



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

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

Romans 13:6,7

Christian citizens

"Why would I support the government when it allows _____ to happen in our country? . . . I'm not paying taxes until the government proves it knows how to use my money! . . . How could I ever respect a president/governor/mayor who acts like that? Who could honor someone so dishonorable?"

Our sinful nature just eats this stuff up. Satan preys on my heart when it is not happy with our government or governmental leaders. Is it wrong to be dissatisfied with leaders? No. Is it wrong to want justice, moral laws, and peace? No. Is it wrong to personally feel a different leader could do a better job? Not at all. But the problem is how I react when Satan leads me to twist those thoughts in my heart into doing as I see fit. It's almost as if Satan convinces us that if anyone in government sins or fails us, then we are justified in sinning back with disobedience, disrespect, or dishonor.

First of all, that's not how Jesus lived. Our perfect Savior showed perfect respect and honor for those in authority. Perhaps you remember the time he told the Jewish leaders to, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." A fascinating statement of humble respect from our true God considering that Caesar claimed to be a god himself! We also consider how humble and respectful Jesus was to the weak-willed yet hard-hearted Pontius Pilate who sent him off to his crucifixion. How thankful we can be for Jesus, our perfect Savior, who lived a perfect life of humble respect in our place and then died to pay for our selfish sins.

In thanks for our Savior's forgiveness, we too can live such a life of humble love and respect—yes, even when we disagree with or disapprove of our leaders. Thus, the apostle Paul teaches us that we can pay taxes to those who ask us to, even if we aren't quite sure how well that money is being spent. And we can give respect and honor to those who lead us—yes, even if they have acted disrespectful and dishonorable themselves. Though we don't condone the sins of leaders, we also understand that only Jesus is perfect. All other worldly leaders will fall into sin. Thus, we need to ask God to give them strength for the difficult task of leadership. For that alone—the challenge of their position and task—there is in fact a certain level of respect and honor due.

How challenging! God give us the strength and the wisdom to respond to Jesus' incredible love with our lives of humble love and respect for all—including our government and its leaders.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, forgive my heart that so often strays in selfish anger, disrespect, and dishonor toward others, especially our government and its leaders. Move my heart to live in your love and to show respect and honor to all for whom it is due. Amen.