

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Romans by John Calvin, William Hendriksen, Kent Hughes, and Bob Utley

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Romans 13:1 God appoints the government

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Its election time in Australia. We don't know who will be elected on Saturday – but God does. And He knows, not only because He knows all things, but because He has appointed who will govern in Australia. We may not like the winning party/candidates. But they will only be there because God has appointed them.

Paul couldn't be clearer as the Holy Spirit guides him to make his case first negatively, then positively. There is no authority except from God. Then, the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, as Calvin remarks, those *tumultuous spirits who believe that the kingdom of Christ cannot be sufficiently elevated, unless all earthly powers be abolished, and that they cannot enjoy the liberty given by Him, except they shake off every yoke of human subjection* are in error.

Remember, Paul is writing about a government who would soon, if not already, persecute Christians to death. About a government that had unjustly beaten him multiple times, and imprisoned him against their own laws. This is not soft language toward a soft government. Rather it is a call to Christians to recognition that God rules even over and through evil governments.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does Paul tell us is true of every human authority?
2. Isn't this only true of righteous authorities? Why or why not?
3. Why do Christians find this teaching hard to accept?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 84a²
1. Pray for your civil government. Pray for the Sat. Aus. election
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Romans 13:11-14 Put on Christ

Notes
(See back page for authors)

It's easy to submit to the government. It's pleasant to pay taxes. It's enjoyable to love others. Right? Maybe sometimes. But other times it's hard and it hurts, and even seems impossible. But Paul ends this instruction with the encouragement of the source of obedience to our godly civil and neighbourly duty.

Hughes quotes Ray Steadman who says, *when I get up in the morning I put on my clothes, intending them to be part of me all day, to go where I go and do what I do. They cover me and make me presentable to others. That is the purpose of clothes. In the same way, the apostle is saying to us, "Put on Jesus Christ when you get up in the morning. Make him a part of your life that day. Intend that he go with you everywhere you go, and that he act through you in everything you do. Call upon his resources. Live your life IN CHRIST."*

Then Hughes replies, *Paul emphasizes that it is "the Lord Jesus Christ" that we put on. We bow to his Lordship. He is King of all or he is not King at all. This is where we gain the capacity to love. Loving on the level comes from the negative—putting off the deeds of darkness, and the positive—putting on Jesus Christ day by day.*

What are you wearing today? Deeds of darkness? Or the armour of light? Deeds of the flesh? Or the righteousness of Christ?

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What are deeds of darkness and why should we avoid them?
2. How can we avoid these dark deeds?
3. How can we put on Christ?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 84a
1. Pray that you and your family will put on the Lord Christ, with God's help
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

Reading Romans 13:8-10 Pay everyone the love you owe them

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Paul moves from what we owe the government (obedience, taxes, and respect) to what we owe everyone (love). This love is not just to other Christians – but to everyone. In this way, God directs Paul to write, we fulfil God’s law. The 2nd table of the law (generally thought of as commandments 5-10) is summed up in the 2nd greatest commandment, “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Hendriksen notes that *this proves that every negative command (“You shall not”) is at bottom a positive command. The meaning, therefore is: “You shall love, and therefore not commit adultery but preserve the sacredness of the marriage-bond. You shall love, and therefore not murder but help your neighbor keep alive and well. You shall love, and accordingly not steal anything that belongs to your neighbor but rather protect his possessions. You shall love, and as a result not covet what belongs to your neighbor but rejoice in the fact that it is his.”*

Hughes says, *every time we meet someone we ought to say to ourselves, “I need to show him or her the love of Christ. I have a great and wonderful debt to pay.” If you have ever had a personal debt, be it ever so small, you know that the first thing that enters your mind when you see that person is that you “owe” them. We need to truly see ourselves as spiritual debtors. When we go to church, town, work, shopping, school—wherever we go, whoever we meet, we owe love. This is our debt.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What do we owe everyone?
2. How are the commandments paying this debt of love?
3. How can you pay this debt of love to someone today?



