

# Life Group Notes 11/2/2025 Mark Warren

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time.

– *Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.*

**Remember:** Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

**Leaders: please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group. Scan the detailed questions that follow the AI-generated study questions, to see if you want to add any more detailed questions.**

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

**Note:** I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/5. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another***

**Important:** At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Footnotes are added to supply detail, and to enhance the study. Use at your discretion, and know any questions are welcomed. This week's footnotes cover:

1. [On Nero and Nebuchadnezzar and obeying those in authority.](#)

**(The new format begins with a summary of the notes, followed by study questions. This week, notes in full detail can be found beginning on page 5.)**

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## Section I: Summary

Here's "co-pilot's" AI summary of the Sermon Lifegroup Notes

Here's a summary of the document "11-02-2025 Lifegroup Sermon Notes Mark Warren Sacred Order Week 4":

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### Purpose & Structure

- The notes are designed for Lifegroup leaders to guide discussion, emphasizing sensitivity, kindness, and allowing the Holy Spirit to direct conversations.
- The document is divided into a summary, study questions, and detailed notes, with additional footnotes and suggested passages for deeper study using the SOAP journaling method.

### Main Themes

- **Sacred Order:** The sermon explores the concept that order—whether in government, church, or family—is established by God for human flourishing.
- **Authority:** Authority is not a human invention but a divine delegation. Romans 13 is highlighted, teaching that all authority comes from God, even when rulers are imperfect or unjust.
- **Biblical History of Law & Leadership:** The notes trace the development of law from Eden, through the patriarchs, Moses, judges, and kings, showing how God’s law reveals His character and sets boundaries for human flourishing.
- **Government’s Role:** Government is described as God’s instrument to promote justice, protect the weak, punish evil, and preserve peace. When government forgets its divine accountability, it risks corruption and collapse.
- **Christian Response:** Followers of Jesus are called to respect authority, pray for leaders, and be model citizens—not because government is perfect, but as a witness to Christ. There is a distinction between blind obedience and faithful submission.
- **Ultimate Hope:** Human governments are imperfect and temporary; the ultimate hope is in the Kingdom of God, where Jesus reigns perfectly.

### Key Passages & Questions

- Romans 13:1-2, Daniel 2:21-22, Psalm 19:7-8, Acts 4:19-20, and others are used to discuss authority, law, and the believer’s response.
- Questions prompt reflection on the nature of order, the role of government, how to respond to unjust authority, and how biblical figures like Daniel and Paul thrived under difficult rulers.

### Application

- The notes encourage SOAP journaling on selected scriptures throughout the week.
- There is a call to assess conversations about those in authority, pray for leaders, and reflect on changes in attitude.

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## Section II: Study questions

Here are **study questions** based on your notes. These are organized by topic and designed to help you reflect, review, and discuss the material:

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### Pillars, Order, and Authority

1. What are the three pillars in this series?
2. What is meant by the “order of the Church”?
3. What is meant by the “order of the Family”?
4. Where did government really begin?
5. Is authority man’s idea or God’s design?
6. Why do we need order?
7. What happens when there is no order?
8. How should we respond when we disagree with those in power?
9. What is your reaction when stoplights are out?
10. What does Romans 13:1-2 teach about authority?

## **Biblical Authority and Exceptions**

11. Who is included and excluded in Romans 13's teaching on authority?
12. What exceptions might exist to submitting to authority?
13. How does the context of Nero as Emperor affect our understanding of Romans 13?
14. How does God create order from chaos in Genesis?
15. Why is light important in the creation story?
16. Why did God establish a sacred order?
17. What flourishes in chaos, and what flourishes within boundaries?
18. How do moral and natural laws establish God's order?

## **Law and Transgression**

19. What were the laws of Eden?
20. What was the first transgression?
21. What rules were established after Eden?
22. What was the first murder, and why did it happen?
23. How did lawlessness relate to the flood, and why was Noah chosen?
24. Is it possible to behave when no one else does? Give an example.
25. What law did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob follow?
26. Who first received the Ten Commandments?
27. Did the commandments exist before Moses? Explain.

