

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: How to Love My Country (Without Losing My Mind) July 3 & 4, 2021

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

[UPDATE] Since the start of 2021, we've been learning *what* we believe as Christians and *why* we believe it. As we continue our When in Rome series this summer, our focus shifts to *how* we live out what we're learning. When what we believe changes how we live, we experience REAL growth!

Use our Reflection Guide for personal study throughout the week, to start a REAL conversation with friends or under the direction of your community group leader. Choose the questions that challenge you to reflect and respond as you live out what we're learning. Keep in mind...*it's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you!*

Read Romans 13:1-7: Pastor Matt cautioned us that these week's verses would be hard to digest, perhaps even feel offensive. As you prepare to read them, first pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you can learn and how you can grow. Both acknowledge what you feel and respond to God.

"Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. ² So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. ³ For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. ⁴ The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. ⁵ So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. ⁶ Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority."

Note: If you're not someone challenged by "governing authorities," then think outside the box and consider those in your life who have authority over you, as well as those whom you have authority over.

1. Do you struggle with the idea of submission? Why do you think that is? Is your perspective something that was modeled for you, that you learned or that is based on experience?
2. Think about the various roles you play – a follower of Jesus, member of your community, spouse, parent, employee, etc. Does your perspective on the value of submission change based on the lens you see these verses through?
3. Since "all authority comes from God," as Christians, our submission to authority is ultimately a reflection of our submission to God. Are you willing to model respect for God's authority by submitting to the authority of those around you even when their views differ from your own? Why or why not?
4. Verse 3 instructs us to "do what is right, and they will honor you." In which of the following ways can you grow either in submitting to authority or modeling submission to those under your authority? What is a practical step you could take to pursue that growth this week?
 - a. Rather than criticize, celebrate when they get something right.
 - b. Rather than complain, appreciate the work they do.
 - c. Rather than tear down, participate [help, respond, challenge] in a way that reflects Jesus.
5. We can't govern anyone else if we're unwilling to first govern ourselves. If you're struggling with submission, be REAL with God. Ask Him to search your heart and help you see what needs to change in you "not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience" before God. Pray, inviting God to help you pursue growth and to remind you that you can trust Him as you keep your eyes fixed on heaven – your final destination.