

2026-07-05 Small Group Guide

Small Group Discussion Guide

Sermon Series: The Tug of War

Topic: Authority - Who's in Charge?

Scripture Focus: Revelation 12:7-17; Deuteronomy 1:26-40

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to help each person honestly examine who truly has authority in their life.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Share a time from your childhood when you struggled with authority (parents, teachers, siblings). What did that teach you?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

War in Heaven and Earth: The battle between God's authority and Satan's rebellion continues today, and we must choose whose authority we'll submit to.

The Freedom We Have: America's founding was rooted in making Christ King, not earthly rulers. We have freedom to share Christ—what's our excuse for not using it?

The Struggle is Universal: From birth, we struggle with authority. We all want to be in charge, but we can barely manage our own lives.

Submission Brings Peace: The greatest way to maintain sanity and spiritual life in difficult times is through submission to God's authority.

Christians Beget Christians: We have the responsibility and ability to share Christ and help others be born again into faith.

Discussion Questions

Understanding Authority (15 minutes)

1. The pastor mentioned that "from the time we're born, we struggle with authority." Where do you see this struggle most prominently in your life right now—at work, at home, in your spiritual life?
2. Read Revelation 12:11. What three things helped believers overcome the devil? How can we practically apply these in our daily battles?

The blood of the Lamb

The word of their testimony

Not loving their lives so much as to shrink from death

3. The sermon stated that Jesus should be both Savior AND Lord. What's the difference? Can you have Jesus as Savior without having Him as Lord?

Personal Application (15 minutes)

4. The pastor shared that Paul's "thorn in the flesh" taught him that God's grace is sufficient. What current hardship in your life might God be using to teach you about His sufficiency rather than removing the problem?

5. "We think comforter always means He's going to come alongside you —'poor thing.'" How does understanding the Holy Spirit as the one who brings peace and perspective (rather than just sympathy) change how you approach difficulties?

6. The Israelites were "unwilling to go up" and "rebelled against the command of the Lord" because they focused on the obstacles instead of God's promises (Deuteronomy 1:26-32). What "giants" are you focusing on that might be keeping you from obeying God?

Living It Out (15 minutes)

7. The pastor challenged: "You have that freedom right now in America to still share Christ. So what's our excuse?" What holds you back from sharing your faith? What's one practical step you could take this week to share Christ with someone?

8. "Talk about it when you get up in the morning...when you're eating breakfast...throughout the day...when you come home at night...when you're going to bed." How can you practically increase God's Word in your daily conversations—especially with your family?

9. The sermon mentioned that submission to authority (even unfair authority) is often God's way of growing us spiritually. Is there a situation where you've been fighting against authority that God might be asking you to submit to instead? How can the group pray for you in this?

Practical Applications

Choose one or two to commit to this week:

Daily Submission: Each morning this week, consciously pray: "Lord, You are in charge today. I submit my plans, my reactions, and my will to You."

Scripture Memorization: Memorize Revelation 12:11 as a reminder of how we overcome spiritual battles.

Share Your Testimony: Identify one person you can share your testimony with this week. Write out a simple version (3-5 minutes) of what Christ has done in your life.

Family Devotions: If you have children or family in your home, begin talking about God's Word at one meal this week. Share what God is teaching you.

Authority Audit: Make a list of the authorities in your life (employer, government, church leaders, family). Pray for each one by name this week, asking God to give them wisdom and asking Him to help you honor them.

Peace Practice: When you face a frustrating situation with authority this week, pause and ask: "What is God trying to teach me through submission here?" Write down what you learn.

Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

The pastor ended with this question: "Who's in charge? I want Jesus to be my boss."

Go around the circle and have each person complete this sentence: "This week, I need to let Jesus be Lord over _____."

Closing Prayer

Pray specifically for:

Courage to submit to Christ's authority in every area of life

Freedom from the need to always be in control

Boldness to share Christ while we still have freedom to do so

Peace in the midst of unfair or difficult authority situations

Our nation's leaders and the future of religious freedom

For Further Study

Read all of Revelation 12 and note every reference to authority and power

Study 1 Peter 2:13-25 on submission to authority

Read the founding documents of America (Declaration of Independence)

and note references to God

Journal about areas where you're currently in a "tug of war" with God over control

Leader Tip: This topic can bring up strong political opinions. Keep the focus on personal submission to Christ's authority rather than debating political viewpoints. The goal is spiritual growth, not political agreement.