

Romans-Chapter 13

Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

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- soul- (*Gk.5590- life*) along with every gives the idea of a universal understanding by the Christians who are not just citizens of Heaven but have responsibilities within the earthly country (*along with the non-Christians*) of our pilgrimage.

 - subject- *Gk.5293- to subordinate*; reflexively to *obey*: -be under obedience. This is different from *Gk.3982 (obey, submitting to the eldership of the local congregation)* which carries a degree of confidence and agreement with it. We do not always agree with or have confidence in our physical government but we are to be subordinate to it unless Christianity is outlawed and practicing it would be illegal.

 - higher powers- These are those that have legal jurisdiction and thus authority over the citizens and foreigners within their borders.

 - ordained- *Gk.5021- to arrange* in an orderly manner, that is, *assign* or *dispose*.

Mat 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed (*Gk.5021*) them.

Read also Act 22:10; Dan 4:35; Jn 19:10-11.

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Rom 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

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- power- *Gk.1849- delegated influence*: -authority.

 - ordinance- *Gk.1296- arrangement*, that is, *institution*. To resist this delegated (*by God*) authority is to resist the very order of things that God put in place (*unless of course, God's will is being violated by the powers that be*). Governments have their purpose. They are to keep things decent and orderly.

“Christians may not like the government they have or respect their leaders, but God requires that we live with and under the system we have. We must obey our leaders as fully as possible because resistance, when there is no Biblical basis for it, is sin.”

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- resisteth- *Gk.436- to stand against*, that is, *oppose*. To oppose civil governments is to oppose God because He set up the governing of man in the first place. Not that He set up certain acts of rule that don't comply with His laws either. Those who have a habit of protesting (*or “occupying” for that matter*) even in “civil” forms of disobedience that are not considered rights under the civil law of the land are being considered here. If we are permitted to protest a law that is against any and/or all of God's specific commands then we are to do so peacefully and not through violence. If we are not permitted to protest then we “must obey God

rather than men” (*Acts 5:29*). Christians are not to attempt to overthrow their government but to work within it.

- damnation- Gk.2917- a *decision* (the function or the effect, for or against [“crime”]): - judgment. In order to keep order in any society there must be a system set up for judging those who go against the rule of law. Punishment is necessary to keep order and to discourage lawlessness. This judgment noted by Paul here can either be that which is meted out by the civil courts or can be that which will be meted out by God at the final judgment of all of mankind. But as Christians we are to “work quietly (*Gk.2271- stillness, that is, desistance from bustle or language*)... and earn [our] own living” (*2 Thes 3:12*).

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Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

- terror- Gk.5401- [fob’-os] (to *be put in fear*); *alarm* or *fright*. Governments, even atheistic, are, by God’s design, to do good to those who are good and punish those who are wicked. But, in the case of those that do the opposite, God is not pleased with their rule and in time will judge them. Christians, whether living in a communist society, a monarchy or a republic, are to do their best to obey the law of the land unless there are certain precepts that would be against God’s word. Paul was readying the saints in Rome for the current and upcoming persecution because Christianity would soon be considered an outlaw religion. It wouldn’t be until Constantine in 313 AD that Christianity would be protected under civil rule.

After giving **the** reason to obey civil rule Paul questions them on something that must have been on the minds of some Christians in Rome. Since Christianity was seen by some Gentiles as a rebellion to the Mosaic law, the Roman system, with its Pagan religious practices, may also have been seen as a system next to be rebelled against. Paul dismisses that idea here.

- do that which is good- Governments are blessed when Christians are part of every aspect in the daily administration. To be recognized for our donations to society might not always bring about positive recognition from everyone (*especially won’t from those who see us as threats to their advancements*) but Christians are to continue honoring God in all aspects of life. Any government that rewards its citizenry for positive works will encourage more of the same through recognition and encouragement.

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Rom 13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

- minister- Magistrates, as rulers, are also servants of God. Not that they will be rewarded for their service either (*unless they are Christians*). They serve as keepers of the peace in matters that affect the church and society as a whole and as servants of God they are to encourage good works and punish evil deeds.

- Christians should never be involved in civil disobedience unless it has to do with just being a Christian and going through with what has been commanded by God.

“If you’re going to be thrown into prison, make sure you’re there for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and not for political protest.”

