

Christians & Government
LIFE fellowship, March 13, 2009

Agree or disagree? Justify your positions from Scripture.

- Christians should always obey what the government/governing authorities command them to do.
 - Christians should always pay their taxes, regardless of what the government spends it on.
 - Christians should never criticize those in governing authority over them.
 - Christians should never participate in
 - peaceful protests against the government
 - civil disobedience against the government
 - political activism
 - armed rebellion/insurrection against the government
 - Christians should not become politicians or aspire to positions of political leadership/power.
 - Christians should not join the police force or the military because they may be compelled to enforce laws or to fight in wars that are immoral.
 - In democratic nations,
 - Christians have an obligation to vote in every election
 - Christians should always vote for the Christian candidate in any given election
 - Christians should only vote for candidates who support social justice causes (e.g. anti-poverty measures)
 - Christians should only vote for candidates who oppose abortion (or hold to Christian views of morality)
 - Governments should limit their sphere of activity only to punishing those who do wrong and commending those who do right (Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14).
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Suggested reading (from slightly different viewpoints):

- “The Christian and Government” sermon series (by John MacArthur)
<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermon+Series/127>
- Sermon series on Romans 13:1-7 (by John Piper)
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/BySeries/2/211_Subjection_to_God_and_Subjection_to_the_State_Part_1/
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/BySeries/2/214_Subjection_to_God_and_Subjection_to_the_State_Part_2/
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/BySeries/2/215_Subjection_to_God_and_Subjection_to_the_State_Part_3/
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/BySeries/2/216_Subjection_to_God_and_Subjection_to_the_State_Part_4/

Some Selected Scriptures on Christians & Government

Matthew 8:15-22

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹"Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²²When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Acts 5:27-29

²⁷Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

²⁹Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

Romans 13:1-7

¹Everyone 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. ²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

³For 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. ⁴For 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. ⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. ⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

¹I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— ²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Titus 3:1-2

¹Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

1 Peter 2:13-21

¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.