



**A Worship Discussion Guide for Individuals, Groups & Families  
For the week of June 4, 2023**

**Read the Bible passage aloud in your group meeting. This is a worship discussion guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for your meeting, and use them as a starting point for your time together.**

**Warm Up**

- **Why is it so hard for us to submit to others?**
- **Does a Christian owe a debt to others? To governing authorities? Why?**

**Romans 13:1-14**

***Put On the Lord Jesus Christ***

**In this week's text, Paul instructs Christians about citizenship. And Paul was not naive about how hard this is for us! John Stott talks about four possible models of church-state relations:**

- 1.) *The state controls the church***
- 2.) *The church controls the state***
- 3.) *The state favors the church and the church accommodates to the state in order to retain a favored status***
- 4.) *Church and state recognize and encourage each other's distinct God-given responsibilities and cooperation***

**As you work through this study: Which model seems to accord best with Paul's teaching in Romans 13?**

subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. <sup>6</sup>For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. <sup>7</sup>Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

- **What reasons does Paul give to submit to the authority of the civil government?**
- **How absolute is the state's power over us? What indication is there in the text that the authority of the state has limits? What indication do you know of elsewhere in the Bible regarding limits to this authority?**
- **What is the purpose and function of the state? What is the "job description" of the Christian citizen?**
- **In what ways can Christians apply these principles for relating to our government?**
- **Paul says that every authority is instituted by God (1) and that all rulers are "God's servant for your good" (4). How do cruel rulers like Pharaoh, Nero (Paul's emperor), and Pontius Pilate serve God's plan?**
- **In light of Paul's life and teaching: Can a Christian participate in revolution, civil war, or non-violent civil disobedience?**

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<sup>1</sup>Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup>Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup>for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup>Therefore one must be in

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<sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

- **Why does this section follow vv.5-7? How are they related?**
- **How does Paul define love?**
- **How does Paul's definition of love answer the person who says, "legal obedience is not important, what matters is love"?**

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<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

- **What practical advice does Paul give us in this section?**
- **Pray together in light of this week's passage.**

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