Government and Rulers

**MAIN IDEAS:**

> Since God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority, we are to submit to them.
> Governments and rulers are to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.
> We are not to subject ourselves to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.
> Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God's good purposes.
> Government is not to be seen as a substitute for God or individual responsibility.

**SCRIPTURE:**

1. Romans 13:1-7
2. Ephesians 4:25
3. Ephesians 5:11
4. Deuteronomy 6:6-7
5. Acts 5:29
6. 1 Corinthians 2:7-9
7. Psalm 20:7

**FROM THE VISUALS DVD:**

- PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 34
- 10 Picture Symbol and 10 Description cards (cut along dotted lines and then cut cards in half to produce 40 separate pieces for each copied page; make enough additional copies so each student will receive at least two pieces; place all pieces in a bag) **Note:** if you have a small class, you'll still want at least 40 separate pieces from each copied page.

**OTHER VISUALS:**

- Bible
- Driver's License

**PREPARATION:**

Note about opening activity: The activity described in this lesson works best with a larger class (20+ students). The main point is to demonstrate how, apart from structured governance of rules and leadership, chaos is the norm. For smaller classes, you could substitute a similar type of game that accomplishes the same goal, or simply have each student pick four or five pieces from the bag.
Large Group Activity (approximately 4 minutes)

Quickly have each student pick out two pieces from the bag of Picture Symbol and Description cards. Explain that each piece is either half a picture of something, or half of a word description. The goal is for each student to find the other half of what he has on his card, and also find the corresponding pair of cards (either the words or the image, depending upon whether he has a word card or an image card). For example, if he has a picture with half a fire truck, he must find the person who has the other half of the fire truck picture and the people whose cards have the words “fire” and “truck.” A complete match will require a total of four separate pieces. The activity will be timed, and the students will have exactly one minute (or two minutes for a large class) to match all the descriptions and pictures. After each student has found his matches, he should bring the four matched cards to you. The adult leaders will not be allowed to help in any way. The only instruction provided will be the signal to begin and the signal to end.

(After the activity): Did you experience any frustrations with this activity? What, if anything, made it difficult to complete in the allotted time? Can you think of anything that would have made the activity easier to complete? Would the addition of more people and more cards have made the activity more or less chaotic? Why?

Large Group Lesson

(Dispaly Pictures + Descriptions.)

All the cards could be considered parts of a wider topic. Ask the students if they can identify the larger topic based on the pictures and descriptions.

(Display Government.)

Government is a very important topic. All people, in every part of the world, are affected by governments and by those who rule within those governments.

✎ What would you say is the main purpose of government?

✎ Overall, would you say that governments are something good or bad?

Just as with everything else, the Bible gives us the truth about how to understand governments and those who rule.

✎ Have the students turn to Romans 13:1-5 and the corresponding portion of the journal. Choose one or two students to read the text.
Romans 13:1-5—Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

What is the main command in the text? [Verse 1: Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.]

What is the main and most important reason given for obeying this command? [Verses 1-2: Authorities exist under God's authority, so resisting them means resisting God.]

(DISPLAY BIBLICAL 1 and direct students to this part of the journal.)

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority. (Romans 13:1)

According to verse 1, ultimately was it the Founding Fathers and the Revolutionary War that established the government of the United States of America? No. Ultimately it was decisively instituted by God.

And according to this verse, do the voters of the United States ultimately choose who will become our next president? No. God is the one who decisively appoints the president and any other rulers, using the secondary means of voting to accomplish his purpose.

Explain that some people may object to the scope of these verses, because it doesn't exclude bad governments, especially repressive governments or those ruled by harsh dictators.

Do you think Paul was unaware of the possibility of the existence of terrible governments and rulers? Was Paul simply being naive when he wrote these words of Scripture? (Allow the students to respond.)

(DISPLAY REALITIES.)

