



Law & Order

(Romans 13:1–7)

Paul in Romans 13 starts the chapter with the following statement. “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” He then continues saying that the authorities are God’s servants and they do not bear the sword in vain, as they reward the good and punish the bad. Those in authority are owed obedience, honor, and respect.

When God made mankind, he made men, women, and children with equal worth in a stratified society with an authority structure. That structure is not only seen in God’s design for the family, the church and society at large, but also in our Triune God, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit willingly submit to God the Father in the outworking of a glorious plan of salvation for sinful man.

Benevolent authority structures bring law and order and stability to life, where the wrongdoer, who disrupts the peace and wrongs others, is punished; thereby, preserving the peace for the good of all. Every person who has been to public school has experienced this. A good teacher loves the students, teaches the students, and in firmness and fairness is in control of the classroom. If a student acts up, there are consequences. Order is maintained. God has ordained that a well-ordered family, where children are taught to respect their parents and treat their siblings and others with kindness, not take what does not belong to them, to work hard and be responsible for their actions are the building blocks of a just and stable society. When families crumble, stability in society is weakened.

In the Bible, Romans 13 explains this concept clearly. For the wellbeing of all, God instituted authority structures in the family and society. Justice demands that people treat others like they would like to be treated (the golden rule), that we do not harm others, or take away their justly acquired property.

We will also be addressing the anarchy and disrespect for law and order with the burning, looting and violence taking place in our nation’s cities today, that is diametrically opposed to Romans 13. There is a cultural revolution in progress today designed to change America and disentangle it from its Judeo-Christian roots. Therefore, (1) the text be explained, then (2) how the concern for liberty and justice for all, that comes out of the text, especially for blacks, was spearheaded by Christians to bring about the end of slavery, and major positive culture change through the civil rights movement (not to say it has been done perfectly and that there is not more to be done), and then (3) lastly, how Romans 13, in our day has been flipped on its head, and is seen as a tool of privileged oppressors, creating a climate of hostility towards Christians and the church in some sectors of our society.

Text: Romans 13:1–7

Table 1. Romans 13:1–7

<p>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.</p>	<p>The authorities are established by God. They have legitimate power; therefore, submission is expected by God.</p>
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Table 1. Continued.

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Rebels can expect judgment</p> <p>God-given guideline for rulers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward the good (the just) • Punish the unjust <p>Give to all their just due. (Justice for all).</p>
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Message of this passage.

God has structured life with authority structures.

1 Corinthians 11:3 “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

God
Christ
Man
Woman

An order can be seen here in God (the Trinity: God the Father and God the Son) and mankind (man and woman). It is a role among equals in God, and a role among equals in mankind. The role played in society is in view not if one is superior to the other.

The Bible speaks of the different roles and giftedness of people. We are all different. Yet no one is any better than the other.

Those in authority God has given the “sword” (power) to administer justice.

In our passage those who do good (NIV, what is right) are rewarded, those who do bad are punished

Justice takes place when a person gets what they deserve.

In the Psalms, there is frequently found a cry for justice. When wronged, the Psalmist asks that God would step in and give the oppressor what they deserve. (“Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” says the LORD, Deuteronomy 32:35, as quoted in Romans 12:19). This is the natural sequence to last week’s passage (Romans 12: 17–21). Sometimes, God takes vengeance, i.e. sees that justice is meted out, through civil authorities. For example: a murderer caught, tried, found guilty, and hanged. **The authority is God’s servant**, “an agent of wrath to punish the wrongdoer” (verse 4).

Romans 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Justice takes place when a person gets what they deserve.

If a person works hard, is honest in his dealings, **it is just** (fitting and right) if God allows him to accumulate personal wealth (property). That personal property belongs to him as a gift from God. **It is just** to reap the benefits of honest toil.

Is it sinful to be rich? No! Abraham, David, and Solomon were wealthy. The rich need to remember it was God who gave them their wealth and it should be used to help others (1Timothy 5:17–18). Also, they should not accumulate wealth by dishonest means, such as withholding wages, and harming innocent men (James 5:1–6).

Justice is served when lawful authorities punish those who do wrong to a person’s life, reputation, health, and personal property.

In a just society peace prevails.

Liberty and Justice for All

Our text shows that God’s template of an ideal society involves a hierarchy of authority. It is an authority to bring stability in society. It is an authority to reward good and punish evil.

REGRETTABLY, OFTEN BECAUSE OF SIN, THE MODEL IS NOT FOLLOWED! Because sinful man has his hands in the mix, much injustice has come from those in authority throughout the history of mankind. Even in the United States of America there are blots in our history, especially in our dealings with Indians and Blacks.

Let us consider each briefly. The Pilgrims and Puritans did not steal Indian land. It was vacated due to a plague before they came. They sought to do the Indians good. They made alliances with friendly Indians to ward off their mutual adversaries. However, the good treatment of the Indians did not continue throughout the history of America, there were many abuses.

I just want to remind you that the initial redress (remedy or set right an undesirable or unfair situation) of the wrongs in regard to slavery that came from the Christian community. Abolition of slavery was a major topic in the Christian community. It would take a Civil War and President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation that would eventually free the slaves. It was a Black Baptist pastor from Atlanta, GA, that spearheaded the peaceful protests that really turned the tide in the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. It was the televised beating of peaceful Black church folk, dressed in their Sunday best, men, women, and children as they attempted to cross a bridge in Selma, Alabama that caused people all over the nation to be horrified to see the ugliness of racial hatred. Broadcasted to their living rooms on their black and white TV screens, they saw first-hand an abuse of law and order. It was raw police brutality.

