

Fulfilling Our Civil Responsibilities

(Mark 12:17)

Introduction:

1. In Mark 12:17 Jesus made a statement that is familiar to many people.
 - a. When Jesus mentioned:
 - 1) *"the things that are Caesar's,"* He was referring to our responsibilities to the civil government
 - 2) *"the things that are God's,"* He was referring to our duties to God.
 - b. The Lord clearly showed that we are to fulfill our responsibilities to the civil government as well as our responsibilities to God.
2. Last week we pointed out one reason why it is necessary for us to fulfill our responsibilities to God -- He knows that we love Him when we keep His commandments (1 John 5:3).
3. Today we are examining passages that relate to our duties to the state.

Discussion:

I. ROMANS 13:1-7

- A. Vs.1a teaches us to be subject to *"the higher powers"* [civil authorities].
 1. A similar admonition is given in Titus 3:1 -- *"obey magistrates."*
 2. These 2 verses simply teach us to obey the laws of the land.
 3. This applies to everyone -- Paul included *"every soul."*
 4. One of our civil duties is to obey the laws of the land; however, if a civil law violates a law of God we must obey God (Acts 5:29).
- B. (vs.1b-5) Paul continued by giving 3 reasons why we must obey the law.
 1. Reason #1: We must obey the laws of the land because God has ordained the government's power to rule (vs.1b-2).
 - a. Jesus touched on this when He was tried before Pilate -- He indicated that Pilate's authority to rule had come from God (John 19:11).
 - b. Those who resist the power of government are guilty of resisting something God has ordained, and He will hold such people accountable.
 2. Reason #2: We must obey the laws of the land so we can avoid fear (vs.3-4).
 - a. One function of the state is to protect its citizens -- law-abiding citizens have no reason to be afraid.
 - b. Another function of the state is to punish evildoers -- they should be afraid.
 3. Reason #3: We must obey the laws of the land for conscience sake (vs.5).
 4. In addition to obeying the laws of the land, . . .
- C. (vs.6-7) We are to pay taxes to support the government, and we are to show respect to those in positions of authority.

II. 1 PETER 2:13-17

- A. These instructions are similar to those given in Romans 13.
- B. We are to obey the law, and we are to show respect to our rulers.
- C. The state is to punish lawbreakers and protect law-abiding citizens.

III. 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-4

- A. We are to pray for our civil leaders.
- B. We are to pray for them so we can live in conditions that are favorable to spreading the Gospel.
- C. This is pleasing to God -- He wants everyone to be saved.

Conclusion:

1. As the Lord's followers, let us fulfill our responsibilities to God and to the government to the best of our ability.
2. If we will do this, we will be ideal citizens, and we will have a great influence for good.
3. For man's benefit, God established the home, the state, and the church.
4. Have you become a member of the church? (see Acts 2:47)