Was the dominant ruling power in New Testament times
Was responsible for the persecution of the early church, which at times including putting Christians to death

Promoted pagan religious beliefs

Did Paul have a naive view of governments and rulers? No. He lived under Roman rule, the same rule that would eventually lead to his own death.

Ultimately all governments and rulers are instituted by God—even those governments and rulers that deny and rebel against God’s authority. And even the harsh and repressive government of Rome served to provide needed and positive benefits for the great majority of its citizens. Ask the students to quickly state any positive benefits that the Roman government provided for its people. After a few responses...

(DISPLAY BENEFITS.)

- Established laws for a more ordered society
- Developed better means of transportation
- Provided protection for its people
- Promoted advancements in knowledge and technology

The Roman road is an example of advancements in transportation, which proves that even an evil government can benefit its citizens. Recall the beginning activity. One of the reasons the activity may have been frustrating and even unsuccessful, was due to the lack of instruction and leadership. It was as if every student was left to simply figure things out on his own, each doing what seemed best in his own mind. In a small group, this might be easier to manage, but in societies with hundreds or thousands, or even millions of people, governments help to establish a certain amount of order that benefits society.

Look again at verses 3-4 of Romans 13. According to these verses, what is God’s intention for what governments and rulers are to do? [reward good conduct and punish bad conduct] What do the word’s “God’s servant” mean? [rulers who do this are rightly are carrying out God’s role for them]

(DISPLAY BIBLICAL 2 and direct students to this part of the journal.)

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God’s supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God’s servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct (Romans 13:3-4).

Display a driver’s license. Point out that this is a legal, government-issued document. Ask the students if a license like this is simply given to anyone who asks for it.

What are some of the qualifications for getting a driver’s license?
[You have to be a certain age and must fulfill certain requirements, such as driver’s instruction, written tests, and driving competency.]

Through this instruction, you learn about laws such as this…

Why would this be “for your good”? Why not let anyone who wants to drive, drive? And why not let everyone drive at his own speed? (Allow the students to respond.)

Governments and rulers are to put laws in place that serve to benefit people and create a more ordered and good society. Rulers and governments are to be God’s servants in making laws and rules that promote right behavior and discourage wrong behavior. There are rulers who will distort and abuse this intention. But even evil rulers serve to maintain some kind of order in a society. There would be chaos if five-year-olds were allowed to drive, or if everyone could choose his own speed on the road.

Illustration

Quickly relate the following true story: A 15-year-old boy stole a car and drove it on a busy city street. He was well beyond the speed limit and out of control. He hit another car, killing the mother who was driving and seriously injuring her two young children. The young man was arrested by the police and put in jail to await a trial. At the trial, he was sentenced to prison as punishment for his wrong conduct. Although the governing authorities could not stop his wrong behavior, they did demonstrate their rightful authority in punishing him.

Illustration

Briefly relate an example of what happens when governing authorities are removed from a situation: During hurricane Katrina in the city of New Orleans, many police officers left the city for their own safety. Many people in the city stayed behind. What did some of those people do in the absence of governing authorities? They began looting—breaking into the abandoned stores to steal everything they could find. Governing authorities are intended by God to play an important role in restraining evil conduct.

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God’s supreme authority.

2. Governments and rulers are God’s servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.

Therefore, because the first two statements are true, what are we—you and I—to do? Look at verses 1 and 5 again.

Direct the students to the following portion in the journal.
3. We are to submit to the governing authorities, and strive to live peacefully under their rule (Romans 13:2, 5; 1 Timothy 2:1-4).

According to verse 2, if you resist the governing authorities, who are you actually resisting? [God] According to verse 5, what should be another incentive for obeying the authorities? [avoiding God's wrath, and for the sake of your conscience—having a “clear” conscience]

Why is submission to authorities a means of submitting to God?

