



The next two weeks - Week 2: Paul on being imprisoned; Week 3: Paul on being owned

Ask, Who has been your favorite boss? What is/was it about them that make them your favorite?

Romans 13:1-10, (NET-New English Translation)

*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God's appointment, and the authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ² So the person who resists such authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will incur judgment ³ (for rulers cause no fear for good conduct but for bad). Do you desire not to fear authority? Do good and you will receive its commendation ⁴ because it is God's servant for your well-being. But be afraid if you do wrong because government does not bear the sword for nothing. It is God's servant to administer punishment on the person who does wrong. ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath of the authorities but also because of your conscience. ⁶ For this reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities ⁷ are God's servants devoted to governing. ⁷ Pay everyone what is owed: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due. ⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "**Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet,**" (and if there is any other commandment) are summed up in this, "**Love your neighbor as yourself.**" ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Ask, What might it be like to grow up where you always trusted those in authority? Of course, it is a far-fetched question, but play along. Why do you think we long to always be in charge and declare, "You're not the boss of me!"

Here are the main points from this passage –

1. Be subject – There is a strong dose of surrender in this command. Paul encourages us to be subjected to others but not out of fear.
 - All leaders are by God's appointment. This might be a big hurdle for many believers. Ask, If our freedom is surrendered to God and all leaders are by God's appointment, why do you think we struggle with authority so much?
 - We surrender our freedom to God's authority.
2. Because of your conscience – Believers have a new conscience that is given by Christ. Our conscience is transformed and we want to give God glory through our lives. Authorities are God's servants – both the ones we agree with and disagree with. They are for our refinement in becoming like Christ.

3. Pay your dues – pay what is owed. Ask, How do you view respect and honor?

- Respect is what a position is due. This is towards the position. When someone holds a position of authority, respect is owed. Ask, Who might these people be in your life?

- Honor is deserved based upon the character of someone. How they handle themselves. These individuals might not hold a “position of authority” but because of their character, demeanor and how they treat others, honor is paid. Ask, Who might these people be in your life?

4. Your eternal debt – owe nothing except to love one another.

The one who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

We constantly need to be paying on this debt – we owe it to one another to love them.

And it is not just the ones we find to be lovely or easier to love.

How about a little quiz?

1. Are you subject to no one? Who do you allow to be “the boss of you?”
2. Are you unwilling to honor or respect those you do not agree with?
3. Are you paying your dues? Is respect and honor evident in your life?
4. In what area of life is God leading you to love others out of respect and honor?

Bonus self-evaluation and accountability –

In what areas of life do you need to be humbled?

How might you surrender to authority this week?

Take time to share prayer requests.