Table 2. Romans 13 – God’s Plan, Man’s Failure to Keep It, Rejection

Romans 13	Romans 13	Romans 13
God’s good plan	Failure to keep God’s plan.	God’s Plan Rejected
Justice	Abuse of power	In Critical Theory a tool of oppression
Rulers to reward the good and punish the bad	Christians seek to redress the wrong.	view of a current cultural revolution to reshape America
	Seeking liberty & justice for all	

A Contemporary (but wrong) View of Romans 13

At present, we are seeing massive disrespect for law and order in our country. In Saratoga Springs, those peacefully eating dinner, a week ago Friday, were assaulted by people carrying Black Lives Matter signs. I have seen videos on the internet of these kinds of confrontations . . . people with bull horns yelling at customers, if they refuse to raise a fist in solidarity of BLM, they are harassed and said to be racists. [Most Black Lives Matter marchers do so peaceably, sincerely seeking to show solidarity with those who are grieved by the abuse.](#) We have seen the looting, the graffiti, the burning of businesses, the beating up of business owners, even the killing

of store owners, and cold-blooded murder of police officers, many of whom are black. Do Black lives matter to all the protesters? The rhetoric does not match the actions! The rights of innocent peace-loving people are being trampled on. How would you like to be the owner of a business destroyed, or the children and widow of a murdered police officer? Actions being done to protest injustice commit injustice. There is a strong “anti-law and order” stance in BLM. During the Obama years we saw BLM marchers chanting, “Pigs in a blanket fry like bacon!” and “What do we want? Dead Cops!”

I am convinced that most people do not know what is going on behind the scenes. There is a cultural revolution that is not just appearing upon the scene but was advancing through the Clinton and Obama administrations and was gaining momentum, when suddenly the present administration disrupted it with its “Make America Great” mindset, and supreme court nominations who do not share the same Constitutional ideology. The ones who are seeking to change America want a fluid Constitution that can be changed to fit their ideology.

Just briefly, I want to tell you about what is being taught in our colleges, universities, and businesses. What is occurring in public life today is the result of indoctrination in Critical Theory in Black studies, Woman’s studies, and Queer studies on American campuses. It is a way of looking at life through the lens of oppressors and the oppressed, that champions the oppressed, and advocates liberation.¹

Table 3. Critical Theory – Only two groups: The Abusers and the Abused

Privileged Oppressors	Heterosexual	*Cisgendered	White	Man	Rich	Christian
Oppressed	Homosexual	Transgendered	POC (Person of Color)	Woman	Poor	Muslim

*Cisgendered – you identify your sex by your sex organs

How much of an “abuser” or “abused” you are is based upon “intersectionality.” We are all a composite of many sections.

- If you are a black man. (1 level of abuse)
- If a black woman (2 levels of abuse)
- If a black lesbian (3 levels of abuse, black, woman, lesbian).

When a black lesbian is hated, is she hated because she is black, because she is a woman, or because she is a lesbian?

According to this, I am about the most abusive person you can find. The only thing I am not is rich (of course that is a relative term I am not rich compared to most Americans.)

The goal of Critical Theory is to liberate the oppressed from the oppressors. To be liberated can only be done when whites deny their privilege and yield their opinions to POC so as to level the playing field. Heterosexual must affirm homosexuals, Christians must prefer Muslims, because you are sensitive to their oppressed status. If you are a sensitive oppressor, then you are “woke.” If you fail to be sensitive and do not show preference to the oppressed, then you are “cancelled” and part of the “cancelled culture.”

If you are privileged, you are to take your place under the oppressed. You have heard the term “white supremacy” this to me, sounds like “black supremacy” “LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer) Supremacy.”

¹ I am profoundly grateful to be able to read the notes that Rev. Nick Kennicott sent to RBNet pastors upon the topic of Critical Theory from his studies on the topic, in preparation for his doctrinal dissertation, *Critical Theory, Postmodernism, and the West’s Embrace of Marxism.*

According to this way of thinking, the way to equalize the rich/poor disparity is through redistribution of wealth.

CHRISTIANITY IS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO THIS REDEFINING OF SOCIETY

How so?

- It redefines marriage between a man and a woman, (who know what sex they are)
- It seeks to redefine and therefore destroy the biblical family
- It is opposed to the Bible and Christianity lumping all Christians into the category of oppressors.

So, there you have it. We need law and order if we are to live in peace and safety. Those who are in leadership must see themselves as God's servants to serve the people they govern, by rewarding and protecting the good and punishing the evil. In Romans 13 we have seen God's plan for law and order. We've seen how we fail over and over to keep it. Lastly, we've seen Romans 13 being outright rejected in a cultural revolution which is seeking to fundamentally change America life.

What about Race? According to the Bible there is no white race or black race, there is only one race. And God wants us to live together in harmony.

August 28, 1963, the Baptist minister and civil rights advocate, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke before the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC these words.

I say to you today, my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this Nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creeds –“we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day the red hills of Georgia the sons of slaves and the sons of former slaveowners will be able to sit down at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that even the state of Mississippi, sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that one day my four little girls will one day live in a Nation and will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the conduct of their character.

This is the way forward to racial harmony. It will be when blacks and whites and all people of color can sit side by side, enjoying each other's company, because they are fellow members of the human race.

This is the harmony that comes as a result of living in accordance to this passage in Romans 13. When we follow God's Word and are obedient to His ways, the result will be justice, stability, and blessing in the good life that follows. When we veer from the right path, all harmony and blessing will be taken away. It will not turn out for anything good because it opposes the excellent plan of our good and just God.