Illustration

Briefly give the following example: Parents who are going out for an evening provide a babysitter for their young children. Before they leave, they tell the children to listen to and obey the babysitter. What is the main reason the children should listen to and obey the sitter? Should the children make the decision whether or not to obey based on how well they like or dislike the sitter? No. They are to obey because it’s their parents’ desire for them. If they disobey, they will ultimately have to answer to their parents, not the baby sitter. In a similar way, we are to recognize governing authorities as appointed by God. We are to submit to them because it is God’s desire for us. And if we don’t submit, we will ultimately have to answer to God.

After making these three true statements about governments and rulers and our response, Paul gives us a concrete example of how to apply these truths.

Look at verses 6 and 7 of Romans 13.

What example does Paul use? [paying taxes]

Read verses 6-7:

Romans 13:6-7—For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Why do you think Paul might have used the example of paying taxes?

This form is from the United States federal government. By law, many Americans are required to pay a certain amount of tax—money—to the government every year.

In what way might taxes benefit society? [e.g., provide for important services, such as military defense, laws, law enforcement, roads, water & sewer, fire departments, etc.] But many people do not like to be forced to pay taxes, having to give their hard-earned money to the government. I could think of a lot of ways I would like to use that money.
What if I thought something like: “Wouldn’t it be better if I lied a little bit on my income tax form so I could keep more of my money? I could then give more money to my church and to missions work.”?

What do these verses say to that kind of thinking? [Submit and pay your taxes!]

(DISPLAY BIBLICAL VIEW SUMMARY.)

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God’s supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God’s servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.
3. We are to submit to the governing authorities and strive to live peacefully under their rule.

Small Group Discussion (6-7 minutes)

(DISPLAY DISCUSSION.)

Explain to the students that you are going to now give them two scenarios to discuss in their small groups. Each scenario will provide a challenge to Biblical View 3 that you want them to think about and respond to in the journal.

Scenario 1: You are a science teacher in a public school and, by law, are required to teach evolution (Darwinism) to your students. The curriculum states: “Humans evolved from lower life forms over millions of years, through random and natural processes.” Should you submit and obey?

Ask the students why this scenario seems to pose a challenge to Biblical View 3. Should that view apply in this case? Why or why not? Can they give any biblical examples or specific texts that would support their answer? Read the following texts as an example: Ephesians 4:25 and Ephesians 5:11. Is there a way you could teach about evolution in a way that also fulfills Romans 13:1 to the best of your ability? (e.g., you could say, “According to the theory of evolution…” or “People who believe in evolution state that…”)

Scenario 2: A new law is passed in our country: Parents are no longer allowed to give their children any biblical instruction. Should your parents submit and obey?

Why does this scenario pose a challenge to Biblical View 3? Should it apply in this case? Why or why not? Can they give any biblical examples or specific texts that would support their answer? Read the following text as an example: Deuteronomy 6:6-7. In this scenario, is there a way you could fulfill both Deuteronomy 6 and Romans 13:1? Would one text take priority over another in this situation?

Large Group Lesson

The truths in Romans 13:1-7 are to be the “norm” for how we are to see and understand the role of governments, rulers, and laws. However, there are certain situations when it would not be right to submit to them...when it would require us, as the only option, to sin.
4. We are not to submit to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option. *(Acts 5:29)*

Give the following brief biblical examples:

- In the book of *Daniel*, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made a law that everyone had to bow down and worship a golden image he had made. Three young men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused because it would have been sinful, breaking God’s command not to bow down and worship idols.

- In the book of *Exodus*, Pharaoh the king of Egypt ordered that all Hebrew baby boys be killed by the midwives—murdering innocent children. The midwives feared God and did not submit to Pharaoh’s order.

- In the book of *Acts*, Peter and the apostles were preaching the truth of the Gospel. The religious authorities ordered them to stop. But they would not, saying, “We must obey God rather than men.” *(Acts 5:29)* God had clearly commanded them to preach the gospel.

