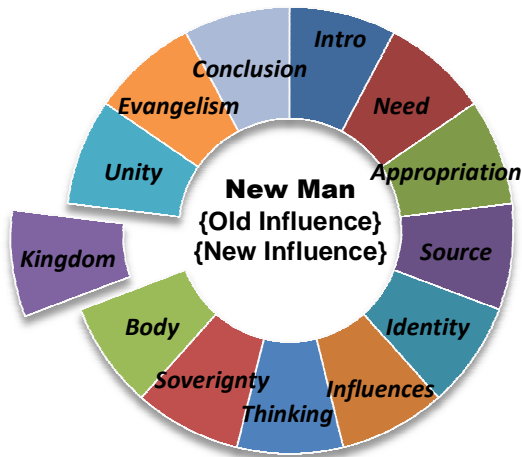


XII. The New Man – Service – Kingdom Life (Rom 13)



A. Submission to the King through the ministers of Government (vs. 1-7)

In the last chapter, Paul ended his discussion with a challenge not to take Justice/Vengeance into our own hands. Rather we are to trust it into God's hands. The New Man is subject to God's Kingdom today. We need not wait till His kingdom comes on earth to live as heavenly citizens.

1. Earthly rulers and authorities are established by God.

This does not mean that they are perfect and do everything right but it does mean that within God's permission, He is allowing them to function (right or wrong). To trust/accept their decisions is to trust God. This is probably one of the harder concepts for us.

We see kingdoms raised from rebellion, coercion, royal lineages, popular vote (sometimes bought), etc. Our minds need to see life from a new perspective. God's sovereignty is greater than man's wickedness. Unless they tell us to go against God's written will or our conscience, then we are to submit to them as God's personal agent for good in our lives. I believe this holds to whatever kingdom we find ourselves subject to.

In the case of America – we have a government of representation. This means that to submit ourselves to God's authority is to specifically get involved in our government. We can vote, run for office and appeal to our leaders. And we are to honor them.

We need not fear them. God has said that Vengeance is His. The authorities He establishes is one answer to this. If we do wrong then they have authority from God to punish it. This is God's grace for order in a world given over to sin. God's wrath has been revealed against all ungodliness. They do not bear the sword in vain. In Roman culture, this last statement would have referred to a soldier pulling his sword out of its sheath. This means he is about to KILL. Fear was sanctioned by God in the case of someone doing wrong.

I believe that we sometimes believe that Grace means people in authority should never give punitive decisions when someone admits wrong. However, Paul clearly indicates that fear is proper in this context for they (who rule in an atmosphere of fear) are God's servants:

For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.
Romans 13:4 (ESV)

2. Earthly ministers have a job of serving us and thus worthy of our pay.

We must be faithful to pay our taxes and revenue/customs. We so often look to avoid these and are easily tempted to record our finances in such a way as to decrease what we owe.

However, these are God's servants. When our minds are renewed in this area we will be transformed in revealing how the new man of God relates to the Government.

We are New Men. We are crucified from our sins with Christ and raised with Christ to newness of life. We are now citizens of God and living sacrifices. How happy we should be to support God's ministers.

3. When Christ was on earth He clearly submitted to the authority over him.

The Roman government was God's ministers. Christ walked under that government and expected us to pay Caesar what belonged to Caesar.

Today we are Christ's body still living on earth. We are to live under the authority of God's ministers.

4. When Christ rules, all authorities will be submitted to Him.

The day is coming when Christ will return to rule. That day is not far away. In that day, we will rule and reign with Him!

5. We are not to withhold pay, honor or respect from God's ministers.

B. Submission to the King's law through submission to LOVE (vs. 8-14)

God has talked about the ministers of the kingdom, now he is talking about the Law. In particular He is talking about God's Law revealed in the 10 commandments but in general He refers to any law that deals with serving our fellow citizens.

1. Love is the "FULLNESS" of the law.

This section takes on several different meanings based on the translation. I don't mean the translation of words but of concepts.

"for the one who loves another has fulfilled the Law"

is different from

"for the one who loves another has fulfilled Law".

The greek does not contain the definite article. The Law is split into two sections: Man's relationship to God and Man's relationship to Man. This is in reference to all law dealing with Man's relationship to Man.

Another similar issue is:

"therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law"

Vs.

"therefore love is the fullness of the Law"

You see, when we love – it is not about satisfying any specific law. That leads us to get hung up on the details of the Law. But the greek here says it is the "FULLNESS". This means that it is the basis that all of the law flows out of. It is not a detail to be hung up on – it is the heart that all details should flow from. It is the FULL thing!

2. The time is nearer now than ever before. And it's even closer now!

Every minute that passes we get closer to the day when Christ will return and the kingdom will be established. We will be forever freed from the sorrow of this body and the corrupt rule of the current kingdoms.

We long for that day of salvation but we only have so much time to present the light of Christ to the current world. How much more today as the day nears?

1 and 2 Peter tell us of God's patience with the righteous man because he was not willing for the unrighteous to perish! That is huge. God is not just patient with the unrighteous but He trusts us to bring the truth to them. Noah preached and God was patient with NOAH. Today God is patient towards you (believers) not willing that anyone else in the world would perish.

3. Citizen living is to “put on Christ” and make no provision for the flesh.

Our flesh still has its desires but it does not rule. It is crucified. The fact is finished. But WE NEED TO LIVE IT.

We need to live in the armor of Light as in the Daytime. It is clear that the day in this context is when Christ comes back. In that day we will function as citizens of his Kingdom – the Daytime. We are to live today under human governments as we will in the day we live in Christ’s government. We are present the Light to this world today.

We do this by “putting on Christ”. We already have “put on Christ” according to Col 3 and Eph. That refers to having Christ as our life. Now we need to “put on Christ” in our living.

Christ is our life on the inside. Now we need to display Him on the outside. This brings us full circle to Romans 12:2 – Be ye transformed (outward revealing of an inward reality) by the renewing of our minds. Nothing needs to change other than our thinking.

Don’t plan to align your life in a way where the flesh might have opportunity to be displayed. Live the crucified/resurrected life!!!