

# DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

God and Politics  
“Trending” Series  
April 22/23, 2017

Main Idea

***Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. (Philippians 1:27 NLT)***

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## Discovery Questions

**1. In what ways have you maybe gone “above and beyond” to express your allegiance, loyalty or passion for a charitable cause, a sports team, health awareness, etc.?**

We are going to take a short break from our series about David in order to start a new series entitled “Trending.” In this series, we’ll take a look at some of the big issues in our world today, and attempt to get a biblical perspective about them. These are “big” issues, but they’re important ones for we Christians to talk about.

In this week’s message, we’ll look at “God and Politics,” seeking to understand in general how we Christians can make sense of all that’s going on in our political realm, particularly how we can even have *hope* in the midst of uncertain times.

**2. This weekend, we looked at the following statements with corresponding scriptures. Take a moment now to read each of the statements and the scripture passages indicated; then answer the questions that follow.**

- All governments on this earth are governed by flawed, imperfect, sinful human beings – 1 Samuel 18:11-17.
- This is why God has given very limited and specific purposes for governments: to curb the influence of evil and to pave the way for the coming of Christ – Romans 13:1-4.<sup>1</sup>
- Our hope, therefore, is not found in government, it is found in Christ and His Second Coming, when He establishes upon this earth the Kingdom of God – Revelation 11:15.
- As we wait for Christ's return, we are to live now as citizens of God's Kingdom – Philippians 1:27, 3:20.

- a. For each statement, discuss how the scripture supports or illustrates its key point.
- b. Which one of these statements is the most challenging to you? Why?
- c. Which statement do you need to be reminded of as you go about your daily life?

**3. a. Have you noticed any difference between how Christians and non-Christians think about and respond to our current political world?**  
**b. As a whole, how aware do you think Christians are that God is sovereign over all the circumstances of our lives, including the big, public areas like politics and government? What makes you answer the way you do?**

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<sup>1</sup> The Romans passage is only about the first purpose—to curb the influence of evil. For the second point, in the weekend services we looked at 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8.

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4.
  - a. Why is it often so easy for us to lose our perspective of God's sovereignty in turbulent times?
  - b. How does the certainty of knowing Christ will one day return to rule this earth as King—but that it will get worse before it gets better—influence how you think about government, our political environment, etc.?
  - c. We talked this weekend about being the change we want to see in this world. For example, rather than just depend on government to do something about abortion, we see that instead we need to actively help others as they make this difficult decision. What is an area you're passionate about where God would want you to take action? What would it look like for you to do that? What would hold you back from taking action in that area?
  
5. Paul instructs us in 1 Timothy 2:1-4 to pray for our leaders. Close your time by praying for those working in all levels of government—from president down to your local civil servants. (Perhaps even look up the names of your local representatives on both the federal and state levels and pray for them by name.) During your time of prayer, also remember to pray for the return of Christ in the same way that John does in Revelation 22:20, "Come, Lord Jesus."

*Leader Guide Starts on Next Page*

# DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

## Leader Guide

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**1. In what ways have you maybe gone “above and beyond” to express your allegiance, loyalty or passion for a charitable cause, a sports team, health awareness, etc.?**

*This is a “lighter” question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.*

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  - This is why God has given very limited and specific purposes for governments: to curb the influence of evil and to pave the way for the coming of Christ – Romans 13:1-4.<sup>2</sup>
  - Our hope, therefore, is not found in government, it is found in Christ and His Second Coming, when He establishes upon this earth the Kingdom of God – Revelation 11:15.
  - As we wait for Christ's return, we are to live now as citizens of God's Kingdom – Philippians 1:27, 3:20.
- a. For each statement, discuss how the scripture supports or illustrates its key point.  
b. Which one of these statements is the most challenging to you? Why?  
c. Which statement do you need to be reminded of as you go about your daily life?