For the most part, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego submitted to the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar. For the most part, the people of Israel submitted to Pharaoh. For the most part, Peter and the apostles submitted to the authorities. They all understood that God had established these governing authorities for the common good of society. They understood that God’s intention was that these rulers make laws and govern in a way that promotes and rewards good conduct, and restrains and punishes bad conduct. However, governments and rulers do not always do this. This is a fallen world, filled with sinful people who act wickedly, and some of these people rule and govern. As we learned in the previous lesson on evil, history is filled with evidence of evil rulers and governments that rewarded wrong behavior and punished good behavior.

So why does God establish governments and raise up leaders who sometimes promote what is wrong and punish what is good, doing the very things they are not to do?

Have the students turn to *1 Corinthians 2:7-9*, and to the corresponding part of the journal.

*1 Corinthians 2:7-9*—But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—

*What secret and hidden wisdom of God are these verses referring to? [the crucifixion of Jesus]*
Explain that Pontius Pilate was the Roman governing authority in Judea at the time of Jesus. Pilate had the authority to release Jesus after his arrest, or to sentence Jesus to be crucified. If Pilate had followed God’s intention for government as stated in Romans, he should have rewarded Jesus for good conduct and released him. But, acting in his evil heart, Pilate sentenced Jesus to death.

However, in the end, what did Pilate’s evil governance serve to do? [accomplished God’s purpose and plan of saving sinners through the death of His Son]

(DISPLAY BIBLICAL 5 and direct the students to this part of the journal.)

5. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God’s good purposes (1 Corinthians 2:7-9).

All governments and rulers, whether good or evil, ultimately are established by and receive their authority from God. God intends that these governments rule for the common good of people by promoting and rewarding what is good, and restraining and punishing what is wrong. Therefore, whenever rightly required, we are to submit to their authority and recognize that even evil governments and rulers ultimately serve to accomplish all of God’s purposes. However, people often do not view government with these truths in mind.

(DISPLAY LIES.)

Government is ultimately established by the will of the people.

Government has no authority over an individual’s freedom.

Government is a necessary evil.

There is one other important lie of Satan that needs to be addressed, too.

Government exists to supply for your needs and to satisfy your desires.

What do you think is meant by this last statement?

Explain that many people increasingly look to government to meet all their needs and remove the need for personal responsibility. Use the following types of statements that demonstrate this thinking:

• If this man becomes president, my life will get better through his direct involvement in meeting my needs.

• Good government is what will bring me and my family happiness.

• Government will protect me from harm and disasters.

• The government is responsible for caring for and teaching my children.
• The government should make sure that I always have a job.

• I don’t need to think about how I manage my money now, because the government will be there to care for me in the future.

Point out that in this type of thinking, people are actually seeing government as some kind of substitute for God, and also as an exemption from personal responsibility. There are even certain forms of government, such as communism and socialism, that encourage people to think this way—to look to the government as one’s provider instead of God. That is why, throughout history, one of the first things a communist government would do is close churches and strictly limit any Christian witness. Government was to be seen as the ultimate provider and ruler in every aspect of life. But even in a non-communist country, such as the United States, people can put their trust in government instead of God. Every Christian needs to guard against this and not be deceived by the lies of Satan.

(Display Psalm 20:7.)

Psalm 20:7—Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

(Display Biblical 6.)

Briefly review the six truths, and direct the students to complete the sixth point in the journal:

1. God establishes governments and they rule under God’s supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God’s servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.
3. We are to submit to the governing authorities, and strive to live peacefully under their rule.
4. We are not to submit to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.
5. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God’s good purposes.
6. Government is not to negate individual responsibility or to be seen as a substitute for God (Psalm 20:7).
Lesson 34

Small Group Application

The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)

• Truth Statement: Since God establishes governments and they rule under God’s supreme authority, we are to submit to them.