Praise Pray

- Psalm 84a
1. Commit with your family in prayer to keep loving others
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Romans 13:1-2 Submit to the government

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Every single person, God commands, is to submit to those authorities God has set over them. These higher authorities are NOT supreme. God rules over them. Yet, we must submit to them. If we resist them, we are resisting God Himself.

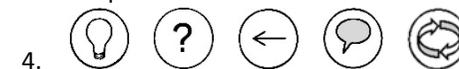
This passage does not deal with what happens if the authorities require us to sin. We know from other places in the Bible that in that case, we must obey God. In any other case, we must obey the governing authorities. As Uteley comments, *to oppose order is to oppose God, unless the civil authorities step beyond their God given bounds. The real spiritual issue is submission to authority. Fallen humanity wants autonomy!*

This is not trivial, nor easy. But, as Hughes notes, *verses 1 and 2 are a call to profound obedience. A profound subjection to the state is rooted in the realization of its “divine right.” With right understanding and attitude, believers should be the best citizens. This requires a profound submission to God, which may involve obedience or disobedience [if asked to sin] to the state. The committed Christian will continually experience tension in this matter.*

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How is the Christian to respond to the civil government?
2. Are there any exceptions? Support your answer from the Bible
3. “Government should be resisted and overthrown if possible.”

Respond



Praise Pray

- Psalm 84a
1. Commit yourself and your family in prayer to submit willingly to government, with God’s help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Romans 13:3-4 Government is God’s minister

Notes (See back page for authors)
Twice in v. 4 (and again in v. 6) Paul identifies the governing authorities as God’s minister – or servant (the Greek word is translated both ways). “Oh,” we say, “that simply can’t be!” So many governments set themselves against God and promote evil practices that we are sure Paul must either have been under a particularly godly government, or else he’s dreaming.

Hendriksen comments that *it has been said that it is strange that Paul would speak so favorably about rulers. Had he not himself been treated cruelly by the civil authorities? See Acts 16:19–24, 2 Cor. 11:25. And was it not the Roman “governor” Pontius Pilate who had unjustly condemned Jesus to death?*

Yet, Paul does speak so favourably. The government is God’s servant, given a God-ordained task to punish evildoers and praise those who do good. Even though we know governments sometimes violate this God-ordained standard, Paul calls us to do civil good and not evil. If we do civil wrong we should expect the government, acting as God’s minister, to punish us.

This punishment, God says, includes the power of the sword. Hendriksen notes that *it should be clear, therefore, that the argument in favor of executing dangerous criminals, who have committed horrible crimes, is based not only on Gen. 9:6 but also on Rom. 13:4. As Calvin says, Contend then do they with God who think it unlawful to shed the blood of wicked men.*

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is the government’s task as God’s minister?
 2. Why might we be nervous when we see a policeman?
 3. How might government praise those doing good?
 4. How might government punish those doing evil?
 5.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 84a
1. Pray that your government will serve as God’s minister well
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Romans 13:5-7 Pay what you owe – taxes and honour

Notes (See back page for authors)
Obey the government, then, not just because they may bring the pain of punishment on us if we don’t, but as Calvin notes, *we ought to obey willingly, as conscience through God’s word thus binds us.* As Hughes puts it, *we understand that the state is divinely instituted and that rulers are wittingly or unwittingly God’s ministers. Christians are able to see the big picture, and thus through their informed consciences they are able to live in profound subjection.*

And this subjection affects us in specific and practical ways. Benjamin Franklin once said, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” And, often, we try to resist both. Yet, for the Christian, we know death takes us to a better place and we (should) know that God says to pay taxes willingly.

Willingly!?! As Hughes notes, *this is where the rubber meets the road for twentieth-century American Christians.* [21st century Australian Christians too] *And it was the same for the Romans. Taxes were exorbitant then too and were sometimes misspent. But the Roman Christians were to pay their taxes, understanding that government authorities are God’s servants. That is, they were to pay them with a good attitude.*

Paul essentially quotes Jesus (Mt 22:21) here. Give to the government (and everyone else) what you owe them – even taxes, tolls, respect, and honour.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Why should we obey the government? (3 reasons)
 2. Why should we pay taxes?
 3. How should we speak/think of the government?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 84a
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to respectful submission to government
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member