*For part “a”:*

- 1 Samuel 18 is written in the context of the Israelites asking for a human king. When God formed the nation of Israel, He didn’t give them a human king—He wanted to be their King. God knew that a sinful human being in a position of leadership would be prone to use that position for his own personal gain—and that’s what we see outlined for us in 1 Samuel 18:11-17. Here God lists all of the sinful, selfish, and perhaps evil things a king will do in a position of authority.
- Romans 13:1-4 is one of the few passages in the New Testament where we’re given the specific purpose for which God has established governments. If all leaders are sinful, why

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*even allow governments to form? The answer is that the alternative—no government—is worse than having sinful leaders in charge. If there were no government, there would be no one to enforce laws, leading to anarchy. Thus God allows human governments for the purpose of “punishing” the “wrongdoer” (Romans 13:4).*

- *Revelation 11:15 is one of many verses in Scripture that talks about the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. In Revelation 11:15, we see that when Jesus returns he will abolish all “kingdoms of this world” and instead will establish the Kingdom of God, where He will reign forever and ever.*
- *Philippians 1:27 and 3:20 talk about how our citizenship as Christians is now in heaven. In both of these verses, Paul uses a word he does not use anywhere else in his letters—the Greek word for “citizen.” (Note: some translations of our Bible obscure that point in Philippians 1:27. You may want to read from the NLT translation, which states, “Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.”) Philippians was a very “patriotic” city, and the point Paul is trying to make is that it’s ok to be patriotic—so long as you realize that your allegiance to Christ comes before your allegiance to the Emperor, and you are Christians before you are Romans.*

*Spend 12-15 minutes on this question in its entirety.*

3. a. **Have you noticed any difference between how Christians and non-Christians think about and respond to our current political world?**
- b. **As a whole, how aware do you think Christians are that God is sovereign over all the circumstances of our lives, including the big, public areas like politics and government? What makes you answer the way you do?**

*We are being deliberate in these questions to avoid talking “politics.” Instead, we’re trying to understand how our faith engages our current political environment. For question “a,” therefore, we’re not looking to get opinions on Trump, the current administration, etc. Instead, we are trying to see if anybody has seen any difference in how people think about our current world as they talk to non-Christians (who have no concrete belief in a sovereign God, in a coming King Jesus, etc.) vs. Christians (who are supposed to look at everything through the perspective of the sovereignty of God and the coming of Jesus). Ideally, the Christians we engage on this topic are much more “hopeful,” because we believe that no matter what, God is in control and Jesus is coming back. But sometimes we Christians forget that!*

*Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.*

4. a. **Why is it often so easy for us to lose our perspective of God’s sovereignty in turbulent times?**
- b. **How does the certainty of knowing Christ will one day return to rule this earth as King—but that it will get worse before it gets better—influence how you think about government, our political environment, etc.?**
- c. **We talked this weekend about being the change we want to see in this world. For example, rather than just depend on government to do something about abortion, we see that instead we need to actively help others as they make this difficult decision. What is an area you’re**

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**passionate about where God would want you to take action? What would it look like for you to do that? What would hold you back from taking action in that area?**

*For part “a,” it can be hard to reconcile our belief in a sovereign and good God in the midst of uncertain circumstances. It’s hard to make sense of why God would allow an evil dictator like Kim Jong-un to rule North Korea the way that he does. When we encounter those things, it’s hard to remember that God is sovereign. But Scripture makes it clear that God can even use the most evil of people for His ultimately good purposes.*

*For part “c,” we talked this weekend about how many people feel that since they can’t make a big difference in this world, they might as well not try. But God doesn’t call us to make a “big” difference in this world: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). God wants us to act whenever we can, even if it only affects one person.*

*Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.*

**5. Paul instructs us in 1 Timothy 2:1-4 to pray for our leaders. Close your time by praying for those working in all levels of government—from president down to your local civil servants. (Perhaps even look up the names of your local representatives on both the federal and state levels and pray for them by name.) During your time of prayer, also remember to pray for the return of Christ in the same way that John does in Revelation 22:20, “Come, Lord Jesus.”**

*Spend as much time in prayer as you need.*