

# STUDY NOTES

HONOR THE EMPEROR // A SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH

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The following content is based on the message “Why Government Exists” spoken on 10/30/16 by Brian Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

## PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

## THE SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 13:1-8

## ELEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT

- *If you are being honest, what are some reasons that you don't really want to talk about government in our Community Group?*
  - *As we look at this passage, there are some descriptors of government that Paul writes about. List those descriptors that you see from the passage.*
- Paul was writing to real people living under real governments at a real point in human history. Paul writes this letter to the Romans while Nero was in control in the Roman Empire. Nero was specifically known for his brutality to Christians, and was responsible for the martyrdom of Paul (and other well-known disciples) himself.
- *How do you feel about this passage when you hear about the situation of the people to whom it was written?*
  - *What is the call of Christians when government oversteps their boundaries? Historically, how has that ended for the Christian?*

# MYTHS OF GOVERNMENT

It can be especially difficult *not* to fall into the trap of two different myths regarding government. Surely you've seen or experienced both during this election cycle.

## **Myth #1: All government is evil and demonic.**

- *How do you see this myth playing out currently? How is it dangerous?*

Jeremiah 29:7 says “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” This means that not all government is evil and demonic, however the logical end of this means that we probably have to guard against this next myth.

## **Myth #2: The government will save us.**

- *How do you see this myth playing out currently? How is it dangerous?*

# THE CHRISTIAN'S ROLE

The role of the Christian begins with identity. Fundamentally, followers of Jesus are Christian—not American, not caucasian, not Mexican, not black, not man, not woman, not conservative, not liberal. We are first and foremost Christians. As Christians we are supposed to be known for our love for each other (John 13:35). Look at the passages surrounding our original passage. **Read Romans 12:16-18. Then read Romans 13:8-10.**

- *Who have you found to be more difficult to love—the candidates or the Christians voting for those candidates?*
- *How have your actions in this election cycle revealed deep down where you may be placing your citizenship?*
- *Returning to the beginning of our discussion, if the historical context of this passage was the context that we found ourselves in today, how do you think that could lead to strength and unity in the church?*
- *Pray for love to be the overwhelming action taken by Christians leading up to the election and afterwards.*
- *Pray for our government leaders.*