Think About It: Read Daniel 2:21a and ask: Have you viewed governments and rulers through a biblical lens (e.g., do you mainly see governments and rulers as ultimately being derived by elections, revolutions, or military might)? How do some forms of government and some authorities do a better job of fulfilling God’s intention for government (e.g., governments that pattern their laws more closely to biblical commands for determining right and wrong behavior regarding work, money, and moral conduct; rulers that see themselves as servants and not masters, patterning their leadership with biblical principles, etc.)? In what ways do we all benefit from the government that God has established in this country, state, and city? What do you think is involved in being a good citizen?

Examine Your Heart: Do you have a heartfelt thankfulness to God for the government and authorities of your country, state, and city? If not, why not, and why does your attitude need to change in this area? Can you be thankful to God and yet, at the same time, be displeased with the way government and leaders fail to properly follow God’s intention? How could you do this?

Live It: Briefly describe the form of government that has been established under God in our own country. (The United States is a constitutional republic.) Have the students make a list of several reasons we should be thankful to God for this type of government (e.g., it is founded on a written constitution, outlining a governing structure that is intended to balance power; citizens have been given rights and are free to participate at many levels; allows many personal freedoms; etc.). Next, have the students make a list of a few influential government authorities, both those they tend to like and also those they do not like. Finally, read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:16-17, and have a time of prayer for our government and its leaders.

• Truth Statement: Governments and rulers are to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.

Think About It: Review Romans 13:3-4. Ask the students to give specific examples of how our own government and authorities rightly demonstrate these verses (e.g., lawmakers write laws against stealing, murder, etc.; police act to arrest those who violate these laws; courts and judges determine guilt and which punishment should be applied—a fine, jail, death penalty, etc.). Now have the students give specific examples of how our government wrongly uses its God-given authority (e.g., laws that have made sin “legal”—abortion, same-sex marriage, the imposition of Darwinism (atheistic evolution) upon impressionable children, etc.). Read verse 4 again. What does it mean that “he
does not bear the sword in vain”? When the authorities rightly bear the sword against a wrongdoer, what are they demonstrating? How can this be a good thing for the society as a whole?

**Examine Your Heart:** Do you naturally “bristle” against authority? If so, why? [Sinful nature does not like to submit.] How can God use submission to governing authorities (even evil ones) help teach you have a more submissive heart toward God? Do you believe the truth of Romans 13:2, that if you resist God’s appointed authorities you are really resisting God? Do you view our government in a skeptical way, or are you indifferent to it? Are you thankful to God for the many ways in which our government rewards good behavior and punishes bad behavior? Do you grieve and pray over the many ways in which our government rewards bad behavior? If not, why not?

**Live It:** Encourage the students to make a prayer list this week that includes both things to be thankful for regarding government, and specific requests for our government and authorities, so that 1 Timothy 2:1-4 becomes a more frequent part of their prayer life. Challenge them to seek ways in which they could be a better and more active citizen, since God has uniquely placed them within a governing structure (at least in many parts of the world) that encourages citizens participation. For example, they could write a letter or e-mail to their congressperson concerning an important topic such as abortion or same-sex marriage. Or, they could visit a local police or fire station and give these public servants a word of thanks for their service to the community, etc.

**• Truth Statement:** We are not to subject ourselves to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.

**Think About It:** Why are the words “as the only option” important at the end of the above truth statement? (You may want to use scenarios 1 and 2 to illustrate the difference. Scenario 1 leaves room for a Christian to be truthful and also submit to the state.) Why must Christians be very careful in discerning when to apply this principle? Sometimes obeying Romans 13:1 might cause us to suffer. (For example, suppose the government decided to place a huge tax on all churches. Would this text still apply? What does verse 7 say?) Read 1 Peter 3:13-14. Why is it better to suffer, even financially or physically, for doing what is right? Do you think Christians sometimes wrongly submit to governing authorities in order to avoid suffering? Can you give examples, both in the Bible and others, in which believers rightly disobeyed the governing authorities? (For example, Rahab refused to reveal the true whereabouts of the Israelite spies in Joshua 2, Corrie ten Boom hid Jews from the Nazis, etc.) Did any of these believers suffer due to their actions? (Corrie ten Boom was arrested and sent to a concentration camp.)

