The Christian and Civil Government
Study Guide

A chapter by chapter companion to the book by Pastor John Weaver

Nine chapter studies with Scripture worksheets,
discussion questions and leader notes

For personal study, church classes and small groups

Name _____

Group _____ Start date _____

About This Study Guide

This companion leads you through all nine chapters of The Christian and Civil Government by Pastor John Weaver. It is designed to help you understand the book's argument, examine its use of Scripture and consider the responsibilities that follow from your conclusions.

Using the book and the Bible

Read the assigned book pages before each lesson and keep a Bible beside the workbook. Record the passage and book page that support your answer. When you disagree with an interpretation, explain the text and reasoning behind your conclusion.

Distinguish what a biblical passage states, what Weaver infers from it and how a principle might apply in another setting. Biblical narratives, historical accounts and present-day applications serve different purposes in an argument.

How each study works

Overview. Review the central question, objectives, vocabulary and Bible readings.

Understand the chapter. Answer six questions tracing the author's reasoning.

Examine the Scriptures. Work through four questions using the passages in context.

Discuss and apply. Consider the discussion prompts, case study, personal response and prayer focus.

For leaders

Suggested responses begin on page 41. Use them after participants have worked through the questions. They summarize the book's argument and offer discussion directions; a thoughtful answer should be assessed by its textual support, not only by agreement with a suggested response.

Edition and page references

Study guide edition 2026. Source text: John Weaver, The Christian and Civil Government, the 160-page book interior with Scripture and topical indexes. Assignments cite the book's printed page numbers, not the page positions in the web PDF. The chapter text occupies printed pages 1-131. The summaries, questions and suggested responses in this companion are study material accompanying that text.

Initial questions

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Reading Plan and Preparation

A suggested pace is one chapter per session. Allow 60-90 minutes for discussion after individual preparation. Longer chapters may be divided over two meetings. Write dates in the plan to suit your group.

Study	Chapter focus	Book pages	Meeting date
1	The Institution of Government	1-16	
2	The Covenantal Nature of Government	17-36	
3	The Purpose of Government	37-47	
4	Obedience to Government and the Word of God	49-60	
5	Usurped Authority and Lawful Obedience	61-68	
6	The Degrees of Resistance to Tyranny	69-79	
7	The Pastor as Magistrate	81-100	
8	Statism Is Idolatry	101-112	
9	Friendship with Christ or Caesar	113-131	

Prepare before the meeting

Read the chapter, mark its main claim and note the passages used to support it. Complete the chapter questions and Scripture worksheet. Bring one question about the text and one application to discuss.

A simple discussion rhythm

Begin with a brief recap and prayer. Spend most of the meeting examining the chapter and Scripture questions. Use the case study to test distinctions, then close with a personal response and prayer. Give participants time to explain their evidence and listen carefully to differing readings.

Preparation notes

CHAPTER 1 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

The Institution of Government

Where does authority come from, and what limits follow from its source?

Read book pp. 1-16.

Weaver begins with the claim that God ordains every sphere of government and remains sovereign over it. Human rulers possess delegated authority and must answer to the One who gives it. He reads the descriptions in Romans 13 as statements about government's calling: servant, minister of justice and public worship. He then distinguishes the family, church and civil government, considers different political forms, and identifies biblical qualifications and duties for rulers. The chapter asks readers to connect the source of authority with its purpose, boundaries and accountability.

Learning objectives

- Explain the difference between original and delegated authority.
- Distinguish a government's form from its source and proper function.
- Identify the qualifications and ministerial duties Weaver assigns to rulers.

Scripture readings

Romans 13:1-6 Notice the names and duties given to governing authorities.

Daniel 4:17, 32-35 Trace the relationship between God's rule and human kingship.

Deuteronomy 17:15-20; Exodus 18:21 List the qualifications and restraints placed on rulers.

1 Peter 2:13-14 Compare political forms with the purposes of government.

Key vocabulary

Sovereignty Final authority that does not derive from a higher authority.

Delegated authority Authority received from another and bounded by the giver's commission.

