

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

Parents. Bosses. Elected officials. Teachers. Law enforcement. All represent people who have authority over all of us at various seasons of our lives, and how we handle that authority says a lot about whether or not we understand that there is a greater authority above all of them. In Week 5 of our "Shift" series, Paul showed us 3 ways that we can interact with authority, and also revealed how God can use the authorities in our lives to write His story through us. When it comes to authority, we can:

1. **Suspect it:** There is a natural tendency – especially in current times – to distrust anyone in authority. While there are times when that may be warranted, our passage isn't one of them. What Jesus knew was that, when we question authority, there is usually one of two questions behind it: do we want an answer or do we want a fight? The religious leaders wanted a fight and had no intention of accepting the authority that Jesus had.
2. **Reject it:** The reason we know that Jesus understood the "question behind the question" is because of the parable He told (verse 19 reveals that the leaders knew that He knew, too!). The story pointed forward to what the religious leaders would do to Jesus at the cross, which was simply to try to silence His authority by killing Him. It was the ultimate rejection of the authority of heaven present in Jesus.
3. **Accept it:** Jesus knew that the rejection of His authority couldn't stop the mission He'd be sent to accomplish. But He knew something else, too. He knew that their rejection of Him was actually PART of the plan and that their rejection would be the very thing that would usher in the foundation of His kingdom. Why was Jesus able to react this way in the face of "bad" authority? Because He trusted the Father! Jesus shows us that **accepting authority begins with trusting the Author!** Nothing that anyone over us does to us can stop God's plan for us!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- How do you **typically** respond to authority? (Suspect it? Reject it? Accept it?)
- Why do people question authority? How does the "question behind the question" change how authorities respond to questions?
- Paul mentioned 2 questions that are usually behind the scenes when we question authority: Do you want an answer or do you want a fight? Which one was the question behind the question that the religious leaders asked Jesus in verse 2? How can you tell?
- Why do you think Jesus responded to their question about authority with another question about authority? What did that question reveal about their motives?
- How did the Parable of the Tenants further expose the desire of the leaders? How did it foreshadow what would happen just a few weeks later on the cross?
- How can trusting God help us honor authority even when the authority isn't honoring God?
- Take the time to read the following Scriptures and discuss what insights we can gain from them concerning authority and how to interact with it: Romans 13:1-5; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Matthew 28:18

STUBBORNNESS

You won't control me!

Crossed arms

Seeks natural power

Demands its way

Fights with men

Bows up

SUBMISSION

You can't control me

Raised arms

Seeks supernatural power

Desires God's way

Fights for men

Bows down

shift