



QUICK BACKGROUND

A certain generation, and maybe more than one thanks to YouTube, will remember the Looney Tunes characters of Ralph Wolf (who greatly resembled Wile E. Coyote, and even used the same ACME tools) and Sam Sheepdog. Ralph spent his workday conniving ways to capture sheep while Sam spent his workday foiling Ralph’s attempts, which usually involved Ralph being flattened by his own ACME anvil. At the end of the workday, they would meet at the timeclock to punch out and leave with a friendly “Have a good night Sam—see you in the morning Ralph.”

In today’s political climate, can we be like Ralph and Sam?

Scripture frequently speaks into the relationship between believers and their secular governmental leadership. Here’s the thing: Nearly every instance that secular leadership is referred to in Scripture, something more important takes center stage. Secular governmental leadership is to be in the background.

DIGGING IN

Speaking of Scripture, the passages below are the more prominent verses that speak to secular governmental leadership. As you read each passage (either from page 3 of this document, or click/tap the link), look for answers to the prompts and note in the space provided what you find.

Romans 13:1-10

What is said about government/leaders?	What is said about God or our faith walk/how we should live?

1 Timothy 2:1-4

What is said about government/leaders?	What is said about God or our faith walk/how we should live?

Titus 3:1-2

What is said about government/leaders?	What is said about God or our faith walk/how we should live?



Hebrews 13:5-8 (Note: While this passage refers to spiritual leaders, it provides a great instruction for change in leadership)

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TAKING IT INWARD

Take a moment to internalize the verses you just explored. Spend some time reflecting, allowing God’s Spirit to speak to your heart. Journal any thoughts that come to mind and then you may want to consider the prompts below.

- How does your awareness of and relationship to government leadership compare to the awareness and relationship that is framed in these passages?
- Has your enthusiasm for political issues overshadowed the instructions these passages give regarding interaction with the people around us?
- Which of these passages most convicts you or challenges you?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Take a minute to get hyperpractical in applying these passages to life.

- What can you change in response to these passages?
- Is there a friend you need to backtrack with or a relationship to repair?
- Is there a friend with whom you can have “Ralph and Sam” interaction? (spirited conversation that does not affect your friendship, where you can punch out together at the timeclock with the same level of friendship you punched in)?
- How can you be a catalyst for gentle, respectable dialogue in your spheres of influence?



Romans 13:1-10 (NIV)

¹ 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. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ 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. ⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NIV)

¹ I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Titus 3:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

Hebrews 13:5-8 (NIV)

⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."

⁶ So we say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?"

⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.