Jurisdiction The sphere in which a person or institution may exercise authority.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 1 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. How does Weaver reason from God's sovereignty to the accountability and limits of human rulers? *(Book pp. 1-3)*

2. Choose two descriptions of government from Romans 13. Explain what each description requires of a ruler. *(Book pp. 4-5)*

3. What responsibilities does Weaver assign to family, church and civil government? How does his household illustration clarify jurisdiction? *(Book pp. 6-8)*

4. Why does Weaver distinguish the source of government from its political form? *(Book pp. 8-10)*

5. Identify three qualifications for rulers and explain why they concern character as well as ability. *(Book pp. 10-14)*

6. How do the images of shepherd, captain, shield and avenger explain government's responsibility toward the people? *(Book pp. 15-16)*

CHAPTER 1 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read Romans 13:1-6. Separate the passage's statements about authority from the duties assigned to the person who exercises it. What relationship does Weaver see between them? *(Book pp. 1-5)*

2. Read Daniel 4:17, 32-35 in context. What does Nebuchadnezzar learn? Which part of Weaver's argument does this narrative support? *(Book pp. 1-3)*

3. Read Deuteronomy 17:15-20 and Exodus 18:21. Which qualifications restrain a ruler's desires, and which equip him to serve? Cite the words supporting your answer. *(Book pp. 10-14)*

4. Compare Romans 13:1-4 with 1 Peter 2:13-14. How does Weaver relate divine institution to human political arrangements? What interpretive questions remain? *(Book pp. 8-10)*

CHAPTER 1 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. What is the difference between respecting an office and treating its occupant as the final authority?

2. How can accountability apply to family and church leaders as well as to civil rulers?

Case study

A community organization asks a respected church leader to decide matters that belong to a family. The leader argues that his spiritual office gives him authority wherever a moral issue arises. The family accepts his concern but questions whether this decision belongs to his office.

1. Which distinction in this chapter best helps you examine the leader's claim?

2. What facts would you need to identify the responsibilities of each party?

3. How could the parties discuss the concern while respecting proper boundaries?

Personal response

Name one responsibility entrusted to you. What purpose and limits should govern the way you exercise it?

Prayer focus

Ask for wisdom to exercise entrusted authority with humility and to recognize your own limits.

CHAPTER 2 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

The Covenantal Nature of Government

What obligations do rulers and people owe to God and to one another?

Read book pp. 17-36.

Weaver presents civil government as covenantal. He distinguishes a covenant involving God, ruler and people from a covenant between ruler and people. He connects these relationships with oaths, conscience, prayer and mutual responsibility. He then argues that a party's breach of covenant releases the other party from the breached obligation, illustrating the claim with Scripture and the American colonies. The chapter closes by distinguishing a ruler's private sin from public wrongdoing and arguing that people share responsibility when they knowingly allow public injustice to continue.

Learning objectives

- Describe the two covenantal relationships identified in the chapter.
- Trace Weaver's argument about breach of covenant and continuing responsibility.
- Distinguish private sin, public wrongdoing and shared accountability.

Scripture readings

2 Kings 11:17; 2 Chronicles 23:2-3, 16 Identify the parties and promises in the covenants.

Ecclesiastes 8:2; 1 Timothy 2:1-2 Consider oaths, conscience and prayer for rulers.

Joshua 2:17-21; Deuteronomy 28 Compare covenant stipulations with consequences of disobedience.

1 Chronicles 21:1-17; 2 Samuel 21:1-9 Examine the narratives Weaver uses for public responsibility.

Key vocabulary

Covenant A relationship with stated obligations binding its parties.

Breach Failure to carry out an obligation established by agreement.

Public responsibility Accountability connected with an office and its effects on others.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 2 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. Who are the parties in each of Weaver's two covenants, and what is each party expected to do? *(Book pp. 17-20)*

2. How does Weaver connect the oath of God with obedience for conscience's sake? *(Book pp. 20)*

3. According to Weaver, why should believers pray for civil rulers? How does his answer shape the content of prayer? *(Book pp. 20-21)*

4. What principle does Weaver draw from Rahab's agreement with the spies and from Israel's covenant obligations? *(Book pp. 21-26)*

5. How do the Fairfax Resolves, Declaration of Independence and Constitution function in the chapter's argument? *(Book pp. 26-30)*

6. What distinction does Weaver make between a ruler's private and public sins? Why does he say the people may share responsibility? *(Book pp. 30-36)*

