

February 10, 2021

Resist Not

As we continue in our meditation on **Romans 13:1-5**, we come to verse 2. In your own words, what is the main theme of this verse? A form of the word resist is found three times in this verse, but surprisingly, they are not all from the same Greek word. The first “resisteth” and the word “resist” both come from the same word meaning to stand against, to oppose. The second “resisteth” is from a different word meaning to withstand, or opposite, and is used in composition to denote contrast. In other words, standing against the powers or authorities ordained of God is opposite or in stark contrast to the ordinance of God.

We often think of an ordinance as a law. Townships pass ordinances to govern what individuals can and cannot do within the bounds of the township, but in this case, the word ordinance is translated from a Greek word meaning institution. The ordinance of God is not a law, it is an institution. What institution is Paul referring to? It would be whatever institution is represented by the power or authority. If the higher power is a parent, the institution is the home. If the higher power is a teacher, principal, or superintendent, the institution is a school. If the higher power is a pastor, the institution is a church. If the higher power is a boss or employer, the institution is a business. If the higher power is a policeman or judge, the institution is a civil government. When we resist or stand against an individual who is the ordained authority, we are standing in opposition to the institution they represent.

Sometimes you might hear someone say, I love my church, but I don’t like the pastor. Or a person might say, I love my country, but I don’t like the president. When a person shows disrespect to the appointed leader, they are showing disdain for the institution the leader represents. A child who demonstrates an argumentative, rebellious, or disrespectful spirit in the home, is essentially demonstrating a lack of appreciation and thankfulness for the home that God has provided. You cannot separate the individual from the institution they represent.

The scriptures reveal that God has ordained three institutions, the home, the church, and civil government. He has ordained or set in order, the husband as the head of the home, the pastor as the head of the church, and the “king” as the head of the government. To resist the power is to resist the institution. To resist the institution is to resist God who ordained the institution. What are the consequences of resisting God? The consequence is damnation or judgment.

Is there ever a time when it would be appropriate to withstand authority? The answer is yes, but it must be done in a right manner. Can you think of anyone in the scripture who justly resisted the authority in their life? Joseph resisted Potiphar’s wife. Daniel and the three Hebrew children resisted Nebuchadnezzar. Many of the prophets resisted their king. The apostles resisted the Jewish leaders, proclaiming, “We ought to obey God rather than man.” Next week we will look at why God warns us not to resist the powers that are ordained of God, but for now, let us conclude with some personal reflection. What is your attitude towards the authorities God has placed in your life? Do your actions or attitude demonstrate resistance? What can you do differently to show respect, appreciation, and thankfulness for those God has placed in your life?