**Examine Your Heart:** Do you try to use the exception of the above truth statement to justify not complying with governing authorities—even in “small” things like following fishing regulations? Or, are you a person who tends to simply follow the rules without ever discerning whether or not the rules may actually be requiring you to sin? If you are more like the first example, who are you resisting? Does God care whether or not you
submit to the fishing regulations? If you are more like the second example, who are you really fearing, God or man? If you fear man more than God, will it go well with you? How can you grow in these areas?

Live It: Encourage the students to read and study one of the biblical examples found in the "At Home" portion of the journal. Challenge students to practice God-honoring submission this week to the authorities in their lives—parents, teachers, coaches, etc.

• Truth Statement: Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God’s good purposes.

Think About It: Ask the students to recall Pharaoh from the book of Exodus. In what ways was he an evil leader? Read Exodus 9:16. What truth does this verse demonstrate? How did God do this through Pharaoh? Recall that throughout the Bible, God raised up governments and leaders (both good and bad) to accomplish His purposes. For example, He established the powerful Babylonians, and then sent them to conquer Judah as judgment for turning away from God. Ask the students if they can think of contemporary examples of this. Have you ever thought of how God might have raised up evil rulers and bad governments to accomplish His perfect purposes? Does God also raise up good governments and rulers to restrain evil ones?

Examine Your Heart: Do you have a hard time believing how even a bad government is still better than no government? Do you become frustrated by the failure of all governments and rulers to ultimately do what is good and right? What condition is this evidence of? [our sinful hearts] How does your own heart reflect this in the little areas of your life over which you “govern”? Who is the only Ruler who always does what is right and just? Are you looking forward to the day when He will establish His perfect kingdom over all the earth, doing away with all other forms of government? Or, does that seem unreal to you?

Live It: Spend time praying for Christ’s rule in your heart by grace, through faith. Pray that God would help you to submit your heart to His rule. Are there any specific ways you can do that this week? If so, what are they?

Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.

Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 34
Lesson 34: Governments and Rulers

United States
Currency

Handcuffs

Roadways

United States
Flag

No “U” Turn

United States
Capitol

Court Gavel

Tank

Fire Truck

Taxes

Sample
Lesson 34

In Class

Examine Romans 13:1-5. What is the main command in the text?

What is the main and most important reason given for obeying this command?

A Biblical View of Government

1. God _________________ governments, and they rule under God's supreme _________________ (Romans 13:1).

Does this include only "good" governments?

Give a biblical example from Paul's experience:
2. Governments and rulers are _______ ____________, established for our benefit, to reward __________ conduct and punish ____________ conduct

(Romans 13:3-4).

Give an example of how our government promotes good conduct:

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Why is this good for the whole society?

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Give an example of how our government punished wrong conduct:

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

3. We are to ______________ to the governing authorities, and strive to live peacefully under their rule (Romans 13:2, 5 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4).

According to verse 2, if you resist the governing authorities, who are you actually resisting?

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________
According to verse 5, what are two incentives for obeying the authorities?

What example does Paul use in verses 6-7?

Why do you think that he used this example?

**Small Group Activity**

**Scenario 1:**
You are a science teacher in a public school and, by law, are required to teach evolution (Darwinism) to your students. The curriculum states: “Humans evolved from lower life forms over millions of years, through random and natural processes.” Should you submit and obey?

Read Ephesians 4:25 and Ephesians 5:11. Is there a way you could fulfill both of these texts and Romans 13:1 to the best of your ability?

**Scenario 2:** A new law is passed in our country: Parents are no longer allowed to give their children any biblical instruction. Should your parents submit and obey?

Read Deuteronomy 6: 6-7. In this scenario, is there a way you could fulfill both Deuteronomy 6 and Romans 13:1? Would one command take priority over another in this situation?

