

LESSON 26

THE CHRISTIANS'S CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

CENTRAL TRUTH: Christians are required by scripture to honor their civic responsibilities.

MEMORY VERSE: Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. – Romans 13:5

LESSON TEXT

Romans 13:1-14.

Romans 13:

1. Let everyone be subject 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, whoever 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 you will be commended.
4. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents 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 as a matter 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 to everyone what you owe them: 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 whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.
9. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not

steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

10. Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11. And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already 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 carousing 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 flesh.

INTRODUCTION

Christians have the responsibility to contribute their part to make the state better at all times and levels. This civic responsibility can be exercised through Christian or high-principled leaders, offering ourselves to be elected to political positions, voluntary community service, serving in the armed forces, Jury service, paying taxes etc. This week's lesson will help us to be responsible citizens and responsible Christians wherever we find ourselves.

LESSON

In **Romans 13:1-3**, the Bible notes that governing authorities, that is, civil authorities are established by God, therefore, Christians are to obey these leaders. We must obey every aspect of the state that does not bring us into conflict with the commands of God. When we do that, there will be orderliness and for that little room for confusion and indiscipline. This can in turn, result in high productivity with the resultant economic benefits. In **Titus 3:1**, Paul admonishes the believers also to be ready to do whatever is good. When we obey the established ordinances of the state and do right, we need not fear the authorities. The fact is that civil leaders rather commend those who do well. An individual who rebels against what God has instituted and therefore brings civil and or divine judgment on himself.

Some Christians regard working on their church service days as against God's instruction, but it is a Christian's duty and entirely in agreement with Jesus' instructions for the Sabbath (**Luke 13:11-17** and **Mark 2:24-28**). Thus for urgent civic services as in health issues, fire, flood, earthquake or rescue, the Christian should respond even if it coincides with their church service day. However, as Christians we should not place ourselves in circumstances or create the conditions for us to be frequently called upon to render such service during church service times because of monetary gains.

As part of our Christian responsibility to the civil authorities we must pay our taxes and bills to support them. Indeed as we pay our taxes, we help our nation to prosper economically.

Again as part of our civic responsibilities, Christians should take good care of national assets, and set good examples, for instance, not giving or receiving bribes. In so doing we bring God's blessings on the land.

One other thing Christians must do as their civic responsibility is to pray for civic authorities. Often we complain and accuse our leaders, we offer the excuse that 'my prayer won't make any difference', but it is time we spend time interceding for our government and nation.

Finally, it is also our Christian civic duty to be one another's keeper in our communities. We can do this by offering ourselves to be elected or by contributing to and getting involved in communal activities like clean-ups etc. The Bible urges the Christian to fulfill his obligations and for that matter his civic responsibility no matter when it is; by so doing he is blessed and the nation prospers.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What responsibilities accompany our privileges as believers and Ghanaian citizens?
2. How can I be sure to leave a lasting impact on my country, town and community?
3. What does submission to government include?
4. Evaluate your own life. When was the last time you spent time praying for the President, Judiciary?

DIALY BIBLE READING

Monday: Governing Authorities Subject to God. (Daniel 4:17, 25, 34, 35)

Tuesday: Love-Motivation for Responsibility. (Mathew 22:34-40).

Wednesday: Praying-a Civic Responsibility. (Jeremiah 29:7).

Thursday: Submit to Authorities. (1 Peter 2:13-15; Titus 3:1-2).

Friday: Civil Leaders- Servants of God. (Jeremiah 27:6-7; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23).

Saturday: Perform Civic Responsibilities for Conscience Sake. (1 Corinthians 1:12-14).