CHAPTER 2 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read 2 Kings 11:17 and 2 Chronicles 23:16. Identify the relationships named in each text. What obligations does Weaver infer from them? *(Book pp. 17-19)*

2. Read Ecclesiastes 8:2 and 1 Timothy 2:1-2. What does each passage explicitly say? How does Weaver connect these commands with covenantal government? *(Book pp. 20-21)*

3. Read Joshua 2:17-21. List the agreement's conditions. Which consequences are stated, and how does Weaver use this example to develop a general principle? *(Book pp. 21-25)*

4. Read 1 Chronicles 21:1-17. Identify the actions of David, Joab and the people. What supports Weaver's conclusion about public accountability, and what requires further explanation? *(Book pp. 31-33)*

CHAPTER 2 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. What evidence should be required before someone concludes that a covenantal obligation has been broken?

2. How can people accept responsibility for public wrongdoing without claiming responsibility for every decision made by every official?

Case study

A community board promises to publish its decisions and hear residents' concerns. It later conceals important decisions. Some residents say that one breach ends every obligation to the board; others say residents must accept everything the board does because it holds office.

1. How does Weaver's distinction between an office and a particular obligation help frame the disagreement?

2. What evidence would clarify the promise, the alleged breach and the duties that remain?

3. What constructive steps could residents take to seek truth and accountability?

Personal response

Identify one promise or responsibility you hold toward other people. What would faithful performance require this week?

Prayer focus

Pray for rulers and people to fulfill their responsibilities with honesty and faithfulness.

CHAPTER 3 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

The Purpose of Government

What makes the exercise of government a ministry of justice?

Read book pp. 37-47.

Weaver summarizes civil government's purpose as punishing evil and protecting and praising good. He distinguishes this task from the responsibilities he assigns to families and churches. He then considers constitutional limits and the general welfare clause before examining negative and positive law. The chapter insists that good and evil require an objective standard and identifies that standard with God's Word. It closes by distinguishing acts that are wrong in themselves from acts made offenses by legislation, and by examining the consequences of punishing innocent people while protecting the wicked.

Learning objectives

- Explain the two purposes Weaver draws from Romans 13.
- Distinguish limited authority, negative law and positive law.
- Define mala in se and mala prohibita and explain why the distinction matters to the argument.

Scripture readings

Romans 13:3-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14 Identify what government is to punish and what it is to praise.

Exodus 20:1-17 Observe commands, prohibitions and the conduct addressed.

James 1:13-15; Isaiah 45:7 Compare the passages Weaver discusses when defining evil.

Proverbs 17:15; Ecclesiastes 8:11 Consider justice, delay and the treatment of the innocent.

Key vocabulary

Negative law A prohibition addressing specified conduct.

Mala in se Acts regarded as morally wrong in themselves.

Mala prohibita Acts made offenses by positive law rather than by inherent moral wrong.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 3 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. What two purposes does Weaver assign to civil government, and how are they related? *(Book pp. 37-38)*

2. Why does Weaver distinguish the ministry of justice from welfare and education? To whom does he assign the latter responsibilities? *(Book pp. 37-38)*

3. How does Weaver explain express powers, reserved powers and the general welfare clause? *(Book pp. 38-41)*

4. Why does Weaver argue that negative law limits government while positive law may expand its control? *(Book pp. 41-42)*

5. What difficulty arises if officials or individuals define good and evil without a common standard? What standard does Weaver propose? *(Book pp. 42-44)*

6. Explain the distinction between mala in se and mala prohibita. How does Weaver connect it with the punishment of the innocent? *(Book pp. 46-47)*

CHAPTER 3 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read Romans 13:3-4 with 1 Peter 2:13-14. List the actions commanded or described. How does Weaver use these words to define the purpose and limits of government? *(Book pp. 37-38, 44-46)*

2. Read Exodus 20:1-17. Classify the commandments by how they are stated. What connection does Weaver draw between a specific prohibition and limited jurisdiction? *(Book pp. 41-42)*

3. Read Isaiah 45:7 and James 1:13-15 in context. How does Weaver distinguish God's definition of good and evil from the claim that God causes people to sin? *(Book pp. 42-43)*

4. Read Proverbs 17:15 and Ecclesiastes 8:11. What do they teach about condemning the just, justifying the wicked and delaying judgment? How do they bear on Weaver's closing argument? *(Book pp. 45-47)*

CHAPTER 3 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. What difference does a moral standard make to the evaluation of a law or punishment?

