

One truth shared: God has established all government and calls on us to show honor and respect to the government.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Romans 13:1

Do I Have to Respect the Government?

There is a lot of division in America over politics lately. Maybe you've noticed. There's lots of shouting and fighting, and no one seems to be able to get along. Some of the leaders in politics don't always seem to have the best interests of the people they serve in mind. It raises the question: do I have to respect the government in the country in which I live?

God speaks pretty strongly about this in Romans 13. He says everyone *must* submit himself to the governing authorities, because the authorities that exist have been established by God.

You might argue, "But what if my government is really bad!?" I'd like to remind you of the government in place when Paul wrote these words. The Roman government was hunting Christians down in the street and putting them to death. Eventually they would execute Paul as well, and he still said people should submit to the government.

There is a limit, obviously. We must obey God rather than men. This means that if our government commands us to do something sinful, we would have to obey God rather than men at that point.

But God has established all governments for the good of his people to maintain peace and order. Even when a government appears to be evil, we can be confident that God is using their actions for the eternal good of those who love him.

Whether you're a Democrat, a Republican, a Libertarian, or an Independent, you owe honor and respect to the government regardless of who is in power, because it has been instituted by God.

Pray for your political leaders whether you agree with all of their policies or not. Pray that God would be with them and use them to bring peace and prosperity to the land in which you live. Pray that they, too, would come to know the Savior who bled and died for them.

Finally, even when you have sharp disagreements with your government, take comfort in the fact that God is still the one in ultimate control. No government can do anything he doesn't allow it to do, and he is working out everything in history according to his perfect plan.

Prayer: Father in heaven, be with the leaders in our government. Give them wisdom to make the best decisions for the people of this country. Let us treat them with honor and respect even when we disagree with them. If they don't know you already, bring them to a knowledge of your Son. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year A – Proper 24

Godly Government

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Do I Have to Respect the Government?

***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- Who can name the most presidents in order starting with Washington?
- Who is the greatest president of all time?

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- How much respect do we owe to the government?
- Which of the Ten Commandments does this fall under?

***Digging In:** Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Romans 13:1 speaks in absolutes. Does this mean that even evil governments have been established by God?
- How did God use the evil government of Persia for the good of his people? (2 Chronicles 36:22,23)
- How can God use evil governments for good today?
- What is the purpose of the government? (*Romans 13:4 – provide order and safety for its citizens*)
- What power has God given to the government? Romans 13:4
- In light of verse 4, does the Bible forbid the death penalty?
- Are we obligated to pay taxes to the government even if we disagree with it? (See Romans 13:7.)
- Do any of these verses forbid us from disagreeing with the government?
- How should we disagree when we do disagree?
- Why is it so important that we pray for our government and its leaders no matter what our opinion of them is?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

- Is there ever a time that we should disrespect and disobey our government when it isn't commanding us to sin?
- List a couple of things we want to include in our prayers for our government and its leaders.