

# Jesus Said: Render To Caesar

November 6, 2016

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,  
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW as followers of Jesus.  
- CG Mission Statement

## Worship: James 1:19-25

*(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer)*

Do a “lectio divina” with the above passage. Read through the passage several times aloud, slowly. Ask people to share what jumped out at them in the passage as it was read, and why.

<sup>19</sup> Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup>Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup>For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

## Icebreaker

Option 1: If you had the power to do one good thing for your neighborhood, what would it be?

Option: If you had to vote for one of these two people (and these were your ONLY choices), who would you vote for and why?

- 1) Lisa Simpson
- 2) Spiderman  
(or make up your own)

## Text for Discussion: Mark 12:13-17

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

## Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

In Mark 12, the Pharisees look to set a trap for Jesus. Should the Israelites – by paying their taxes – support a debased, idolatrous nation that worshipped its emperor as a god? If Jesus says “Yes”, then the zealous Pharisees would accuse Him of committing idolatry. But if Jesus says “No”, then the Pharisees would turn him over to the Roman authorities for treason.

But of course, Jesus never does what is expected of Him. Rather than tell them to pay (or not to pay) their taxes, He presents them with a third option. Looking at a Roman coin, Jesus declares, “Render to Caesar the things that Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (v17). He is telling us that there are two kingdoms – *The Kingdom of God* and *The Kingdom of Man* – and we are citizens of both. As Christians, we are called to be engaged in both kingdoms, for we have responsibilities to both.

But in everything we do for the Kingdom of Man, we are called to do it for the Lord’s sake (Acts 5:27-29) because we are a part of God’s Kingdom first. We need discernment, for though we are called to engage, our ultimate loyalty is to Christ (1 Peter 2:13-17). Our loyalty to God should show us *how* to engage with the world. So we must ask ourselves: Are our hearts and words, our attitudes and thoughts more influenced by the Kingdom of Man than the Kingdom of God? And are we willing to confront the truth found in our answer?

Jesus’ message here is the same as the Sermon on the Mount; He is teaching us to live as citizens in the Kingdom of God. Just as the coin given to Jesus in Mark 12 is stamped with the image of Caesar, we are stamped with the image of God (Genesis 1:26). We are of God and we belong to Him (Matt 5:38-39). Our primary mission in the Kingdom of Man is therefore to reflect the values and attitude of our true King Jesus. We are to love our enemy, humbled because we first have been pursued, loved and forgiven by our Father. May our actions bring glory to God.

## Guiding Question of the Week

*(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)*

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### How do we promote the “common good” as citizens of the Kingdom?

## Questions for Discussion

*(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)*

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- 1) In Mark 12:13-17, what is the essence of the “trap” the Pharisees are trying to draw Jesus into?
  - Jesus answers this question with a “third way” answer. This is characteristic of Jesus and his teachings, very often used by him when presented with an “either/or” choice. How can this “third way” approach help us with controversial issues in our culture today?
    - What would it look like to actively reach out to those who disagree with us on various issues?
    - How do we balance upholding our own convictions while being gracious to those who disagree?
- 2) Do you see the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of man (the world) as completely separate from one another? Why or why not?
- 3) Read 1 Peter 2:13-14, and Acts 5:29. These two statements could seem to be in conflict with one another. How can we discern between a cultural/situational and a universal command in scripture? What issues do you see in our culture today that we have to wrestle with in this way?
- 4) **Guiding Question: How do we promote the “common good” as citizens of the Kingdom?**
  - How, specifically, can we do this in our neighborhood this week to serve the community?
- 5) Application exercise:
  - On a piece of paper or on their phones, ask everyone to list three specific, practical things they (or the group) can do between now and the next meeting to to promote the “common good” in their community.
  - Have each person pick one, circle it, and hand it to the person next to them. Ask the person next to them to pray for them this week, and to bring back the card next week to do a “check-in” to see how it went. (Make the check-in time part of your opening group time next week.)

## Praying for One Another

*(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)*

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- Pray that God would open our eyes to the needs of the community around us.
- Pray that we would be willing to wrestle honestly with hard questions.
- Pray for our new elected officials, and for healing and unity in our nation.
- Pray that God will move in our hearts this week to show us anything we might be holding back from giving Him that is due to Him as God.