

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide based on the themes from Pastor Paul Pett's sermon from Sunday, September 6, 2026, the Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost:

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Theme: Authority, Love, and the Call to Submit

Day 1: All Authority Belongs to God

Reading: [Romans 13:1-2](#)

In the beginning, the temptation in the Garden was not merely about fruit. It was about authority. Eve desired to be like God, to seize what was not hers to take. That same desire lives in every human heart. We want to be in charge. Yet Paul is clear that no authority exists apart from God. Every governing structure, however imperfect, is ultimately under his sovereign hand. To resist lawful authority is to resist God himself. Reflect today on where you have struggled to submit, and ask God to replace your desire for control with trust in his sovereignty.

Day 2: Conscience as a Compass

Reading: [Romans 13:5](#)

God does not call us to obey merely because punishment awaits the disobedient. He calls us to obey because a renewed conscience, shaped by his Spirit, recognizes what is right. The conscience is a gift. When it stings, that is not condemnation but correction. Paul reminds us that subjection to authority is also a matter of the inner life, not only outward behavior. A person who obeys only when watched has not truly submitted. Ask yourself today whether your obedience to God and to lawful authority flows from a transformed heart or merely from fear of consequences.

Day 3: The Kingdom of Grace and the Kingdom of Power

Reading: [Matthew 22:17-21](#)

Jesus drew a clear line. Caesar's image belongs on Caesar's coin. God's image belongs to God. That image is stamped on every human being. Civil government operates in what theologians call the kingdom of power. It maintains order, restrains evil, and punishes wrongdoing. But God's primary desire is the kingdom of grace, where he lavishes forgiveness and mercy on sinners through Christ. Both kingdoms matter. Paying taxes, respecting law, and honoring leaders are not opposed to faith. They are expressions of it. Render to Caesar what is his, and render to God what bears his image: yourself, fully and freely.

Day 4: The Debt That Never Ends

Reading: [Romans 13:8](#)

Most debts can be settled. You pay what is owed and the account is closed. But Paul identifies one debt that can never be fully discharged: the debt of love. No matter how much you love your neighbor, your spouse, your enemy, or your community, there is always more love to give. This is not a burden. It is a calling. Love fulfills every commandment because love never seeks its own harm against another. The law finds its completion not in rule-keeping but in genuine care for the other person. Ask God today to show you one person to whom you owe more love than you have been giving.

Day 5: Christ Submitted So We Could Be Free

Reading: [John 19:10-11](#)

Pilate believed his authority was his own. Jesus corrected him gently but firmly. The authority Pilate held over Christ had been given from above. And Jesus, knowing this, submitted to it. He did not call down angels. He did not resist. He stood before corrupt human power and allowed it to carry out its sentence, because that sentence was the very means by which God would pour out his wrath on sin and pour out his grace on sinners. Christ's submission purchased your freedom. Out of gratitude for that sacrifice, we are called to live not in rebellion but in love, honoring God in all things.