

Title: Romans: Life in the Family of God, Pt 5: “Shape and Submit to Government” – Romans 13:1-7

Big Idea: Shape and submit to government because of God, goodness, fear, and conscience.

Read Romans 13:1–7 together. What stands out to you in this passage? What is challenging or surprising?

SUBMIT to government because it is INSTITUTED BY GOD.

1. In Romans 13:1, Paul says that all governing authorities are 'instituted by God.' How does this truth shape your view of current or past governments?
2. How do you personally wrestle with the idea of submitting to authorities that may not reflect godly values?
3. Greg shared a story from his childhood about learning to obey the law. Can you share a time when you learned a lesson about authority – either positively or negatively?

SUBMIT to government because of GOD, GOODNESS, FEAR, and CONSCIENCE.

4. Paul gives four reasons to submit to government: because it's instituted by God (13:1), it's good for us (13:4a), we'll be punished if we don't (13:2-4), and because of conscience (13:5). Which of these reasons resonates most with you, and why?
5. How do we balance submission to government with our conscience before God? Can you think of a time when you or someone you know had to make a difficult decision in this area?
6. What does it look like to disagree with government policies while still showing respect and honor to those in authority?
7. How can our small group serve or encourage local civic leaders in a tangible way?

SHAPE government as GOD'S AMBASSADORS.

8. Greg said, 'Stopping for a stop sign is Christian worship.' How does this perspective change the way you think about everyday obedience?
9. What does it mean to 'shape government as God's ambassadors'? What are some practical ways we can do this in our community?
10. How can we engage in political or civic conversations without losing our witness or compromising our faith?
11. In what ways can we be 'people of the cross' in our political engagement, as John Piper describes?

“Next Step” Takeaways – Discuss and pray through the following:

- With God as His FAMILY:
 - Memorize Romans 13:1-7 together as a group.
 - Choose one government leader (local, state, national) to pray for this week.
- With Others as His SERVANTS:
 - Within your group, discuss and consider how to serve our civic and community leaders in some way.
 - Consider writing a letter of encouragement or appreciation to a local official.
- On Mission as His MISSIONARIES:
 - In order to be better equipped to vote, discuss, and engage, research a current political issue and discuss how a biblical worldview might shape your response.