

God, Believers, & Government



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November 4, 2020



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Question: What should we know and remember about God, Believers & Government?

I. Believers are _____ to be _____ to governing authorities (**Rom. 13:1; Tit. 3:1; I Pet. 2:13**).

Believers were not to have a reputation of being rebellious to authorities. They were expected to be law-abiding citizens, expected to voluntarily place themselves under the authority of those in authority, to obey laws, and to yield themselves to rule of government. They were expected to respect the office, to have a new understanding of those in authority. They may or may not think highly of a person who occupies an office or position, may or may not like his/her character, may or may not like his/her policies or position on issues, but out of respect for the office/the position, believer to yield to the authority of those in authority.

Some of the reasons obedience to this expectation can be challenging are:

1. If the one in the position is _____ (lies, dishonest, deceitful, inhumane, vile).
2. If the one in the position is _____ (makes decisions that are partial to some).
3. If the one in the position _____ in how one group is treated over another (leans toward showing favor to some but not the same favor towards others).
4. If the one in the position appears to _____ power/authority for personal advancement or to benefit others while excluding some others.

5. If the one is the position seems _____ of all under his authority.

6. Other reasons.....

Question: What are reasons believers are to be in subjection to governing authorities?

II. Believers must _____ is the Only authority and _____ were established by God (**Rom. 13:1**).

Paul wrote, “for there is no authority except from God and those which exist are established by God.” The verb translated “established,” is understood to mean “appointed, put in place, or ordained.” Governing authorities did not come into existence apart from God. They came into existence because of God. They were ordained, put in place or appointed by God and have their authority from God. Governing authorities are work and will of God. Therefore, when one submits to governing authorities, he/she submits to God.

Fill in: It’s hard to believe that some governing authorities are established by God when _____

III. Believers _____ being in subjection to governing authorities, _____ to God (**Rom. 13:1-2**).

God is the Only Authority! No authority exists without God. All Governing authorities that exist have been established by God -- to rule believers and unbelievers, to govern believers and unbelievers, and to maintain order in the land for believers and unbelievers. Without governing authorities there would be total

chaos. Laws are given to prevent chaos. God established governing authorities for our well-being, for our protection from harm...so there would be peace in the land.

Those who resist being in subjection to God, resist the ordinance or arrangement, the established means by which God maintains order in the land. Thus, when one resists governing authorities, one directly resists God. Believers must view governing authorities as the authority of God, working through human vessels to do His will. To ensure that order is maintained for believers and unbelievers, if one resists the authority of God by resisting governing authorities, **that one receives condemnation** or judgment upon him/herself (**13:2; I Pet. 2:13-14**).

God has given governing authorities the authority to judge the behavior of people as meriting either praise or punishment. Those who live in subjection to governing authorities receive praise and those who do not, punishment.

Fill in:

IV. Believers _____ to fear Governing Authorities when they _____ to God (**Rom. 13:3-5; I Pet. 2:13-14**).

All those who engage in good behavior, who live in subjection to God by subjecting themselves to governing authorities, should have no reason to fear rulers/Governing Authorities. If we do what is good, Paul writes, that we will receive praise from rulers/governing authorities. The right thing to do is to live in subjection to God by living in subjection to governing authorities. Governing authorities are ministers of God for the good of all people (**13:4a**).

However, believers are warned, that if they engage in evil, if they refuse to live in subjection to God by living in subjection to governing authorities, they should be afraid because Governing Authorities bear a sword, given to them by

God. They are ministers of God, avengers, who bring wrath upon those who engage in evil...who will not live in subjection to God by living in subjection to governing authorities. Governing authorities are ministers/servants of God...to praise those who do good and to punish those who do evil. Governing authorities were established by God for our praise or punishment depending on our willingness to live in subjection to God by living in subjection to Government. A few statements are true:

1. Law abiding citizens should not fear law abiding governing authorities.
2. Law abiding citizens should fear lawless governing authorities.
3. Lawless citizens should fear law abiding governing authorities.
4. Lawless citizens and lawless governing authorities should both fear God.

It's unfortunate but true, many people have experienced being law abiding, yet having to fear lawless governing authorities. It also true that many have lived around lawlessness among people and by governing authorities. The ideal, the hope we have in America with voting and choosing leaders is that both the people and governing authorities would be in subjection to God and abide by law.

Select one: I'm more disappointed when I see [people or Governing authorities] not abiding by the law. The reason is

V. Believers _____ to each one what is due in subjection to God (**Rom. 13:6-10**).

There are several things believers must render:

1. Believers must render taxes to rulers, governing authorities, servants of God (**13:6**).
2. Believers must render what is appropriate to each one (**13:7**).
3. Believers must render honor/respect to governing authorities by submitting to Governing authorities.

4. Believer must render honor/respect to God by submitting to authorities established by God.

In our Democracy, God uses us to select those who serve as governing authorities. Our expectation is that those selected would be law-abiding, even as they are appointed to enforce the law. We believe that through voting, God chooses those He has appointed to lead. Thus, every citizen of age should vote...because he or she is a vessel through whom God uses to choose governing authorities who bear a sword. If we abdicate this responsibility, we fail to follow the ordinance of God, Who has established voting as the means to select rulers. At times, as with this current election, we go to the Polls after praying and hearing each candidate and do our best to select that candidate will believe will not only enforce the law, but also be law abiding. Many times people choose a candidate other than the candidate we've chosen. We trust that God makes the deciding vote through His people.

God is intimately involved in establishing Governments and works through believers and unbelievers to appoint rulers, who serve as His ministers.