MacArthur (p. 23)

- sword- Gk.3162- judicial *punishment*. Whether restitution, prison time, corporal or capital punishment, civil courts are ordained by God to execute whatever form necessary to keep society in check. Such punishment is not to be done without cause, reason or effect. Paul’s use of “the sword” here shows his agreement with capital punishment as an option for serious crimes.

Gen 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in His own image.

Act 25:11 If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything **for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death**. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar." (*Emp. added*)

- revenger- Gk.1558- carrying *justice out*, that is, a *punisher*. These authorities, as servants of God, are ordained by God to carry out whatever punishment is to be deemed befitting of the crime committed in the most expeditious method possible and in such a way as to deter future crime from others and to discourage disobedience.

Ecc 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.

1Ti 1:8 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 understanding this, that the law is **not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient**,... (*Emp. added*)

- wrath- Gk.3709- by implication *punishment*: -anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath.

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Rom 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

- conscience- Gk.4893- *co-perception*, that is, moral *consciousness*. (Webster: an awareness of right and wrong, with a compulsion to do right.) Christians are to be good citizens not just because of the punishment that one would receive for going against the rule of law, since there are many others who do “*get away with murder*”. If a person, especially a faithful Christian, has a good conscience it might be the one thing that prevents them from following through on any thought of disobedience. (*1 Pet 3:21*)

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Rom 13:6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

- tribute- Gk.5411- a *load* (as *borne*), that is, (figuratively) a *tax* (properly an individual assessment on persons or property; whereas 5056 is usually a general toll on goods or travel). "...defined as "direct tribute (property-or head-tax) of a subjected people to the foreign ruler" (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:436)." As God's ministers - (here Gk.3011- a public servant, which is different from 1249 which means just servant) they are to be paid for their services just as we would pay someone to paint our houses. We are to continue to pay for government services as long as we receive them.

1Ti 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

"Because governments sometimes squander tax money and are poor ministers of finances as well as other matters such as justice, some have concluded that Christians do not need to pay their entire tax bill. This conclusion is wrong. These two verses [6-7] teach that poor stewardship on the part of the government does not release us from or reduce our tax obligations. We may not want to pay what we owe, we may think that the tax system is unfair, or we may know of someone who cheats the system and doesn't get caught. No matter how we feel or what others do, we are obligated to pay our taxes. We will be judged on whether or not we fully cooperated with the taxation system of our government."

"At the present time, those who fail to pay their taxes rob God because governments are God's servants. If we rob the servants, we rob the One they serve."

"If anyone could have objected to how tax money was spent, it was the Lord. Since Jesus paid into the tax fund that was controlled by thieves, and money was taken from this fund to betray Him, how can Christians not pay the taxes levied by their government? The Lord's example forever answers any questions about Christians and taxation."

"In view of these facts, we should be able to pay our taxes without too much complaining. If the officials who receive the funds mismanage or abuse what we send, the matter will be between them and God. Jesus had no interest in starting a tax revolt and we shouldn't either."

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Mat 22:17 Tell us, then, what You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put Me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show Me the coin for the tax." And they brought Him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left Him and went away.

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Rom 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

- In lieu of what was just said, Christians are to render their share, fair or not, in taxes to support the government in which they live.

- custom- Gk.5056- specifically an *impost* or *levy* (as paid).

- fear- Gk.5401- *alarm* or *fright*. When you fear something you respect it. Here the word has to do with a certain level of respect toward government.

- honour- Gk.5092- *esteem* (especially of the highest degree), or the *dignity* itself.

1Pe 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.
18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

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Rom 13:8 Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law.

Mat 5:42 Give to the one **who begs from you**, and do not refuse the one **who would borrow from you**. (*Emp. added*)

- The following may cause some controversy. When a Christian pays his taxes on time he is said to not owe the government anything. When a mortgage payment is paid on time it cannot be said that the lender is owed anything because it was paid, maybe not paid off, just that it was paid **as per the agreement**.

Jas 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but **let your yea be yea**; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation. (*Emp. added*)

Therefore we are not to interpret this passage as though a Christian cannot borrow in order to purchase any big ticket item such as a house or a car. If a payment isn't paid **on time**, whether or not a person's finances have changed, it could be equivalent to theft. As Christians, before we sit down to make decisions concerning financial obligations, **especially when co-signing for someone else***, we need to ask if whether we have the income to pay the debt off in its entirety beforehand**. That of course would be the perfect scenario. If it's felt that the debt is sustainable and things happen in time that change this, the Christian is still obligated to pay all because he/she represents, and is answerable to, the Lord.

