SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority, resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”
Romans 13:1-10 (NKJF)

Paul’s Argument (Line of Reasoning)

Statement:  “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities” (Romans 13:1)
Question:  Why?
Answer:  Because all authority exists by God’s designed intent or purpose. “For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.” (Romans 13:1)
Conclusion:  Therefore, to resist the authorities is to resist God’s intended purpose. “Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.” (Romans 13:2).

Question:  What is God’s intended purpose?
Answer:  
(1)  Evil actions are restrained through fear of punishment. “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.” (Romans 13:3)
(2)  Good actions are promoted and encouraged. “Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good.” (Romans 13:3).
(3)  Through God’s ministers (governing authorities) evil doers are punished (justice is executed). “But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.” (Romans 13:4).
CHRISTIAN DUTIES:

Specific duties:

(1) Pay taxes
(2) Give respect
(3) Give honor.

“For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due; taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.” (Romans 13:6,7).

General Duty: To love our neighbor is to do what God’s moral law requires. Obedience to laws is for the good of society and fulfills the requirements of the law.

“Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” (Romans 13:8-10)