2. How might people disagree about the meaning of a standard even when they agree that an objective standard is necessary?

Case study

A local association has rules against theft and rules about submitting routine paperwork. Members disagree over whether every rule violation deserves the same moral judgment. One person treats a filing mistake as proof of dishonesty; another argues that procedural rules can never serve a good purpose.

1. Which distinction in the chapter helps you examine these two claims?

2. What would you need to know about intent, harm, the rule's purpose and the proposed response?

3. How could the association pursue fair treatment while maintaining orderly procedures?

Personal response

Choose one policy you are responsible for administering. What good is it meant to protect, and how can you apply it fairly?

Prayer focus

Ask for discernment to distinguish moral wrongdoing from error and to practice justice without favoritism.

CHAPTER 4 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

Obedience to Government and the Word of God

How should a Christian reason when an authority's demand conflicts with obedience to God?

Read book pp. 49-60.

Book chapter: Are We Bound to Obey Government When it is Contrary to the Word of God?

Weaver challenges the assumption that Romans 13 requires obedience to every civil command. He argues that the dispute concerns the point and degree of disobedience rather than whether disobedience can ever occur. He then examines rulers who move God's boundaries, Paul's imprisonment, Elijah's encounters with kings, the Hebrew midwives, Moses' parents, Rahab, the three Hebrew children, Daniel and the apostles. Through these examples he maintains that obedience to God may require refusal of a human command. The chapter also addresses conscience, persecution and God's deliverance.

Learning objectives

- State the interpretation of Romans 13 that Weaver rejects and explain his reasons.
- Compare the commands, conflicts and responses in his biblical examples.
- Explain how conscience and consequences enter his argument about obedience.

Scripture readings

Hosea 5:10-11 Consider rulers and people who depart from God's boundaries.

Exodus 1:15-22; 2:1-4 Examine the midwives and Moses' parents.

Daniel 3:13-28; 6:5-11 Compare public worship, prayer and royal commands.

Acts 5:17-29; 12:1-11 Observe the apostles' response and the deliverance narratives.

Key vocabulary

Civil disobedience Refusal to comply with a civil demand on grounds of a higher obligation.

Blanket submission Obedience assumed to apply to every command without distinction.

Conscience Moral understanding and conviction brought under the authority of God's Word.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 4 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. Why does Weaver say everyone recognizes some limit to obedience? What does he identify as the real point of disagreement? *(Book pp. 49-50)*

2. What does removing the bounds mean in Weaver's reading of Hosea? Why does he hold both rulers and people accountable? *(Book pp. 50-51)*

3. How does Weaver use Paul's imprisonment to question a blanket-submission reading of Romans 13? *(Book pp. 51-52)*

4. Compare Elijah's response to Ahab with his encounters with Ahaziah's officers. What common principle does Weaver draw? *(Book pp. 52-54)*

5. Select two other biblical examples. Identify the command, the conflict and the response in each. *(Book pp. 54-59)*

6. What role do persecution, conscience and deliverance play in the chapter's conclusion? Does faithful conduct always produce the same immediate outcome? *(Book pp. 57-60)*

CHAPTER 4 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read Hosea 5:10-11 in context. How does Weaver identify the boundary being moved? Distinguish the passage's language from his explanation of its application. *(Book pp. 50-51)*

2. Read Exodus 1:15-22 and 2:1-4. What do the midwives and parents do, and what reasons or evaluations does the narrative supply? *(Book pp. 54-56)*

3. Compare Daniel 3:16-18 with Daniel 6:10-11. How do the characters respond to threatened consequences? What does the first passage leave uncertain? *(Book pp. 57-59)*

4. Read Acts 5:17-29 alongside Romans 13:1-4. State how Weaver reconciles them. Which assumptions about the nature and limits of authority are essential to his reading? *(Book pp. 59-60)*

CHAPTER 4 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. How can someone distinguish a clear conflict with Scripture from a demand that is merely inconvenient or unwelcome?

2. What is the difference between a promise of God's ultimate faithfulness and an expectation of immediate rescue?

Case study

A workplace supervisor asks an employee to record information the employee knows is false. The employee wants to honor legitimate supervision but believes the request violates a clear duty to tell the truth. Coworkers argue that responsibility belongs only to the person giving the order.