## **God's Law and Character**

28. How does God's law reveal His character?
29. What are the "most important laws" according to Jesus?
30. What does Psalm 19:7-8 say about God's law?
31. How does law revive the soul?
32. What is the difference between a law, a precept, and a commandment?

## **Judges, Kings, and Leadership**

33. What happened after a judge died in Israel?
34. Why is temporary rule not sufficient?
35. Why did self-established rule fail for Gideon's son?
36. Why did Israel want a king, and who was God's first anointed king?
37. How did Saul do as king, and who came next?
38. Why was David chosen, and why is his lineage important?

## **Delegated Authority and Wisdom**

39. What does it mean that authority is delegated, not invented?
40. What do Daniel 2:21-22 teach about God's control over rulers?
41. How did Daniel thrive under bad leadership?
42. What qualities of Roman order helped spread the gospel?

## **Jesus, Caesar, and Submission**

43. What was the test about paying tribute to Caesar?
44. How did Jesus answer, and what does it mean?
45. What is the difference between earthly and divine authority?
46. What does it mean to be “in the world but not of the world”?
47. What does John 19:10-11 teach about authority?
48. What is the difference between blind obedience and faithful submission?
49. How should Christians respond to laws that contradict God’s commands?
50. What is our hope regarding government and the Kingdom of God?

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### Section III: Complete study notes

1. Can you name the three pillars in this series, of which this is the third?
2. What do you remember of the order of the Church?
3. What do you remember of the order of the Family?

In Mark’s Sunday preview which he sends out each week, he asked three questions:

- Where did government really begin?
  - Is authority man’s idea—or God’s design?
  - How should we respond when we don’t agree with those in power?
1. What are your thoughts to begin with?
  2. What is your reaction when stoplights are out?
  3. Why do we “need” order?
  4. What is the product of the absence of order?

To begin, Mark invites us to examine Romans 13:<sup>1</sup>*Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which is from God. The authorities that exist have been appointed by God.* <sup>2</sup>*Consequently, whoever resists authority is opposing what God has set in place, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

1. Read the passage again.
2. What do you see? Who is included?
3. Who is excluded? What are the exceptions?
4. Keeping in mind that Nero was Emperor when this was written, what authorities are included? Which are excluded?
5. Can you explain this?

Mark goes back to beginning, where from chaos and darkness God created order and light.

1. Where is this found? What do you remember?
2. What came first? Why is light important?
3. Do you remember why Mark says God established a sacred order? What flourishes in chaos?
4. What can only flourish within boundaries?
5. “God established a sacred order in order for humanity to flourish.” Explain. How does that work?
6. “He created laws both moral and natural.” Explain. How does each set of laws establish God’s order?

Mark reviewed the establishment of Law.

1. What were the laws of Eden?

2. What was the first transgression?
3. What rules were established post Eden?
4. When was the first murder?
5. What did lawlessness have to do with the flood, and why was Noah chosen?
6. Is it possible to behave when no one else behaves? Prove it.
7. What Law did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob follow?
8. Who first received the 10 Commandments?
9. Did the commandments exist before Moses received them? Explain.

✠ **God’s law reveals God’s character, holy, just and merciful—and it shows humanity how to live in right relationship with both God and one another.**

1. How does this work?
2. Recite the summation of the law, the “most important laws” according to Jesus.
3. Read Psalm 19:<sup>7</sup>*The Law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making wise the simple.* <sup>8</sup>*The precepts of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart; the commandments of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.* What do you see? Explain.
4. How does Law revive the soul?
5. What is the difference between a law, a precept, and a commandment?

