



CIVIL

DISOBEDIENCE

ROMANS 13:1-7

"Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword in vain; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil... For rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing"

REMEMBER....

- God ordained government, but not its evil practices – Corruption and government go hand-in-hand, and God is not unaware of this reality (Deuteronomy 17:14ff, Isaiah 10:1, Ecclesiastes 5:8-9).
- Obedience is not unqualified – Governments should be obeyed when they take their place under God, not when they take the place of God (Acts 4:19).
- We need not obey its evils – Be careful not to make a country or its government an idol.

DIVINELY APPROVED EXAMPLES

- Exodus 1:15-21
- Exodus 5-12
- 1 Kings 18:4, 13-15
- Daniel 3:5, 18
- Daniel 6:7, 10
- Acts 4:18ff
- Revelation 12-13
- *"...These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes..."* (Revelation 14:4).

The background of the image is a close-up photograph of a wall with severely damaged paint. The paint is cracked, chipped, and peeling away, revealing a bright red surface underneath. The remaining paint is a mottled, yellowish-tan color. The overall texture is rough and weathered.

THE RIGHT WAY TO
DISOBEY

WHEN TO DISOBEY

ANTIPROMULGATION

- When government permits evil
- When it promulgates (announces) evil laws
- When it limits freedom in some way
- When it is politically oppressive

ANTICOMPULSION

- When government commands evil
- When it compels evil actions by law
- When it negates freedom altogether
- When it is religiously oppressive

WHAT ELSE DO WE LEARN FROM BIBLICAL EXAMPLES?

- God's people refuse to obey an evil command, but do not revolt against authority in general.
- The disobedience is non-violent (Romans 12:17-21).
- Believers calmly accept the punishment for their civil disobedience.
- Sometimes it is just best to flee.
- Take advantage of peaceful, lawful means of overcoming oppression. Paul, for example, knew his rights (Acts 22:24ff, 25:8-12).



BUT WHAT ABOUT

REVOLUTION?

REVOLUTION

- The overthrow of Athaliah is an exception under special circumstances (2 Chronicles 23:3).
- The Bible is consistent in its disapproval of rebellion against authority (Proverbs 24:21, 17:11, Psalm 68:6, Numbers 16, 2 Samuel 15).
- And what about our own country's rebellious beginning? Should we celebrate Independence Day? We do not necessarily have to approve of the "how" in order to be grateful for what was born out of it.

"Submit yourselves, for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him... for such is the will of

1 PETER 2:13-15 God"

We must obey the law (Titus 3:1), pray (1 Timothy 2:1-2), work peacefully to bring about change, disobey sinful commands, and patiently endure suffering (1 Peter 4:12-13).