Pro 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.

*Ecc 5:5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

**Luk 14:28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

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- but to love one another- This is the one thing in which we are never out of debt. It is a debt we have incurred as we were ransomed by Him and in which we can never repay.

1Jn 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

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- the Law- The law understood here is the Law of Christ. **It supersedes all other laws because it accomplishes what they can “not” do.** Christ’s law influences the inner man, the conscience (*v. 5*). This is the Law we fulfill when we love one another. It is the solution to **all** the problems in the world.

Joh 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

Gal 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jas 2:8 If ye fulfill the **royal law** according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: (*Emp. added*)

Heb 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

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Rom 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

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- If everyone were to love his neighbor as he does himself he won't commit adultery against his neighbor, won't kill his neighbor, won't lie about him, won't want what belongs to him and won't do any other thing that would be contrary to his wellbeing.

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- love- Gk.25- (*ag-ap-ah'-o*) to love (in a social or moral sense). Thayer: To be full of good-will and exhibit the same; *to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of.*

Luk 10:25 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the

other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

- Jesus used a Samaritan in His illustration because they were looked down upon by the Jews as an inferior race. On the other hand, they held in high esteem their priests and Levites. In doing so His point was that everyone, no matter their background, is our neighbor and we are to show concern for them by being the type of person as was this Samaritan. If the entire world were as he was in this illustration there would be no need for man's laws because we would all be about seeking what's best for our fellow man, our neighbor.

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Rom 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law.

- love- Gk.26- From 25; *love*, that is, *affection* or *benevolence*. Love is rendered here as being used in such a way as to not do anything that would be injurious to a fellow human being. Love restrains us from doing anything that would even remotely do harm to anyone. It fulfills the Law (*O. & N.T.*) because it restrains us from desiring even the occasion to break it.

2Co 5:14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that One has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live might **no longer live for themselves** but for Him Who for their sake died and was raised. 16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (*Emp. added*)

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Rom 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

- knowing- Gk.1492- to see; to know: perceive, understand.
- time- Gk.2540- an *occasion*, that is, *set* or *proper* time: (due, short) time.

Mat 16:2 He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times (*Gk.2540*).

In the above passage Jesus was referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem which happened about 40 years later as was determined in eternity. In this

passage Paul was gently warning the church at Rome concerning Christ's return as also having a set date. Even the apostles didn't know when Jesus would come to claim His own but the warning stood then as it does now. They understood that He would ultimately return because they had the faith necessary. The same goes for us even now after almost two millennia.

Mar 13:32 "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Gal 6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season (*Gk.2540*) we will reap, if we do not give up.

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- awake- *Gk.1453*- (through the idea of *collecting* one's faculties); to *awaken*, that is, *rouse* (figuratively from inactivity).
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- sleep- *Gk.5258*- spiritual *torpor*. Webster defines torpor as apathy. We are to remain in a high state of alert because one of Satan's weapons is apathy.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness (*Gk.539- delusion*) of sin.

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- salvation nearer- Notice the lack of the word "*death*". Even though "baptism ... now saves you" (*1 Pet 3:21*) our salvation is not complete until Jesus returns (*which the saint should be "waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God" [2 Pet 3:12]*). Upon obedience through baptism the new convert is...

Eph 1:13 ... sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 Who is the guarantee (*Gk.728- a pledge, that is, part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest*) of our inheritance (*Gk.2817- heir-ship, that is, [generally] a possession*) until we acquire (*Gk.629- ransom in full [specifically] Christian salvation: -deliverance, redemption*) possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

- Our eternal security lasts as long as our faithful obedience. Jesus' coming gets "nearer" as the moments pass. It can be said that we are nearer to His coming then they were then, and nearer still then we were when we were first converted.

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Rom 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

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- night is far spent- The statement "*religion is for old people*" is a true statement, but "*religion*" is really for every age. Many people state that, thinking they'll worry about it when they are older. They're just content going in circles in pursuit of the brass ring right now. Paul here is addressing the saints at Rome reminding them the clock's ticking (*to them the hour glass is running out of sand*). It was necessary for them, as it is for us, to understand that time was of the essence because there would come a day when the physical body would be too old to support the work necessary to be done in the kingdom. Also, too much of their time was spent in worldly pursuits and so the remaining time left should have been dedicated to the Lord's service.