Mark moves on from Moses, and says, “[...after Moses] God established Judges. He raised up leaders to enforce justice and to restore peace. We can see this in Judges 2: <sup>16</sup>*Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them from the hands of those who plundered them.* These officials were unelected, and raised up by God to restore order and the Law to a nation that had turned from the Law, and begun to receive the consequences of lawlessness.

1. If you know the book of Judges, what happened shortly after a particular judge died?
2. What was required of the people before God would send the next judge?
3. Can you explain how temporary rule is not sufficient?
4. What did the people clamor for?
5. When Gideon’s son established himself king, why did that fail? Why does self-established rule always fail?
6. How many “kings” can you name who established themselves king? When did this ever work?
7. Why did Israel clamor for a king? Who was God’s first anointed king?
8. How did Saul do? What happened to him?
9. Who came next?
10. Why was David chosen?
11. Who came from David? Why is this important?

✠ **“So from Law to leadership, God revealed that authority is delegated not invented. Human government is instituted to reflect God’s righteousness and justice on the earth.”**

1. What does this mean?
2. Mark took us to Daniel 2:<sup>21</sup>*He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.* <sup>22</sup>*He reveals the deep and hidden things; He knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with Him.* What do you see?

3. Who are the good guys in this passage?
4. What superpowers do the wise and the discerning have? How do these, the wise and the discerning, prosper even under Nero or the emperors of Babylon?
5. Name someone who was wise in Nebuchadnezzar's day. How did he do?
6. Mark says, "Daniel learned to thrive in the midst of bad leadership." How much do you know of Daniel in his day?
7. What influence did he have on those leaders under whom he served?
8. Explain.
9. Does Daniel's prosperity under dubious leadership help explain the principle Paul is highlighting in Romans 13?
10. Name someone who was wise in Nero's day. How does Paul still live today, despite being beheaded?
11. What qualities of Roman order directly contributed to the spread of the gospel? How many can you name?

Pastor Mark draws attention to a trap the Pharisees set for Jesus, when they asked, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar." (The passage appears in all three Synoptic gospels: Mark 12, Luke 20 and Matthew 22.)

1. Explain the test.
2. What is being tested? Whose authority is being questioned?
3. Jesus' answer: "[If it's Caesar's effigy and Caesar's name], return to Caesar what belongs to him [what is rightly his], and to God what belongs to God." Explain the answer.
4. Describe the freedom this attitude establishes. Where does the money come from in the first place? Who establishes currency?
5. Who establishes blessing? What is the difference?
6. From where do all blessings flow? Who can take your blessings away?

Mark says, "In one statement Jesus affirms two truths:"

✠ **Earthly governments have a rightful place of authority.**

✠ **God's authority is higher still.**

Mark says, "Jesus is not calling for rebellion. He is calling for right relationship."

1. Explain.
2. Mark speaks of the tension of being "in this world but not of the world." Can you explain this?
3. Examine this exchange in John 19:<sup>10</sup>*So Pilate said to Him, "Do You refuse to speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?"*<sup>11</sup>*Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of greater sin."* What do you see?
4. How does this fit Paul's Romans 13 principle? Who gave Pilate his authority?
5. Is the government always right in its behavior?
6. Why was the Pharaoh of Moses' day put into power? What was God's plan for Egypt?
7. Here's a question: Did Pilate really have the authority to release Jesus?
8. What was God's plan for Rome? For the rebellious who rejected Christ?
9. (Spoiler alert: What happens when we pray for those in authority?)

† **God is not wanting blind obedience but faithful submission—recognizing that respecting authority is one way we honor God’s order.**

1. What is the difference between “blind obedience” and “faithful submission?”
2. What are we called to?
3. When it comes to a law that demands we stop praying or we bow down to other gods, what is our license in those cases? Prove it.
4. When in Acts 4, the Apostles are confronted by the Jewish leadership, they respond in these terms: <sup>19</sup>*But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than God. <sup>20</sup>For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”* Are they justified? Explain.
5. How does one know how to decide how to behave? How does one learn to submit?
6. At what point do we draw the line the apostles drew?