1. How does the chapter distinguish submission to an office from compliance with this particular demand?

2. Which facts and Scripture passages would clarify the employee's responsibility?

3. How could the employee explain the concern truthfully and respectfully while seeking an honest resolution?

Personal response

Recall a time when you confused inconvenience with a question of conscience. What would a more careful examination of Scripture and facts look like?

Prayer focus

Pray for a conscience formed by Scripture, courage to be truthful and humility when your judgment needs correction.

CHAPTER 5 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

Usurped Authority and Lawful Obedience

What distinguishes an office ordained for good from a person's misuse of that office?

Read book pp. 61-68.

Book chapter: Is Usurped Authority Legitimate?

Weaver defines tyranny in terms of authority exercised without a lawful commission or outside its proper bounds, not simply personal cruelty. He argues that Romans 13 concerns lawful authority and does not make every action of an officeholder binding. He connects this distinction with the obligation to preserve life and with the limits of authority in marriage, family and other relationships. The chapter concludes by distinguishing the office from its occupant, using Uzziah's entry into the temple as an example of a ruler acting beyond his jurisdiction.

Learning objectives

- Define usurpation and explain why Weaver does not define tyranny by cruelty alone.
- Distinguish an office, its occupant and a particular exercise of authority.
- Explain how Weaver applies limited authority across different relationships.

Scripture readings

Romans 13:1-4; Acts 5:29 Compare lawful authority with obedience to God.

Exodus 20:13; Revelation 2:10 Consider preservation of life and faithfulness in suffering.

Ephesians 5:24-29 Read the discussion of marital responsibility in context.

2 Chronicles 26:14-21 Examine Uzziah's action and the priests' response.

Key vocabulary

Usurpation Claiming an office or exercising power without the authority to do so.

Tyranny In Weaver's argument, rule beyond the bounds of God-given authority.

Office and officeholder The entrusted position and the particular person occupying it.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 5 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. Why does Weaver say a ruler may act tyrannically even while claiming benevolent intentions? *(Book pp. 61-62)*

2. State Weaver's reasoning about which powers merit submission and which actions may be resisted. *(Book pp. 62-63)*

3. How does Weaver distinguish suffering for faith from unnecessarily placing oneself in danger? *(Book pp. 63-64)*

4. What obligation does Weaver draw from the commandment against killing? How does he relate it to preserving one's own life? *(Book pp. 64)*

5. How do the examples of marriage, parents, teachers and a ship captain illustrate limits on authority? *(Book pp. 64-65)*

6. What does the Uzziah narrative illustrate about resisting a person's misuse of office while recognizing the office itself? *(Book pp. 67-68)*

CHAPTER 5 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read Romans 13:1-4. Which features of the passage does Weaver use to distinguish lawful authority from abused power? Identify both textual statements and his conclusions. *(Book pp. 62-63)*

2. Compare Exodus 20:13 with Revelation 2:10. How does Weaver hold together preservation of life and willingness to suffer for Christ? *(Book pp. 63-64)*

3. Read Ephesians 5:24-29 in context. How does the purpose of care and love affect Weaver's account of the limits of marital authority? *(Book pp. 64-65)*

4. Read 2 Chronicles 26:14-21. What office does Uzziah hold, what action does he take, and why do the priests object? What principle does Weaver infer? *(Book pp. 67-68)*

CHAPTER 5 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. What evidence distinguishes an abuse of authority from an honest disagreement about a decision?

2. How can people resist an improper demand without despising every legitimate responsibility attached to the office?

Case study

A committee chair has authority to organize meetings. The chair begins ordering members how to conduct unrelated family affairs, insisting that good intentions and election to office make the instructions binding. Members want to protect the committee's legitimate work while addressing the overreach.

1. Identify the office, its proper purpose and the particular demand in dispute.

2. How would Weaver's distinction between office and officeholder apply?

3. What response could address the disputed demand while preserving legitimate cooperation?

Personal response

Where might you be tempted to exceed your own responsibility because you believe your intentions are good?

Prayer focus

Ask for humility to accept limits and courage to address overreach with truth and patience.

