LifeGroup Study Sheet

Oct 8th and 11th: Romans 13:1-7

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing for your group discussion.

Quick Review

Look back from your sermon notes – Was there anything that particularly challenged you from this sermon? Anything you didn't understand, agree with or connect with?

Introduction

What's your least favorite "adulting" chore, like doing taxes, renewing your license, or sitting at the DMV? Do you have a survival strategy?

Digging In

Question 1: Read Romans 13:1-4. God Established It! God has set up three institutions: the family, the church, and government. each with its own purpose. Why do you think God created all three instead of just one? What do you think happens when one of them tries to take over the role of the others?

Paul says there is no authority except from God, and Jesus told Pilate he would have no power at all "unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11). How does it change the way you think about government leaders? Even ones you strongly disagree with, to believe God is sovereign over them?

Paul calls government officials "God's servant for your good" (v.4) and "ministers of God" (v.6). Whether they acknowledge it or not, God has put them there! What good things does government do for us that we often take for granted? And how does remembering that purpose shape the attitude we bring to it?

Question 2: Read Romans 13:1, 5-7. God's Expectations for Us! Paul says we are to submit "not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience" (v.5). What does it mean to submit to authority out of conscience before God, rather than just fear of getting caught? Where do you find that hardest, speed limits, taxes, workplace rules, or somewhere else?

Peter writes that "by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people" (1 Peter 2:15) and tells us to "Honor everyone… Fear God. Honor the emperor" (v.17). The emperor at the time was Nero, a brutal persecutor. How can we show real respect for a leader's office without pretending we approve of everything they do?

When Peter grabbed a sword to defend Jesus, Jesus told him to put it away and drink the cup the Father had given Him (John 18:10–11). Why do you think Jesus refused to fight, and what does His example teach us about how Christians should respond when we feel wronged by authorities? How does Philippians 3:20, "our citizenship is in heaven" help us stay calm and obedient instead of anxious or angry?

Question 3: Read Acts 5:29. God's Expectations. Romans 13 is not a blank check for any ruler. Government's authority is real but derived and limited! It comes from God, so it can never override God. Throughout Scripture,

God's people obeyed government wherever they could and disobeyed only when they were forced to choose between a ruler and God.

Acts 5:29 says, 'We must obey God rather than men.' How would you explain the difference between a Christian who respectfully refuses to sin and a Christian who simply rebels against authority they don't like? What questions might help us tell the difference?

There are many examples of Godly people disobeying government authorities because it would have dishonored God. **Exodus 1:17, Daniel 1:12–15, Daniel 3:16–18, Daniel 6:7, Acts 4:18.**

God established government, God expects us to submit, respect, and pay what we owe, and God is our final authority when the two conflict. What is one specific thing you want to do this week as a result? It might be praying for a leader by name, paying something you owe, changing how you talk about officials, or standing firm on a conviction.

Take it Home

Matthew 22:17-21

Praise / Prayer Requests

Pray for your group with these things in mind:

Adoration – How can I praise God for what this teaches me?
Confession – What sin can I confess because of what this teaches me?
Thanksgiving – How can I thank God for what Jesus has done?
Supplication – What do I need to ask of God in order to grow in light of this?