. This means that the Ten Commandments have permanent and abiding relevance for Christians. It expresses examples of what love really is. The Ten Commandments teach Christians how to live a life that pleases God, that is, how to live a life of love. "Fulfilment of the law" means that apart from love no law is ever fulfilled! The Ten Commandments cannot be fulfilled without love! It is only through love that Christians can fulfil the demands of God revealed in all his commandments.

(3) To love your neighbour means not to sin against your neighbour.

Most of the Ten Commandments are stated in the negative form, “Do not!” “Do not commit adultery.” “Do not murder.” “Do not steal.” “Do not covet.” But the law of love is stated in the positive form, “Love your neighbour.” Thus, to love has both negative and positive aspects: You love when you do NOT DO certain things and you love when you DO certain things. While the Old Testament emphasised the things believers should not do, the New Testament emphasises the things believers should do!

Love never overlooks the reality of sin! A Christian cannot deliberately go on sinning and still love. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 says that true Christian love “avoids every kind of evil.” Romans 13:10 says, that true love “does no harm to its neighbour.” True love will not involve one’s neighbour in any kind of sexual immorality. True love will not destroy any aspect of one’s neighbour’s life. True love will not steal any possession from one’s neighbour. And true love will not even consider or desire to have or take anything from one’s neighbour. Thus, the Ten Commandments are in the negative form, because they never overlook the reality of sin. True love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 is also expressed in negative terms: “Love does not envy”, because it never overlooks the reality of sin!

(4) To love your neighbour means to take positive action towards your neighbour.

“Love your neighbour as yourself” is an imperative and is stated in the positive form. Love not only avoids the negative things like sin, but also turns the prohibition (negative) into its opposite commandment (positive)! For example, love actively protects one’s neighbour from every kind of sexual immorality. And love actively promotes the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual welfare of one’s neighbour’s life. Love actively respects and protects one’s neighbour’s property. And love actively appreciates and is happy with what one’s neighbour has or does. Love not only does no harm to its neighbour, but also actively does all kind of good to its neighbour.

13:13-14

Question 5. What is the responsibility of the Christian with respect to the realm of darkness and the realm of light?

Notes.

(1) Christians have the duty to know the time in which they live.

Romans 13:11 literally says, “Know this *time*”. The word “time” (Greek: *kairos*) here refers to *the present time in the light of the end-time events*. We say, “Knowing how things stand.” It is to look at the present time, knowing that it is speeding towards the second coming of Christ, the final judgement and the renewal of all things on earth. And Romans 13:12 says, “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.” “The day”, which is almost here, is a reference to the day of judgement.

(2) Christians have the duty to put off everything that is connected with darkness and put on everything that is connected with the light.

According to the Bible, “the present age, which precedes the coming age of Christ’s second coming, is evil”. Therefore, Christians must always view the present age in the light of the coming age, and live holy lives. Romans 13:12 says, “Put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.” The Christian belief in the second coming of Jesus Christ is the reason why they want to grow in sanctification. “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” is elsewhere called “putting on the new man” (Ephesians 4:24). Thus, we Christians must “say ‘no’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, namely, the appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:12-13).

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 13:1-14.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 13:1-14.

13:1. Submit yourself to everyone of the seven authority-submission relationships in the Bible.

13:1-2. There are evil powers that God has not established and therefore Christians should not submit to them. God allows and tolerates them to have power over certain people until he finally destroys them. For example, the devil has control over the whole evil world, that is, the world that hates and opposes God, Christ and his people (1 John 5:19; John 12:31; 17:14-16). Other examples are the two beasts. “The beast out of the sea” represents Satan’s antichristian governments, “the beast out of the earth” represents Satan’s antichristian religions and philosophies and “the great prostitute, Babylon, represents Satan’s antichristian morality (Revelation chapter; chapter 17 and 19:19-20).

- 13:3. Do not fear people in authority. If you want to be free from fear, then do what is right in the eyes of both God and the other six institutions of authority.
- 13:4. In certain circumstances a government has the right to wield “the sword”, that is, to execute the death penalty (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 21:12; Numbers 35:16,30-31; Deuteronomy 19:11-13; Judges 9:24; 2 Kings 14:5-6; Matthew 26:52) or to defend their country in war. Nevertheless, the reason to wield the sword may never be arbitrary and must never violate God’s Word.
- 13:6-7. Pay your taxes and revenues to the government. Show respect and honour to those in government positions and in any other position of authority.
- 13:8. In every circumstance of your life you stand under the obligation to love your neighbour, that is, to love the person God brings across your path (Luke 10:25-37).
- 13:9. Always protect your neighbour from every kind of sexual immorality. And promote his physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual welfare.
- 13:9. Always protect your neighbour’s property. And actively appreciate his property and accomplishments.
- 13:10. Never harm your neighbour. Always do good and kind things to him.
- 13:11. Be alert every day, because the second coming of Christ is coming nearer fast.
- 13:12-13. Stop with orgies and drunkenness, with sexual immorality and debauchery, with dissension and jealousy.
- 13:14. Clothe yourself with Christ and the righteousness and holiness that he has earned for you. Never even give a thought to gratify any desire of the old sinful nature.

2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 13:1-14.

As a Christian, I want to submit myself to the governing authorities in everything that is not against the clear teachings of the Bible. This also means that I am committed to pay taxes and to respect the government leaders.

The Ten Commandments are very important for me to know how God wants me to love my neighbour practically. I not only want to avoid doing sin against my neighbour, but also want to actively do what is best for my neighbour. I want to remember that love means never to do sin against my neighbour and always to actively do what is good for my neighbour.

STEP 5. PRAY.	RESPONSE
LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 13:1-14. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)	

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two’s or three’s. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. **Preach, teach or study** Romans 13:1-14 with another person or group of people.
3. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Ezekiel 2, 18, 33 and 34** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. **Memorisation. (16) Romans 12:16.** Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. **Teaching.** Prepare **the parable of “the talents”** in Matthew 25:14-30. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. **Update your notebook** on preaching God’s kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.