Life Group Questions

Come Under Authority

Passage: Romans 13:1-2

Introduction: John noted that God tells us to be subject to governing authorities because He put them in place. To resist government authority is therefore to resist God (Rom 13:2). John noted that every authority structure we experience is established by God: teacher/students, parents/children, etc. As Christians, what should our demeanor towards authority be?

Additional passages: Genesis 9:6; Jeremiah 29:7, 1 Peter 2:13-17.

Questions:

1. **John explained the meaning of "be subject" (Rom 13:1) as a command from God to willingly place yourself under all governing authorities. John exhorted us to take seriously respect for those in authority because God gave them their authority: government, parents, employers. How did God challenge you in the sermon?**

2. **What does 1 Peter 2:13-15 teach us about the impact submitting to authority has on others?**

3. **When is the last time you thanked someone in authority over you?**

4. **John pointed to God's instructions for Israel in exile given by Jeremiah (29:7) to show that God wants Christians today to engage society constructively, not subversively. What are practical ways to engage in politics constructively? How about school districts?**

5. **What about limits to submitting to government authorities? Read 1 Peter 2:17, Ephesians 5:21-24 and Ephesians 6:1. <u>Note</u>: the same Greek word is used in Ephesians 5 and Romans 13:1 What words to denote response to authority are used in these passages?**

6. **Are there times when wives should not submit to husbands and when would that be? Are there times when Christians should not submit to government and when would that be?**

7. John brought up three noteworthy examples in history of Christians resisting government authority: 1) Army Commander Oliver Cromwell resisting King Charles I; 2) the American Continental Congress resisting the British monarchy; 3) Dietrich Bonhoeffer aiding the assassination plot against Adolf Hitler. **Spend some time giving**

thought to these three examples and discussing them together. Here are some specific questions:

a. **John noted that in the case of Cromwell and the American Revolution, *lesser governing authorities* resisted greater ones; neither situation was a case of *individual people* resisting governing authorities. Is there ever a time where it is biblically okay for an individual to resist governing authority? What might individual resistance look like biblically?**
b. **The basis Cromwell gave for resisting King Charles was Charles shedding innocent blood, a direct violation of Genesis 9:6-7. Does this seem like a morally justifiable reason to resist government authority?**
c. **Does it seem like the people who participated in the American Revolution had a morally justifiable reason for resisting government authority?**