CHAPTER 6 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

The Degrees of Resistance to Tyranny

How does Weaver distinguish forms of resistance, and what limits does he place on them?

Read book pp. 69-79.

Weaver describes verbal resistance, flight and violent self-defense as distinct responses to tyranny. He argues that the nature of a threat matters when evaluating a response. He presents flight as a legitimate means of preserving life, using examples from the lives of Christ and biblical believers, while acknowledging that escape may fail or be unavailable. He then discusses self-defense through biblical reasoning and historical accounts. The chapter ends with a distinction between defending God's people and work and using force to advance religion or make converts.

Learning objectives

- Identify the three categories of resistance and the distinctions among them.
- Explain the purposes and limitations Weaver assigns to flight.
- Assess how Weaver uses biblical passages and historical narratives to argue for self-defense.

Scripture readings

1 Kings 18:17-18; Matthew 10:23 Compare verbal response and flight.

Matthew 2:13-14; Acts 9:23-25; 2 Corinthians 11:32-33 Trace examples of escaping threatened violence.

Nehemiah 4:7-18 Observe prayer, watchfulness and defense of the work.

2 Corinthians 10:4; Luke 22:36 Examine the passages used in the chapter's conclusion.

Key vocabulary

Verbal resistance Answering accusations or demands through words and reasoned appeal.

Flight Leaving danger as a means of preserving life and avoiding violence.

Self-defense Protecting life from attack, distinguished in the chapter from advancing religion by force.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 6 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. What three forms of resistance does Weaver identify? How does he relate the nature of a threat to the kind of response? *(Book pp. 69-70)*

2. How do Elijah's reply and Weaver's discussion of written appeals illustrate verbal resistance? *(Book pp. 69-70)*

3. Why does Weaver reject the assumption that flight necessarily indicates cowardice? Give two examples he uses. *(Book pp. 70-72)*

4. What limitations of flight emerge from the Urijah account and the discussion of families and congregations? *(Book pp. 72-73)*

5. What role do the Scottish Covenanters and the Malta account play in Weaver's argument? How does he distinguish historical illustration from scriptural foundation? *(Book pp. 74-78)*

6. What distinction does Weaver make between defending the work of God and advancing it by force? *(Book pp. 78-79)*

CHAPTER 6 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read 1 Kings 18:17-18 and Matthew 10:23. What response is described or directed in each passage? What circumstances make comparison important? *(Book pp. 69-70)*

2. Compare Matthew 2:13-14, Acts 9:23-25 and 2 Corinthians 11:32-33. What is being preserved through flight? What do these accounts establish, and what do they not establish? *(Book pp. 71-72)*

3. Read Nehemiah 4:7-18. Identify prayer, preparation, work and threatened attack in the passage. How does Weaver connect trust in God with human responsibility? *(Book pp. 78-79)*

4. Read 2 Corinthians 10:4 with Luke 22:36 in their settings. How does Weaver reconcile them? Explain his concluding limit concerning the use of force and conversion. *(Book p. 79)*

CHAPTER 6 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. Why is it important to distinguish a narrative describing an event from a command applying to every believer?

2. How does the chapter's rejection of force to make converts affect the way its historical examples should be discussed?

Case study

A church group loses permission to use a meeting hall. Members propose writing a reasoned appeal, speaking publicly about the decision or meeting at another venue while the dispute is considered. Others say that any move would prove cowardice. The group wants to examine its options without confusing its mission with the dispute.

1. Which categories from the chapter help describe the proposed responses?

2. What facts about the decision, available venues and the group's responsibilities would affect your evaluation?

3. How could the group pursue its mission and address the disagreement without treating every inconvenience as a threat to life?

Personal response

Identify a conflict in which a patient explanation or change of setting could help prevent needless escalation.

Prayer focus

Pray for discernment, courage and restraint when facing opposition or conflict.

CHAPTER 7 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

The Pastor as Magistrate

How does Weaver connect resistance to the responsibilities and limits of an entrusted office?

Read book pp. 81-100.

