

**Read: Romans 13:1-7**

## God Blesses Us Through... Taxes?

### **Romans 13:1,6,7**

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

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.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Let's start with a game. Everyone, hold out one of your hands and spread out your fingers. Listen to this list of five things. If you think one of the things listed *isn't* useful to you, put a finger down. Ready?

1. The library
2. Clean tap water
3. Your local park
4. Police officers and firefighters
5. Roads and sidewalks

Did you put any fingers down? After that list of things, most people would probably still have a hand with five fingers extended, because all five of those things are useful. All five of those things are also provided by local governments, which means all five of those things are only made possible through taxes. You and your family, by paying regular taxes, make all of those things happen not only for yourselves, but for your entire community! Now take that hand from before... and give yourself a pat on the back!

When God talks about the government in his Word, he doesn't give those specific examples of things like libraries and firefighters. What he does do is remind us of where the government really gets its power: not just from elections or constitutions, but from God. Our God orders everything in this world, including the people that run our country and serve its citizens. That makes sense, doesn't it? God is almighty, which means he has all the power in the universe. Anyone else who has power only has it because God gave it to them!

We do live in a sinful world, though. That means that even good things God has given us can be misused. Governments can go against God's will. Our taxes can fund things that God forbids in his Word. And us? Well, we can sinfully disrespect the authorities God has given us, and we can complain about life's inconveniences because of them far more than we thank God for his blessings.

That is why God provided chapters like Romans 13 in his Word. Let's ask God for forgiveness for when our attitudes are selfish, and then let's be reminded that God establishes governments for the benefit of his people; that things like taxes are used by God himself through his human servants to bless and provide for us. These little blessings of life help keep us free and safe to ponder God's greatest blessing: he has forgiven our sins in Christ. And that one is tax-free!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Ask your parents to name three places where taxes show up and why.
- One way to show God's love to people is by serving the community. What is a way you can serve right now?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Through the governments he establishes and the taxes we pay, God provides us with plenty of other services we haven't talked about yet. Name some of them.
- You've probably already identified some jobs that interest you for your future career. Think about those occupations you're considering. How do they serve your community, your church, and your God?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- When you are old enough to vote, you may not always vote for the person who wins. In what ways can you be a good citizen even when "your" candidate isn't in power?
- Some governments are just downright evil. Think about world history and the various dictators and tyrants that have risen to power in the past. How is Romans 13 still true even in those times and places?

### **Closing Prayer:**

King Jesus, we pray that everyone you have entrusted with any power and authority only uses it according to your will. Amen.