Introduction: Engage the group by thinking about a concept.

State the following to your group: “I am going to give you a command. You will do as I say. Here’s the command: forget the number 17.” Then ask, “What was your first thought after you heard this?” More than likely, the number “17” popped into their heads.

Ask, “Why do you think that is?” The purpose of this exercise is to get them thinking about the human condition. While this exercise cleverly causes you to do the very thing it’s telling you not to do more in a psychological than moral sense, our response to God’s commands is often similar. God’s commands, unlike the number 17 exercise, are not mental tricks and yet we still resist obeying God’s commands, a behavioral pattern that exposes the human tendency to rebel against authority, especially divine authority.

As we think about the evil’s effect in the world, instruct group members not to think so much in terms of “why do bad things happen to good people” but more in terms of “why does anything good happen to bad people” in order to augment the biblical teaching about God’s justice along with the constant He shows to undeserving sinners.

Point 1: Check for understanding using “Think-Pair-Share.”

Play the clip “Give Me a Sign” (1 minute, 57 seconds) from the movie Bruce Almighty: https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/bruce-almighty/give-me-a-sign

As group members watch the video, ask them to identify various examples of how Bruce shows the typical human response to God, especially when things are not going as planned.

Provide the following instruction in your own words: “Think for thirty seconds about the pattern of sinners to question how God governs the world. Now I want you to discuss this in pairs with a person on your left or right who is not your spouse” Pause for sixty seconds, and then call on 3-4 pairs to share one idea from their discussion.
Point 3: Consider the vantage point of personal experience.

Raise the following questions to stir reflection among group members:

- How many of you as parents remember spanking or disciplining your child and saying something like, “This hurts me more than it hurts you”?
- Why did you say that?

Your group members should reflect on their sense of grief and sorrow at the offense of the child and their having to correct the wrong behavior. Relate this to God righteously punishing His people for their sin, but remaining faithful to them and correcting them because He loved them.

Then ask a volunteer to read aloud Hebrews 12:5-6 to lend additional biblical perspective on the matter of God’s discipline of His people:

> And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: My son, do not take the Lord’s discipline lightly or lose heart when you are reproved by him, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives.

Conclusion: Challenge for application.

The opposite of rebellion is submission. As believers, we are to be submissive to God in every aspect of our lives. When we choose to sin, we are telling God that we are on the throne.

Ask your group to take a few minutes for reflection, confession, and prayer dealing with the issue of rebellion.

Teaching Tip of the Week

Every godly teacher wants to impact their students’ lives in such a way that it helps them change for the better. Telling people what they ought to do without motivating them to do it only adds to their burdens. This was the approach of the scribes and Pharisees; it was not the approach of Jesus (Matt. 23:1-4). Jesus was a master at using various word pictures, images, and metaphors to teach. The common person heard Him gladly and many of them were transformed by His
teaching. What word picture or metaphor are you going to use in your teaching this week?