

Matthew: Things That Are God's

Discussion Guide for August 22 and 23, 2026

Summary

The Pharisees and Herodians — usually bitter rivals — team up to trap Jesus with a question about paying taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22). Whichever way He answers, He appears to lose: agreeing makes Him a traitor and blasphemer; refusing makes Him a threat to Rome. Jesus sidesteps the trap by pointing to the image on a coin: give Caesar what bears Caesar's image, and give God what bears God's image — namely, us. The question for us: are we living as faithful image-bearers of God in every area of our lives?

Ice Breaker

Think of a time someone tried to back you into a no-win question or situation. How did you respond, and what did you learn from how you (or someone you admire) handled it?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 22:15-22
2. Genesis 1:26-27
3. Romans 13:1-7
4. Romans 12:1

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus called out the religious leaders' hypocrisy — publicly criticizing Rome while privately benefiting from and paying into the system. Where might you be guilty of saying one thing and doing another, especially regarding money, authority, or convictions you hold?
2. Jesus taught that Christians are to submit to civic authorities within their proper sphere, but not when those authorities overstep into spiritual matters. Where is that line for you today, and how do you discern it?
3. The coin bore Caesar's image, showing it belonged to him. You and I bear God's image, showing we belong to Him. What would it look like this week to live like your whole life — not just Sunday mornings — belongs to God?
4. C.S. Lewis wrote, "The terrible danger is thinking that any part of our life belongs to us." Which part of your life do you find hardest to hand over to God — time, money, relationships, work, self-image?

Life Application

This week, identify one sphere of your life where you tend to compartmentalize your faith — work, home, friendships, finances, free time — and ask what it would look like to intentionally reflect God's image there rather than treating it as separate from your faith. Each day, pick one concrete action in that sphere (a word of encouragement, a moment of integrity, an act of service) that lets people see Christ rather than you. End the week by reflecting: did people see God's image in me, or my own?

Key Takeaways

1. Christians are called to submit to civic authority within its proper sphere, because God has delegated real but limited authority to government, church, and individuals alike.
2. Submission to earthly authority is ultimately an act of worship to God, not primary allegiance to the state.
3. Because we bear God's image, our entire lives — not just religious activities — belong to Him; there's no part of us that is "off-limits" to His ownership.
4. To be an image-bearer means that in our work, relationships, and homes, people encounter a reflection of God's character in how we live.