



Week 3
Discipleship Study
Questions



The Politics of Jesus

With the fall election cycle in full swing, most of us are seeing in real time how the tension between faith and politics too often results in strained or broken relationships. Looking at the example Jesus gave us, we will study how we can navigate relationships and the political landscape with humility and hope, while loving others well and remaining true to our faith in Jesus Christ. Key principles taught by Jesus can equip us to better listen and engage with the people in our lives, and in the political life of our community and nation – while representing Him well.

Read the Scripture:

Individual: Read the passage from two or three different translations.

Group: Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

Speak the Scripture:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

Group: Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words, as best they can.

Understand the Scripture:

Individual or Group: Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

Dig Deeper into the Scripture:

Individual: Work through the Digging Deeper questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member if you choose.

Group: Work through the Digging Deeper questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Small Group Guidelines

This is a Safe Group

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

Listen

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

No Rescuing or Fixing

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

Use "I" Statements

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

Don't Over-Talk

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

Fight for Relationship

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

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Background: In Matthew 22:15-21, Jesus is confronted by two opposing political groups both hoping to trick Him into saying something treacherous. Jesus responds in a powerful way: reminding both groups that we are citizens of two kingdoms, but our allegiance to God supersedes our allegiance to earthly kingdoms. Paul also explores the relationship between citizens, God, and government in Romans 13.

Read: Romans 13:1-7

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What do we learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ in this passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit might be teaching you personally through this passage?

Is there anything God is leading you to do after reading this passage?

Digging Deeper:

In what sense are governments “established” or “ordained” by God? Does this mean that those in power always do the will of God?

In the previous chapter, Romans 12, Paul tells the church to bless those who persecute us, to not repay evil for evil, to live peaceably with all, to leave vengeance to God, and to feed our enemies. Why are those commands so important to keep in mind while reading Romans 13?

How does this text challenge your views on authority?

What do we owe to our government and its leaders? What makes this so difficult?

End this time with a prayer.

Heavenly Father, we are a sinful people and we always want our own way. We struggle to submit to authority – both the authorities on earth and to Your authority. But You are sovereign, Lord. We may not understand you, but we don't have to. We just have to trust you, submit to you, and make your name known among all the nations. Fill us with your Spirit and give us the discernment to know how to obey our earthly authorities. In Jesus' name, Amen.