MAIN POINT

Christians have an obligation to human authorities but only in light of our supreme allegiance to Jesus, the King of kings.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are the authorities currently in your life? What kind of ruling do they have over you in regards to your money?

How does this differ from God’s authority?

Each monthly bank statement and yearly tax return highlights our obligations and priorities. But Jesus challenges us to think about “our” money with a radically God-centered perspective. The Creator God is the absolute owner and ultimate authority over everything that He has made. In Matthew 22, Jesus challenges us to consider how this basic truth that everything belongs to God impacts our understanding of “our” money, obligations, and priorities.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 22:15-22.

What message do you think Rome intended to communicate by putting Caesar’s image on its coins? Why could this potentially be problematic for the Jews?

In your own words, what do you think Jesus means by “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”?

John Piper makes it clear that our Creator God is the absolute owner and ultimate authority over everything that He has made. But even though there are limitations placed on human and state authority if it contradicts God’s authority, because God owns everything, Christians should be a humble and submissive people. Everything Caesar has and all the authority he rightfully claims is derivative from what God has and what God claims.

WATCH THE VIDEO TEACHING FOR SESSION 4 FROM JOHN PIPER.
What about the video clip resonated with you most?

What does it mean to you that Caesar only has authority under the umbrella of the sovereignty of God?

Describe your emotions about knowing that God has ultimate and final authority. Does this make you nervous, relieved, emboldened?

To what extent should we submit to state or human authority? What are some real examples of how this is played out in our world today?

After viewing this clip, how do you personally need to submit to human or state authority today? How can the group pray for this?

God’s total sovereignty justifies submission to earthly authorities and profoundly informs how we ought to think about those authorities. The New Testament is clear that Jesus is the true “Lord” and “King” (see Acts 2:36; 17:7), which calls into question Caesar’s claims of absolute authority and demands for total allegiance from His followers. Jesus, who is “Lord of all” (Acts 10:36), demands that we give what is due to human authorities in such a way that we also render to God what is due Him—namely everything. So we obey Caesar as an act of loyal submission to our true and final authority, the Lord Jesus. Such obedience to Caesar actually dethrones Caesar by expressing Jesus’ ultimate lordship.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ROMANS 13:1-7.

Which of these verses is particularly encouraging or challenging to you? Why?

How is the way we respond to human authority and God’s authority important in the grand narrative of Scripture?

Describe how embracing the truth that God has ultimate authority over all of His creation could impact a believer’s life in a very real way?

When Jesus returns, He will bring all secrets into the light and will render true and perfect judgments. The glorious truth that Jesus will make things right allows believers to maintain proper perspective of this world marred by injustice and sin. We render to Caesar, but we know that Caesar will one day give an account to King Jesus.
APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Describe a time when you or someone you know faced a difficult choice between the demands of human authorities and the demands of God. What happened in the end?

What is one practical step of obedience God is calling you to make today as a result of this study?

PRAYER

Praise God for having ultimate authority over His creation. Ask Him to move us to be humble and submissive people. Pray that God would give us wisdom and discernment to discover how to respond to state and human authority under God’s ultimate authority.

Visit LifeWay.com to purchase the Bible study book for more in-depth individual and group study.