

“Satisfied with How God Operates”

Have you ever heard someone say, or thought or said this yourself?

- _____ (insert name of government official at any level – Governor Tony Evers, Senator Joe Biden, President Donald Trump, Police Officers, etc...) is an idiot, a crook, inept, immoral, self-serving, incapable of passing helpful legislation, trying to run our country into the ground.
- My employer is clueless on how to run a successful business. My supervisor is lazy or unfair or arrogant.
- School is a waste of time. The school administrators, teachers and coaches don't know what they are doing and their rules, homework assignments, and drills/tactics are pointless.
- I can't believe the Church Council made that decision. What were they thinking! That pastor is boring or lazy or arrogant or not friendly or spends too much time in their study or not enough time in their study, etc...
- My parent's rules are so dumb, unnecessary, and out of touch with what other families are doing. My parents need to leave me alone and stop embarrassing me and stop suffocating me with their advice.

I could go on with examples and I could add to the list of leaders under attack, but I think you get the idea. What does God have to say about such thoughts and words? Listen to Romans 13:1-10.

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

³ For 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. ⁴ For 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. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.

People can switch employers, switch schools, switch churches, move to a different state or country, but at the end of the day a person will always have to embrace the fact that no matter

where they go there is always going to be someone in authority over them. This is actually what God designed. **“There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God”** (vs. 1). So when we dishonor, disrespect, and disobey those in authority over us we are really dishonoring, disrespecting, and disobeying God. And God takes that quite seriously. **“Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves”** (vs. 2). At times that means earthly punishment. But this is a spiritual issue too. If we rebel against any earthly authority, then we are really rebelling against God. We are really saying, “God, I’m not satisfied with how you have decided to operate this world. God, you have made foolish choices in who you selected to be in leadership over me. God, I don’t think you can use this leader, flawed as they are, to fulfill your good purpose for me and others.” If that dishonor, disrespect, and disobedience is not dealt with then prepare to spend eternity in Hell.

“But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken” (Matthew 12:36). God have mercy on us for our social media posts, conversations with family/friends/classmates/co-workers/strangers even, our body language, attitudes, and thoughts about those in authority over us. When it comes to the fourth commandment there is much that deserves our humble and sincere repentance. God has good news for the repentant. **“Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman”** (Jeremiah 15:19). Through the gift of faith in Jesus Christ God has restored us. Jesus perfectly kept the 4th commandment when he lived on this earth and Jesus suffered the punishment of Hell for all the times we have dishonored, disrespected, and disobeyed God and the representatives of his authority on earth.

Forgiven in Christ and content with God’s grace shown to us through Jesus let’s not take the bait of social media, family, friends, classmates, co-workers, strangers, and our own sinful nature that wants us break the 4th commandment. Instead, let’s stand out in this world as God’s spokesmen, positive examples of respecting authority and being satisfied with how God operates the world. We can do that in the following ways.

- **“For he is God’s servant to do you good”** (vs. 4). Assume the best about those in authority over you that they have the best interest of you and others in mind. Don’t presume to know what their motives and intentions are. Don’t question everything they do. Don’t act like you always know better than them and would do a much better job. Don’t buy into every conspiracy theory that is thrown out there by others. Every person in authority is sinful, but even flawed authority figures and the safety and order they provide is better than the chaos of having no law and order.
- **“Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor”** (vs. 7). Make it evident through your attitude, words, and actions that you appreciate God’s authoritative representatives and consider them a blessing in your life. In fact, God encourages us to do this - **“I urge...that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority”** (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Since God intends for authority to be a blessing to all

then encourage them and pray for them so that they fulfill their purpose for the benefit of all.

- **“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities”** (vs. 1). That doesn’t mean that you have to love every decision that they make and that you can’t have a different opinion on how it should be done. However, at the end of the day God wants us to obey the authority figures in our life. And if we disagree with them there are proper and respectful ways to do that.
- **“We must obey God rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). God wants us to submit to those in authority over us unless one of their commands would mean disobeying God’s greater authority. In those situations, God directs us to disobey his earthly representatives of authority. Even so, God would want us to disobey in a peaceful and respectful way if possible. The apostles in Acts 5 are a great example of that.

⁸ **Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.** ⁹ **The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”** ¹⁰ **Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law”** (vs. 8-10). It’s not a coincidence that God has Paul follow up his thoughts on authority with this statement. Your neighbor and my neighbor are all the various authority figures in our lives. God wants us to stand out in this world as different by loving them in all the ways shared previously. And keep this in mind as well. When the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans Nero was the emperor of Rome. Nero wouldn’t make anyone’s list of greatest leaders of all time. In fact, Nero persecuted Christians to the point of death. The Apostle Paul died a martyr’s death at the hand of Nero. If Paul can write the words of Romans 13:1-10 and follow those words and Nero is his emperor – then I don’t think anyone of us has all that bad and we can strive to follow Romans 13 too. Content with God’s grace to us through Christ, let us show God and others that we are satisfied with how he operates and governs this world and our lives by striving to stand out in this world in the way we keep the 4th commandment. Amen.