

Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: Romans

Speaker: Jay Haugh

Message: The Purpose of Government

Date: 10/11/2026

Memory Verse: Romans 6:23 NIV

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The goal of these questions is to foster meaningful discussion and to encourage participants to reflect on God's Word and lead to heart transformation. Feel free to modify or expand upon these questions based on the dynamics and needs of your Small Group.

Big Idea: Honor the government because it persuades right living, punishes evil, and protects people physically.

Read Romans 13:1-8

1. Governing authorities exist under God's sovereignty, and resisting them is serious (vv 1-2). Paul wanted the Roman Christians to see that even the most powerful and polytheistic empire on earth was ultimately under the sovereignty of the Creator. Why do you think God calls believers to be subject to authority? How should we respond when we disagree strongly with leaders or policies? What kind of attitude should mark a Christian even in disagreement?
2. Rulers are described as God's servants meant to promote good and restrain evil (vv 3-4). What does it mean to think of governing authorities as God's servants? How might this shape the way we speak about leaders we struggle to respect? When leaders fall short, how can we respond in a way that reflects Christ?
3. Paul moves from external consequences to internal motivation (v 5). What is the difference between obeying because you're afraid of consequences and obeying because you want a clear conscience before God? Why do the



HOSPITALITY



MOVEMENT



CONTRIBUTE



COMMITMENT



ENGAGE THE SCRIPTURES



SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP

motives behind our actions matter? How have you experienced the freedom that comes from doing what is right, even when it's hard?

4. Believers are called to give what is owed, including taxes and tolls (vv 6-7). This is one way we can live an upright life with our governing authorities. If a financial error is made in your favor, do you keep that money in your pocket, or do you make known the mistake and return the money? How does a Christian's reputation for being "above board" and honest in financial obligations create a bridge for the gospel? How does being dishonest with what we owe create a chasm for the gospel? What does a grumbling taxpayer say to the world about God's sufficiency compared to a peaceful provider?
5. Paul tells the Roman Christians to give "respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed" (v 7). This was likely written during a time when Nero, a leader known for his cruelty, was emperor of Rome. For this reason, it is clear that Paul is not endorsing a leader's character but recognizing the position God has allowed them to hold. How does this verse challenge the way our culture typically speaks about leaders whom they do not view positively? How can dishonoring speech subtly reveal a lack of trust in God's control? Can you think of moments in Jesus' life where He showed respect toward authority while still standing firm in righteousness (e.g. John 19:8-11)?
6. Scripture teaches submission to authority, yet also shows moments when obedience to God came first (Daniel 3). How do passages like this help us think carefully about the limits of submission? Have you ever faced a circumstance or situation where you felt you had to choose between submission to authority or submission to God?
7. Love is one continuing debt believers are called to carry (v 8). What does it mean that love is never fully "paid off"? How does love fulfill God's commands in a deeper way than simply following rules (e.g. Matthew 22:37-40; James 2:8; Galatians 5:14; 1 John 4:20-21)? Is there a relationship where love feels especially difficult right now?



HOSPITALITY



MOVEMENT



CONTRIBUTE



COMMITMENT



ENGAGE THE SCRIPTURES



SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP