Romans 13:1-7 (NKJV) 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to [execute] wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore [you] must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes [are due,] customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

1 Peter 2:13-17 (NKJV) 13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and [for the] praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all [people.] Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

How do we Respect Government While Remaining Faithful to God

The central principle: Christians are called to respect and submit to governing authorities, recognizing that all earthly authority is accountable to God. Our ultimate allegiance belongs to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. *There is no perfect earthly government nor will there ever be until Jesus rules and reigns.*

Romans 13 Commands Respect and Submission Romans 13:1 — "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities."

- Paul teaches that governing authorities serve an important purpose in maintaining order, restraining evil, and promoting what is good. Christians should therefore be responsible citizens who respect authority, pay what they owe, and avoid lawlessness. We should be a blessing to leaders. Pray for all leaders (1Timothy 2)

We should not withdraw from civic responsibilities like voting, always aligning with God's eternal word to the best of our ability. We should get involved when possible; serving and not neglect the heart of God for righteousness flowing through government.

Romans 13:7 — "Pay to all what is owed to them… respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed."

Submission does not mean that every government decision is righteous or that rulers possess unlimited authority. Rather, Christians recognize the legitimate role of government while understanding that its authority remains under God's sovereignty.

We need to look no further than Jesus and the disciples to have clarity on how to honor earthly government. We ultimately belong to King Jesus and submit to His Lordship. His kingdom is not of this world.

Jesus Recognized Government Authority Matthew 22:21 — "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

- Jesus affirmed that paying taxes and fulfilling legitimate civic responsibilities. However, He established a clear distinction between our obligations to government and our ultimate allegiance to God. Human authority has limits because our identity, worship, and highest obedience belong to Him.

John 19:11 — "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above."

- Jesus acknowledged Pilate's authority while making it clear that his power came from God. Earthly rulers are not supreme; they remain accountable to the One who ultimately holds all authority.

When Government Conflicts with God's Commands Acts 5:29 — "We must obey God rather than men."

- When the religious authorities commanded the apostles to stop preaching about Jesus, they refused because obeying that command would have required them to disobey God.
- The apostles demonstrate that **submission to government does not require obedience to commands that directly contradict God's will.** When human authority demands what God forbids or forbids what God commands, our ultimate allegiance must remain with God.

Importantly, the apostles did not respond with violent rebellion. They accepted the consequences of their decision and continued faithfully proclaiming the gospel

Our responsibility is to honor legitimate authority, pursue what is right, and remain faithful to Jesus Christ regardless of the political or cultural environment.

Our highest allegiance is not to an earthly government, but to the Kingdom of God.

- **Philippians 3:20** (NKJV) For our **citizenship** is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
- **John 17:16-18** (NKJV) 16 "They are **not of the world**, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

As disciples of Jesus, sons and daughters of the King we have to guard ourselves against earthly systems that attempt to infiltrate our mind/lives and are not a true representation of the kingdom of God. These include political, religious and cultural systems that seek to conform us to this world and have an appearance of godliness.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) And **do not be conformed** to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.
Mark 8: 15 Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the **leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.**"

Leaven- n. a substance, typically yeast, that is added to dough to make it ferment and rise.**2. permeate and modify or transform**

Leaven is applied to that substance which is small in quantity, yet thoroughly pervades a thing by its influence. We are warned to beware : From a bad sense there is the leaven of Herod and the leaven of the Pharisees. **Both are based around the fear of man** Though we live in the world we are not ruled by the worlds systems.

There are demonic infrastructures used by the enemy to cause division. We need to be able to separate the systems from the people caught within.

Pharisee Leaven-Represents the religious system. Embraced God in theory but not in experience or practice. Having a form of Godliness but lacks intimacy love and power.

Both the political leaven and the religious leaven are dangerous systems that have infiltrated the church. These systems are deceptive because they entangle themselves with the truth of God's word and corrupt God's message.