Weaver begins by calling Christians to oppose evil, then distinguishes private self-defense from action taken in a public capacity. He examines biblical words for magistrate, power, god and ruler, arguing that spiritual as well as civil leaders may hold authority. He interprets the actions of Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Phinehas and Jehoiada as examples of spiritual magistrates addressing failures of civil rulers. Historical accounts of American pastors extend the illustration. The chapter concludes with interposition: the responsibility of a lesser magistrate when a higher magistrate fails to perform his duty.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish private action from the exercise of a public office.
- Trace the biblical examples Weaver uses for spiritual magistracy.
- Explain interposition and evaluate the steps in Weaver's argument for pastoral responsibility.

Scripture readings

Romans 13:4; Matthew 26:52 Compare entrusted public authority and the warning about taking the sword.

Exodus 22:28; Psalm 82; Titus 3:1 Examine words for rulers and their responsibilities.

Numbers 25:1-13; 1 Samuel 15:22-33 Read the narratives of Phinehas and Samuel in context.

2 Kings 11:1-17; Hebrews 11:32-34 Consider Jehoiada and the examples of faith cited by Weaver.

Key vocabulary

Magistrate A person entrusted with authority and responsibility to govern or restrain wrongdoing.

Public capacity Acting within an entrusted office rather than solely as a private individual.

Interposition In the chapter, a lesser magistrate undertaking a duty a higher magistrate has failed to perform.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 7 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. Why does Weaver call every Christian to resist evil while also distinguishing the responsibilities of particular offices? *(Book pp. 81-83)*

2. How does his extended family illustration distinguish preserving life from exercising private revenge or public punishment? *(Book pp. 82-84)*

3. What do the terms magistrate, powers, gods and rulers contribute to his understanding of authority? *(Book pp. 84-90)*

4. Choose two spiritual leaders from the chapter. What failure of civil leadership does Weaver identify, and what does he say the spiritual leader does? *(Book pp. 91-96)*

5. What do the accounts of American pastors contribute to the chapter? Distinguish the historical illustration from the biblical argument. *(Book pp. 96-99)*

6. What is interposition, and why does Weaver argue that responsibility does not disappear when a higher official fails? *(Book pp. 90, 99-100)*

CHAPTER 7 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read Romans 13:4 with Matthew 26:52. How does Weaver use the distinction between public and private responsibility to interpret these passages? *(Book pp. 82-84)*

2. Read Exodus 22:28 and Psalm 82. Who are the rulers being addressed, and what judgments does the text make about their conduct? How does Weaver understand the term gods? *(Book pp. 89-90)*

3. Read Numbers 25:1-13. Identify the crisis, Phinehas' office, his action and the narrative's evaluation. What further reasoning is needed to apply this account to a different office or setting? *(Book pp. 94-95; later reference p. 100)*

4. Read 2 Kings 11:1-17 with Hebrews 11:32-34. How does Weaver connect office, responsibility and faith? Distinguish a narrative example from a command that applies to every believer. *(Book pp. 95-96)*

CHAPTER 7 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. Does possessing an office establish that every action taken by its holder is authorized? Explain from the chapter.

2. Which parts of Weaver's argument depend on the meaning of an office, and which depend on an inference from a historical or biblical narrative?

Case study

A church member believes an official has acted unjustly and wants to take personal revenge. A pastor urges the group to examine evidence, identify who actually holds responsibility and seek an accountable response. Another member says a pastor's title alone authorizes any action he considers necessary.

1. What distinctions does Weaver make between private action, public responsibility and the proper purpose of an office?

2. What evidence would be needed to evaluate a claim to act in an official capacity?

3. How could the group pursue truth and accountability without treating grievance or a title as unlimited authority?

Personal response

Identify a responsibility that your position actually gives you. What accountability should accompany it?

Prayer focus

Pray that leaders will act faithfully within their responsibilities and that members will seek truth rather than personal revenge.

CHAPTER 8 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

Statism Is Idolatry

When does treating government as an authority become treating it as an ultimate authority?

Read book pp. 101-112.

Weaver broadens the discussion of idolatry beyond visible images, beginning with covetousness and the desire to replace God's Word with human will. He connects treason, sovereignty and the claims of the state, then examines kings who promoted false worship. He argues that law expresses moral commitments and that rulers may use religion to preserve power and control people. The Moloch-state image represents a claim to total jurisdiction. The chapter ends by connecting fear, obedience and the legal establishment of conduct that he regards as contrary to God's law.

Learning objectives

- Explain why Weaver treats idolatry as more than the worship of images.
- Trace his connection between law, sovereignty and a state's claim to total jurisdiction.
- Distinguish obedience arising from fear of God from obedience that treats another authority as ultimate.