In this context, examine what Peter says: 1 Peter 2:<sup>16</sup>*Live in freedom, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. <sup>17</sup>Treat everyone with high regard: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.*<sup>18</sup>*Servants, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but even to those who are unreasonable.*

1. List each exhortation: How do you fulfill each?
2. Look at verse 18. Could you even do this if asked?
3. Could you honor the king if the king is Nero or Caligula?
4. Does this change our own attitude toward governments today? Should it?
5. Mark says, “When we apply our hearts toward God’s sacred order, it does not take away our liberty...it actually applies more liberty for us.” Look at the apostles in front of Jewish leaders, above, and explain how their liberty had increased, even in the face of very real physical threats.

† **Government is God’s instrument to promote God’s justice in a fallen world.**

Mark points out that when people begin to make their own laws, to act according to their own accord, society begins to crumble.

1. What do you know about the fall of empires?
2. He says, “When government acts rightly, it protects the weak, punishes evil and preserves peace.” Have you ever seen this?
3. He continues, “When government forgets its own divine accountability, it risks corruption and collapse. We’ve seen this through history time and time again.” What have you seen?
4. “As followers of Jesus, we pray for those in authority over us. We obey laws, and reflect God’s law. We become model citizens not because government is perfect, but because our witness of Jesus Christ matters. Our behavior is a sign to the world.” Do you know the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor who spoke against Hitler? What does his example teach us of boldness, and caution?

Mark concludes, “Every governmental system will always fall short. Our hope is not in the greatest republic. Our hope is in the Kingdom of God where Jesus is the king. We get to participate, under authority, and under His kingship today, knowing that His kingdom which we see in part, and in which we live in part, will one day come. And it will be a perfect governmental system. Human government falters. Jesus’ reign is perfect. His Law of Love is perfect.” Look at Revelation 11:<sup>15</sup>*Then the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and loud*

*voices called out in heaven: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever."*

1. What do you see?
2. What will that look like?
3. What changes?
4. What happens to the greatest kings and powers on that day?
5. What changes today with our attitude toward those whom God has placed in authority over us?
6. How will your conversations change?

***Take the time to pray.***

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**Follow up application:**

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
  2. Examine your conversations about those in authority over you? Assess them. Are they constructive? Honoring?
  3. Pray for those in authority this week, and journal any changes in attitude you have.
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**Footnotes:**

1. **On Nero and Nebuchadnezzar and obeying those in authority**—It is important, keeping Paul's admonition in Romans 24 in context, to look at Paul's circumstances when he wrote the letter to the Romans. Scholarship suggests he was in Corinth when he wrote the letter, and Romans chapter 16 suggests how many believers he had had contact with in and from Rome. In that day, Nero was the emperor, and chronology suggests he was still young, newly installed after his adoptive father Claudius was murdered and his brother was overridden in his favor by his mother who was also closely related to him by other means. If you know of Roman emperors, and of their depravity you will not be surprised to know that I will not detail any. Nero grew to be more than despotic as the years progressed, and history suggests that he is the emperor who had Paul eventually beheaded, and of whom Peter speaks. The Bible says these leaders engaged in behavior that we are not to even speak of. From my research today, that is a deliberate understatement. Nero was not a good man any more than the Emperors of Babylon, the Medes or Persians were, but believers in each of these empires preclude the license to rebel. Daniel turned the heart of more than one ruler. So did Paul. Studying their own righteousness and their attitudes toward government and their behavior before unrighteous rule instructs us in our own, as our days increase in danger and challenge.
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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Romans 13:1-2  
Tuesday: Proverbs 28:28  
Wednesday: 1 Peter 2:16-18  
Thursday: Psalm 19:7-8  
Friday: Daniel 2:21-22  
Saturday: John 19:10-11  
Sunday: Acts 4:19-20

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.