

# Study in Romans

Application > Disposition of the Christian > Biblical Approach to Authority  
Selected Scriptures

During the decades of the 1960's and 70's there was a popular bumper sticker that read, "Question Authority." While we don't see that sticker these days, the seeds of that rebellious philosophy are certainly producing a bumper crop in our American culture in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have taken it upon ourselves to question everything and everyone, even replacing that bumper sticker with another, "Question Reality." As a result, most people—Christians included—are thoroughly confused about what authority is, where it comes from, and why we should obey. At the foundation of this confusion is our rejection of God and His divine authority. It is nothing new, of course, stretching back to the Fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden where the Devil first questioned God's authority and character.



In our study of Romans, we have arrived at one of the most important passages in Scripture on the subject of authority. In seven short verses, the Apostle Paul gives us a huge stash of insight into God's protocol of authority. In this topical mini-series, we will use Romans 13:1-7 as a launching point to cover other important passages that speak to this topic. What we will see will surprise, convict and free you as we see what the One Who really matters has to say on this subject.

1. Source of Authority
  - a. Wrong views
    - i. Might makes right
    - ii. Money
    - iii. Talent
    - iv. Appearance
  - b. Biblical view: God (Rom. 13:1)
2. Roles, rights and responsibilities: How authority works
  - a. Roles
    - i. Dictionary: "the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a **particular situation**."
    - ii. In terms of authority: A responsibility to exercise limited, God-vested authority in this life for the praise of those who do right and the punishment of those who do wrong, or a responsibility to submit to the same.
  - b. Rights
    - i. Dictionary: "a moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way."
    - ii. In terms of authority: God's expectations for treatment of people in the roles they fill at the time in which they fill them. In other words, those in leadership have rights just as those in subjection have rights. (Romans 13:7)
3. Institutions of Authority
  - a. Civil (Rom. 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17)
    - i. Congress
    - ii. President or Governor and administration
    - iii. Judicial system
    - iv. Police/security

- b. Church (I Thess. 5:12-13, Heb. 13:17)
    - i. Apostles (writings only now)
    - ii. Overseers/teachers
  - c. Family (Eph. 5:21-6:4)
    - i. Husbands
    - ii. Wives
    - iii. Parents
    - iv. Children
  - d. Business (Eph. 6:5-9)
    - i. Employee
    - ii. Employer
4. Exceptions to obedience (Ex. 1:17; Dan. 3:16-18 and 6:7,10; Acts 4:19-20)
5. But what do I do when I don't agree? Understanding the appeal process (Luke 2:41-51; Philemon 1:8-10)