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- the- (Gk.3588) suggests the definite article which was in reference to a specific day (Gk.2250) referring to a period defined by its context. Here the context is referring to an event that was to happen soon; at hand- Gk.1488- near. If the “night is far spent” refers to those wasted days past that were spent on worldly pursuits, “the day is at hand” would refer to whatever time they had left for their service to the Lord. In other words, it was past time to get their act together if they wanted to go to Heaven when Christ returned (*or in visitation of judgment*).

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- cast off- You can't cast off something you haven't worn. What they were wearing was the very thing that was slowing them down, which is why in the Greek games of the time the athletes were either naked or donned very few clothing. These brethren were so occupied with walking in darkness (*usually understood as ignorance*) they couldn't see the light in front of them.

Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also **lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely**, and let us run with endurance the race that is **set before us**, (*Emp. added*)

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- put on- We are to exchange worldly ignorance for the spiritual enlightenment. To do so we are to sharpen our swords for the battle. You can't go to war with a dull sword (*here, referring to a lack of understanding concerning God's word*). armour- Gk.3696- an *implement* or *utensil* or *tool* (literally or figuratively, especially offensive for war): -weapon.

Eph 6:11 **Put on** the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present **darkness**, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (*Emp. added*)

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- light- Gk.5457- (to *shine* or make *manifest*, especially by rays); *luminousness*. In many applications, as it does here, light refers to knowledge or comprehension. Read Psa 119:105; Jn 1:4-5; 8:12.

1Co 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are **spiritually discerned**. (*Emp. added*)

Col 3:10 and have put on the new self, which is being **renewed in knowledge** after the image of its Creator. (*Emp. added*)

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Rom 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

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- The word for “honestly” in the Greek (2156) is “decently” thus we are to **walk** (*conduct ourselves*) as though our actions are done in broad daylight when others witness it.

1Co 14:40 But all things should be done decently (*Gk.2156*) and in order.

We can't profess Christianity but live worldly in a worldly world. It would bring reproach on the church and would give the enemies of the cross more ammo. Many of us know of situations where brethren behaved poorly and those of the world are looking for such behavior as an excuse to slam the faith.

Mat 23:3 so practice and observe whatever they tell you--but not what they do. For **they preach**, but **do not practice**. (*Emp. added*)

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- rioting- Gk.2970- a *carousal* (as if a *letting loose*). In this case drunkenness is added with rioting since usually people need to be intoxicated enough to do things they might not normally do. And that begins with the very first drink.

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- chambering- Gk.2845- a *couch*; by extension *cohabitation*; by implication the male *sperm*: -bed. Let's look at other passages where this word is used and see how these glosses fit each one of them. The way it's used here, because of the context, implies a relationship with an illicit nature to it. Like "*shacking up*".

Luk 11:7 and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me (*actual*) in **bed**. I cannot get up and give you anything'?

Rom 9:10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had **conceived** (*gives the of a sexual relationship having occurred*) children by one man, our forefather Isaac,

Heb 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage **bed** (*sex being between scripturally married couples*) be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

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- wantonness- Gk.766- licentiousness (sometimes including other vices): -filthy, lasciviousness.

Thayer's definition for *wantonness* in this passage is "*wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.*" (pp. 79-80)

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- The last two sinful acts on this incomplete list are strife and envying. Christians are not to be quarrelsome, even in the privacy of the home but, especially where others can witness their behavior. And by no means are we to be jealous because it gives the idea we are not satisfied with what God has blessed us with by envying someone else for the things they possess.

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Rom 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

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- put ye on- Gk.1746- (in the sense of *sinking* into a garment); to *invest* with clothing (literally or figuratively): -array, clothe (with), endue, have (put) on. Not only were believers initially to put Christ on in baptism (*Gal 3:27*) but afterward we are to continue clothing ourselves daily (*just as we would physically put clothes on daily*) with growth and knowledge in His word.

2Ti 2:15 Do your best (*Gk.4704- to use speed, that is, to make effort, be prompt or earnest: -do [give] diligence, endeavor, labour*) to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker (*Gk.2040- toiler*) who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling (*Gk.3718- to dissect [expound] correctly [the divine message]*) the word of truth.

- provision- *Gk.4307- forethought*. If our minds are set on giving diligence to the word of God and its study, the longing for the forbidden desires that our human nature lusts after will dissipate.

“If we do what is right, we avoid doing what is wrong.”

Brad Price

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