4. We are ________ to submit to governing authorities in situations that would require us to ________ as the only option (Acts 5:29).
Examine 1 Corinthians 2:7-9. What was the secret and hidden wisdom of God in this text?

5. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish ____________________ ________________ (1 Corinthians 2:7-9).

6. Government is not to ____________________ individual responsibility or to be seen as a substitute for ____________ (Psalm 20:7).

**Small Group Notes**

I plan to apply the following truth to my life this week in this way:
Lesson 34 Review—Governments and Rulers

Main Ideas:

> Since God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority, we are to submit to them.

> Governments and rulers are to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.

> We are not to subject ourselves to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.

> Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God's good purposes.

> Government is not to be seen as a substitute for God or negate individual responsibility.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

ROMANS 13:1
At Home

With your parents read Romans 13:1-7, and then review the six biblical truths about governments and rulers, as presented in the lesson. Talk about how your own views of government, rulers, laws, and policies measure up to the truth of Scripture. Are there areas in which you struggle? Which areas? Do you tend to put too much trust in earthly governments and leaders, and not in God’s ultimate reign and rule? Do you become fearful for the future based on who is elected into power? Or, do you tend to be indifferent or even hostile to the government and authorities that God has sovereignly placed in your life? Is either attitude pleasing to God? How can you live out the command of 1 Timothy 2:1-4 this week?

Do one or more of the following this week:

> Choose one of the following people from the Bible to study: Daniel, Esther, Peter, or Paul. Under what form of governance did they live? In what ways did each submit to the state? Give an example in which they did not submit. What was the specific circumstance?

> Read and examine the first, second, and last paragraph of the Declaration of Independence of the United States. In what ways does this document demonstrate a right understanding of God’s intention for the role of government? In what ways does it show a wrong understanding? Has God used even these wrong ideas to serve His good purpose? How?

> Read the sermon titled “Subjection to God and Subjection to State, Part 2” by Pastor John Piper (www.desiringgod.org).

> Research an issue that involves government action/authority in which the authorities are wrongly promoting what is evil. Write a respectful letter to the president and/or a congressman/senator encouraging him to view this issue rightly and lead in a way that will promote what is good.

> Use a website such as Voice of the Martyrs to study a country in which the government and rulers are openly hostile to Christians and the Gospel. How have the Christians there demonstrated ‘we must obey God rather than man’? Is what ways have they suffered because of this? How can you pray for these believers? What can you learn through their example?
Governments and Rulers

MAIN IDEAS

In His mercy and wisdom, God establishes governments on earth, and they rule under God’s supreme authority. God intends that these authorities reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct. We are to submit to them, since resisting them would be resisting God. However, we are not to submit ourselves to governing authorities in situations that would require us, as the only option, to sin. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God’s good purposes, and we must remember that government is never to be seen as a substitute for God or for individual responsibility.

A Biblical View of Governments and Rulers

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God’s supreme authority. (Romans 13:1)
2. Governments and rulers are God’s servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct. (Romans 13:3-4)
3. We are to submit to the governing authorities, and strive to live peacefully under their rule. (Romans 13:2,5; 1 Timothy 2:1-4)
4. We are not to submit to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option. (Acts 5:29)
5. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God’s good purposes. (1 Corinthians 2:7-9)
6. Government is not to negate individual responsibility or be seen as a substitute for God. (Psalm 20:7)

Lies about Governments and Rulers

1. Government is ultimately established by the will of the people.
2. Government has no authority over an individual’s freedom.
3. Government is a necessary evil.
4. Government exists to supply for your needs and satisfy your desires.

INTERACTING WITH YOUR STUDENT

Your student has been asked to apply one truth learned from this lesson to his/her life this week. Ask about this, and pray with your student to encourage him/her in this application. Ask God to work in your student’s heart, and encourage your student to grow in God’s truth.

Encourage your student to complete the “At Home” section of the Student Journal and discuss it with you. He/she may need help with some of the options listed in this section.