The Religious system -Religious leaven endeavors to interfere with the free flow of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

Generally, the leaven that permeates through religion promotes a works-based or performance-based lifestyle denying the power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This system places a high value on performance-based religion and puts burdens like guilt, fear, and pride on others for the purpose of control but are void of truth, freedom and Holy Spirit.

- **the motivation of religious leaven demands that you and I need to earn something with God.** *Through His death and resurrection, Christ Jesus has secured our acceptance with the Father once and for all as we place our faith in Him and receive grace upon grace.*

Signs that religious leaven is alive and active are Legalism, elitism, Criticism, Debate, Opinion, and Judgment. *Let's apply that measure to ourselves and take the log out of our own eyes instead of pointing out the splinters in others' eyes.*
The leaven of religion looses : 1) Guilt, 2) Fear, and 3) Pride. **Uniformity is essential, hierarchy is highlighted and control is common.**

Herod's Leaven-A leaven that is based upon the strength of man and man based systems like popularity, fame success (Worldly way of thinking). **This way of thinking excludes God and Accomplishes great things without the help of God.**

- **Compromise with the world:** Allowing worldly values and political interests to take precedence over righteousness.
- **The pursuit of power:** Using authority for personal security, influence, and advancement rather than serving God's purposes. Making decisions to preserve power rather than obey God.
- Herod's leaven represents a way of thinking that allows the pursuit of power and worldly security to influence spiritual decisions. It exalts man and not Jesus Christ.

Political Leaven-The spiritual powers behind religion is often allied with the political. This coalition has occurred in every age and in every culture. It can be seen in the case of the Pharisees, who joined with political forces to achieve their purpose of discrediting and eliminating Jesus. **At the start of Jesus' ministry:** "The Pharisees went out and immediately

began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him" (Mark 3:6 nasb). *Three years later, when Jesus was arrested and taken into custody, He was passed back and forth between the religious and political leaders.*

- The political leaven mesmerizes people into false loyalties while issuing demands of uniformity through the pressures of fear, shame, and control. It wants you to choose a side and demonize all others.
- **In addition to the circumstances surrounding Jesus's arrest and crucifixion, we see numerous examples throughout history of the coalition of the political and religious working together.** We must be careful we do not preach a political gospel that Jesus never preached. People have done some horrible things in the name of Christianity to advance a political agenda.

Galatians 5:9 Paul tells us-*"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.*

Both types of leaven if allowed to remain have the potential to ruin the entire batch of dough. The leaven of Herod/political and the Pharisees/religious are often subtle. They creep in sounding right but are not Kingdom.

We find Jesus operated from a **third way** that didn't fit in a political or religious system and that is how we must learn to operate from. **Kingdom of heaven/Kingdom of God.**

Matthew 13:33-- He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough. What permeates our mind, our heart is it Kingdom? We need to be free of the wrong kind of leaven and let the right kind permeate and work its way entirely in our thinking, living. **Jesus was not ruled in any measure by the influence of the religious or political atmospheres that were influential in His day. We shouldn't be either.**

Has the kingdom of God become the standard that rules your life? The Bible is about a King and His kingdom! His eternal plan to rule and reign with those He loves with an everlasting love. I*t is not a Book that is primarily about rules and regulations rather about the establishment of His Kingdom.* His divine government of ruling is based upon His perfect love for us. God is looking for yielded lovers who will lay down their kingdoms so that He can usher in His Kingdom!

Daniel 2:44 (NKJV) "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Home group questions

1. How do we respect government while remaining faithful to God? How do you walk in this tension?
2. Discuss how Jesus and the disciples did this?
3. Discuss the process of leaven and the dangers of the political and religious leaven?
4. What happens when mixture is in the believers life and in His church.
5. Can you honestly say the kingdom of God is permeating your thoughts and the lens in which you see and understand things?

- Pray, repent, seek first the Kingdom of God.