



## STUDY GUIDE

“THE WORLD: CHRISTIANS ARE IN SOCIETY TO SERVE AND TRANSFORM IT”  
“THE STATE: CHRISTIANS MUST RESPECT CIVIL GOVERNMENT”

(pg. 234-238)

### **What is the Main Takeaway?**

God has placed His people in His world to draw more attention to Him and His Gospel. He intends for Christians to be a blessing to their society.

### **What are the Potholes, the problems, the alternate views?**

1) Some hold to the idea that in order to serve the culture one must in some way be like it. Rather than be different from society, it becomes necessary to look like society in order to have a platform to speak the truth.

2) Many questions arose over how Christians should respond to the government during covid. Scripture tells us to be subject to the governing authorities (Romans 13:1). Some held that believers were to demonstrate submissiveness to authorities, no matter what the mandates. Others held the talking voices in contempt because of misinformation and deception, thus negating the requirement to follow such mandates. Respect for civil government became difficult, especially when the directives were handed down to local gatherings of the church.

### **What are some of the Gracious Answers for those who may push back?**

1) Believers have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light. We have been brought from death to life. There is no legitimate way to live as a born-again child of God that mirrors our former lives of rebellion. The “culture” is not an entity that needs saving. It is made up of primarily the lost who are dead in their trespasses and sins. The message of Christians is to repent from this and follow Christ. The church influences culture as they faithfully follow God’s Word and as more and more sons are brought to glory.

2) The main issue for believers during covid became whether the government had the right to dictate what happens in the weekly gatherings of the church. As J. I. Packer wrote, “The state may properly collect taxes for the services it renders. But should it forbid what God requires or require what God forbids, some form of civil disobedience, with acceptance of its penal consequences (thus showing the one recognizes the God give authority of governments as such), becomes inescapable.” (Concise Theology, 238) Acts 5:27-32 *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet*

*here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree. God exalted Him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

### **What Applications arise from this study?**

All believers by their born-again nature ought to make an impact on those around them, even in the simple things of life. Philippians 2:14-15 *"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."* Part of godly living includes rightly submitting to God and to the authorities that He has placed in our lives. If we get these out of order, we are not rightly submitting to either.

*Sample questions could include:* "How are you engaging with individuals in our largely pagan culture?" "Do you find it difficult to submit to any government authorities? How do you rightly follow God's instructions on this?"

### **What are some Additional Resources?**

<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A122/christian-duty-in-a-pagan-culture>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/what-we-owe-civil-authorities>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-government.html>

<https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B200723>