

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

**# 22 – ROMANS 13: 1 – 7, “Submission to Authorities” – with commentary**  
**The purpose of the Letter to the Romans is to develop a “Model for Living the Awakened/Transformed Life.” Today’s study is the 22<sup>nd</sup> of 27 lessons.**

**According to our Study Chart** we are studying the 4<sup>th</sup> section of “Become The Work of The Church.” Our previous sessions cover Paul presentations on God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. This new section covers the Work of The Church. This is one of seven sessions under the rubric of “Ethics.” This the **third** session in the series. Remember, the focus of the Book of Romans is to provide us “The Model For Living The Awakened/Transformed Life.

**REMEMBER! THE CONTEXT IS CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

**ABOUT THIS LESSON!** This lesson clearly is about obedience as a Christian virtue. In light of Paul’s admonition I want to raise two questions: 1) “To whom are we obedient?” 2) “What does Christian Disobedience look like?” With this in mind, I share the following reflection.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The “study page” provided three formats for making Christian decisions. This comment page offers just one. After the IHOP Bible Study session, it was apparent to me that using all three formats only confused us. These three formats were: 1) “A Philosophical ranking of values: “Concerning the question of the Good,” 2) “The Actions of the “Responsible Person, and 3) “The Christian Ethic of WWJD.”

**The answers to each question using all three comments are printed here.**

The one to be used with this commentary section is # 3 “The Christian Ethic of WWJD.” The context for this material is:

What does it mean to make decisions are the questions confront us in “Jesus Christ.?” Let’s examine this for a moment.

**The Cross:** It is Christ who confronts us through the Cross. Christians never have “immediate relationships” with anything or anyone. Every relationship is viewed “through the cross.” That is, we stand the cross before every decision we make so that we ask, “What would Jesus do?”

When we look at our handsome/beautiful co-workers and desires floods our bodies, we ask “What would Jesus do?” Would Jesus want us to have a relationship that misuses the body of another person, a relationship that is disrespectful of our marriage vows, and finally denigrates ourselves?

When we look at the Sports Catalogue and see a new shot gun, we ask, “What would Jesus do?” This doesn’t mean we don’t buy the new gun. I means that before we do something impulsively or unwisely we stop and count to WWJD?

This ethic is true even for pastors making house calls. It is true before we enter the door we can ask ourselves, “What it this person need to see and hear from me through Jesus Christ?” If we are the President of the United States, he or she builds the budget on the principles of who Jesus would build it. As teachers, before we enter the classroom, we will want to ask, “What do these children need to see and hear from me today for the sake of WWJD? Note that this does not mean evangelism. It means **QUALITY WORK AND ACTIONS** according to the teacher’s discipline. Our actions and presence will speak louder than any words.

One other note: for those who did the work using all three formats, comments are included using them.

**Now, let's go to work.**

**I. Vs. 1, "Submit to authority."**

A. How can we Christians do this by applying WWJD to this statement?

By looking through Jesus Christ, submission is demonstrated in The Cross. We are to go to The Cross in our obedience to authority. For example, we are required to make right and left turns into the proper lanes. While this may, at times, be inconvenient, it is the law.

Concerning the **hierarchy of values** Christians do those things that bring about At-One-Ment. Thus, bring Order into society, an emphasizing the actions of The Community (Societal) values is the work we are called to perform.

Concerning, "**The Responsible Person**," doing God's will is done when we work at being humane.

**II. When is it possible for a Christian to rebel against authority?**

A. Disobedience to authority is made when Jesus cleansed the Temple. His context was that the Temple had become a den of thieves and no longer represented God's context of living the humane life. Also, this is our context. When we see that the laws are unfair to others—such as racism—then it is necessary for these laws to be overturned.

However, as one IHOP's noted, when ever we are disobedient to the Law, we must be ready to pay the price for breaking the Law. Civil disobedience during the campaign of Martin Luther King paid this price by going to Jail.

In light of the **hierarchy of values**, we Christians seek to bring Order and to promote the good of society even at the expense of Individuality; the social good is of more value than individual rights. However, concerning civil disobedience, bringing Disorder against the right of Society is of more value when change is desirable.

In light of "**The Responsible Person**," Christians may perform acts that may appear to others as either profoundly Obedient, and to others as Irresponsible. However, Christians do not find their justification is how other perceive them. Rather, Christians find their justification in doing God's work.

**III. Vs. 4B, How are government employees the agents who are responsible to apply the wrath of God?**

A. Identify the "Wrath of God." God's wrath is actually God's love. God wants us to live humane lives that result in At-One-Ment. When we engage in things that is the antithesis of this purpose, then we can apply the axiom, "The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself." This is God's judgment that the reward is built into the deed. When we do good things, the reward is At-One-Ment. When we do mean things the reward is that we break the Great Commandment. We experience the breaking of this commandment as wrath because accountability or confrontation are unpleasant experiences for us.

- B. **WWJD.** In light of WWJD it is necessary to look through Jesus' Glasses. When we see injustice being done, sometimes it is necessary for Christians to disobey those laws that keep injustice alive. For instance, when the rights of woman were not being honored in the workplace, it is necessary for Christians to protest and to promote the equal treatment of all people. What does this say about how Christians are to respond to the treatment of homosexuals today?

From the, it was necessary to bring about disorder in order to draw attention to perspective of "**The Hierarchy of Values,**" racism in society needed to be changed. Consequently this situation needed to be addressed by bringing disorder into society.

From the perspective of "**The Responsible Person,**" the Christian pays the price of disobedience in order to make society a more humane place in which to live. Christians do this in response to doing God's will.

#### **IV. Vs. 9, Paul commends us to obey by paying taxes.**

- A. Describe an occasion when Christians might not pay taxes.

Church people do this all the time when they disagree with a particular activity of their denominational Mission in Ministry Funds (their franchise fee). This same principle can be applied to the political filibuster when the minority party disagrees on the passage of bill of the majority party. This is a form of righteous disagreement.

**From the principle of WWJD,** again the example of Jesus and the money changers seems appropriate. Jesus rebelled against the misuse of the temple for the purpose of making a profit. The same thing can be said for Christians, when we see the abuse of the system that is supposed to benefit the minority as the expense of the majority, then it is appropriate to disobey provided we are willing to pay the price for our disobedience.

In light of "**The Hierarchy of Values,** when the social order abuses minority groups, then it is appropriate to create a crises in order that the social process may rebalance itself appropriately for the entire society and not just a minority.

In light of "**The Responsible Person,**" it is necessary for them to "judge the circumstances, to weight up the appropriate values, to make a decision and then to act of this information after all of the prospects and the purpose of this action has been considered." Then, the justification for any action that is taken is in light of an obedience to God and never to how others may view the action.

- B. How is a Christian every justified – by refusing to pay taxes?  
The Christian never finds justification in any one or in any thing other than in God through Christ Jesus.

**Alright folks, talk to me.**