SMALL GROUP GUIDE

The Responsibility of Authority
Influence, Stewardship & the Danger of Abuse

OVERVIEW

This session explores the relationship between authority, responsibility, accountability, and influence. Drawing from Luke 12:47-48, Romans 13:1-4, and other passages, the sermon challenges believers to understand that authority is not merely the power to command. It is the responsibility to influence, protect, guide, and serve.

When much is given, much is required.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Luke 12:47-48: A servant who knows his master's will but fails to act accordingly faces greater consequence than one who acts in ignorance; to whom much is given, much is required.

Romans 13:1-4: All governing authority originates from God, and those who resist it resist God's ordinance.

Genesis 1: God gave humanity dominion and authorization to steward the earth.

Jude 1:24: God is able to keep us from falling.

1 Timothy 4:12: Believers are called to be examples in word, conduct, love, faith, and purity.

Hebrews 13:17: Spiritual leaders watch over souls and are accountable to God.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Authority is not yours to own. It is yours to manage. You represent someone greater than yourself, and exercising authority should reflect God's character, not your own agenda.

To know is not enough. Knowledge without corresponding action and preparation carries its own consequences. Maturity requires execution.

Responsibility governs authority. Irresponsible people in positions of authority become dangerous. Authority without responsibility creates domination, manipulation, and abuse.

Accountability creates preservation. What you are unwilling to disclose, you are willing to experience. Secrecy harbors indiscretion.

Influence is always active. Whether you recognize it or not, you are shaping the attitudes, decisions, behaviors, and spiritual direction of those around you, and they are shaping yours.

Serving before leading is not optional. Before you can lead well, you must learn to serve faithfully in someone else's field.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTION | START HERE

Think of someone in your life who exercised authority in a way that genuinely served and protected you. What did that look like, and how did it affect you?

SECTION 1 | AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY

1. The sermon defines authority as "not merely the power to command, but the responsibility to influence, protect, guide, and serve." How does this definition challenge or expand the way you have typically thought about authority?

2. In what areas of your life, such as home, workplace, church, or community, have you been given authority? Are you approaching those areas as a steward or as an owner?

3. The sermon states that irresponsible people should not hold authority because they use it to dominate rather than to serve. Have you ever experienced authority being abused? Without sharing harmful details, how did that experience shape your relationship with leadership or with God?

SECTION 2 | THE WEIGHT OF BEING GIVEN MUCH

1. Luke 12:47-48 teaches that greater knowledge brings greater responsibility. In what areas of your life has God given you much, such as gifts, resources, relationships, opportunity, or spiritual insight? Are you treating those things as gifts to steward or as possessions to protect?

2. The sermon says, "Stop complaining about your season and begin to ask God, does this come with the anointing? Does this come with my position? Does this come with my promotion?" How does reframing difficulty as the weight of responsibility change the way you respond to hard seasons?

3. David was being prepared in someone else's field before he was called to his own. Where in your life are you currently serving in someone else's field? How are you approaching that season?

SECTION 3 | ACCOUNTABILITY

1. The sermon asks three pointed questions: Who do you consult before you do? Who do you confess to after you do? Who knows your whereabouts and intentions? How would you honestly answer those questions right now?

2. The pastor shared that some of the depression people carry is connected to unconfessed faults, not because God has not forgiven, but because the person has not released what they are managing internally. Do you agree with that observation? Why or why not?

3. What makes accountability feel risky or unsafe? What would need to be true of a relationship for you to trust someone with genuine accountability?

SECTION 4 | INFLUENCE & GUARDING YOUR HEART

1. The sermon defines influence as "the ability to shape attitudes, decisions, behavior, and spiritual direction." Who or what is currently shaping yours? Are those sources moving you toward God or away from Him?

2. The pastor challenged the group to consider how much time is spent on social media versus in God's presence, and how that imbalance affects spiritual stability. How do you personally navigate that tension?

3. 1 Timothy 4:12 calls believers to be examples in word, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Which of those five areas feels most natural for you right now? Which one needs the most intentional attention?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to practice before your group meets again.

1. AUDIT YOUR INFLUENCE

For one week, pay attention to what you are consuming, including social media, podcasts, conversations, and entertainment. Ask yourself after each: Did this move me closer to God or further away? Did it shape my attitude, decisions, or behavior in a healthy direction? Journal what you notice.

2. IDENTIFY AN ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIP

Pray this week and ask God to reveal one person in your life who could serve as a genuine accountability partner, someone who will tell you the truth, not just agree with you. Take one step toward building or strengthening that relationship.

3. SERVE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S FIELD

Identify one area where you can serve faithfully without recognition this week, whether in your church, your home, your workplace, or your community. Do it without announcing it or expecting credit.

4. STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

Write down three areas where God has given you much, such as gifts, relationships, resources, opportunity, or responsibility. For each one, honestly assess: Am I being a faithful steward? What does responsibility require of me in this area that I have not yet given?

5. EXAMINE YOUR AUTHORITY

If you hold authority in any area of life, such as a parent, a spouse, a leader, a mentor, or an employer, ask yourself honestly: Are the people under my care being influenced toward God by the way I exercise that authority? Ask one trusted person for honest feedback.

CLOSING PRAYER FOCUS

Close your group time by praying together over these specific areas:

- That God would reveal where you have held authority without responsibility.
- That He would bring the right accountability relationships into your life.
- That your influence, seen and unseen, would reflect His character.
- That you would serve faithfully in whatever field you are currently in, trusting God to call you forward in His timing.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Luke 12:48

Reflect on the truth that to whom much is given, much is required, and let that reality shape how you approach every responsibility entrusted to you this week.