Scripture readings

Exodus 20:1-3; Colossians 3:5 Compare the prohibition of other gods with covetousness as idolatry.

1 Kings 12:26-33; 2 Kings 21:1-9 Examine the rulers' motives, actions and effects.

2 Kings 17:7-19; Job 28:28 Observe the relationship between fear, statutes and conduct.

Psalm 94:20; Acts 5:29 Consider the conflict between legal approval and obedience to God.

Key vocabulary

Idolatry Giving to a created thing the allegiance or authority belonging to God.

Statism In Weaver's definition, the state's claim to ultimate or total jurisdiction.

Fear of God In the chapter, reverence expressed through departure from evil and obedience to God.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 8 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. How does Weaver use covetousness and the example of Adam and Eve to broaden the meaning of idolatry? *(Book pp. 101-102)*

2. How does he connect treason with the replacement of God's authority and law? *(Book pp. 102-103)*

3. What do the accounts of Solomon, Manasseh and Jeroboam illustrate about the promotion of false worship by rulers? *(Book pp. 104-106)*

4. What three reasons does Weaver give for government's tendency toward idolatry? *(Book pp. 105-107)*

5. What does the Moloch-state image mean in his argument, and what point does the food-sharing example illustrate? *(Book pp. 107-108)*

6. How does Weaver connect fearing a god, obeying that god's statutes and the possibility of making sin lawful? *(Book pp. 109-112)*

CHAPTER 8 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read Exodus 20:1-3 with Colossians 3:5. How does the latter passage affect a definition of idolatry limited to statues? What wider claim does Weaver make? *(Book pp. 101-102)*

2. Read 1 Kings 12:26-33. What does Jeroboam fear, what does he do, and what is the stated effect? How does Weaver use this narrative to discuss power? *(Book pp. 105-106)*

3. Read 2 Kings 17:7-19 and Job 28:28. Identify the objects of fear and the patterns of conduct. How does Weaver use these texts to explain allegiance? *(Book pp. 109-111)*

4. Read Psalm 94:20 with Acts 5:29. How does Weaver distinguish a rule's legal standing from its moral character? What evidence would be needed to apply his argument responsibly? *(Book pp. 111-112)*

CHAPTER 8 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. How can gratitude for a public institution coexist with recognition of its limitations and accountability?

2. Why is it important to test a claim of total authority even when the claim is expressed as wisdom, protection or public benefit?

Case study

A community leader says that because an agency has expertise, its decisions should never be questioned. Another person responds that every public decision must therefore be wrong. The group needs to distinguish appropriate respect for an institution from treating it as incapable of error.

1. Which claim of authority in this scenario resembles the problem Weaver identifies?

2. What distinction separates expertise within a responsibility from unlimited moral authority?

3. How could people examine a particular decision using evidence and a clear moral standard?

Personal response

Where are you tempted to place unquestioning trust in a person, institution or personal desire? What would accountable trust look like?

Prayer focus

Ask for undivided allegiance to God and wisdom to evaluate human claims without cynicism or credulity.

CHAPTER 9 | OVERVIEW AND PREPARATION

Friendship with Christ or Caesar

What does allegiance to Christ require when another authority claims final loyalty?

Read book pp. 113-131.

Book chapter: A Friend of Christ or Caesar?

Weaver begins with the importance and danger of friendship, distinguishing casual association from intimate allegiance. He frames the choice between Christ and Caesar as a choice of final authority. He then describes four requirements he assigns to friendship with Caesar: participation in injustice, suppression of criticism, refusal of a rival and rejection of Christ's kingship. He closes with three requirements of friendship with Christ: knowing His Word, obeying Him and being willing to lay down one's life for Him. The chapter draws the book's themes together through the question of allegiance.

Learning objectives

- Distinguish friendship as association from friendship as ultimate allegiance in Weaver's argument.
- Identify and explain the four requirements he assigns to friendship with Caesar.
- Connect knowledge, obedience and faithfulness with the chapter's account of friendship with Christ.

Scripture readings

John 19:1-16 Observe the accusations, choices and claims surrounding Pilate's decision.

James 4:4; 1 Corinthians 15:33 Consider the moral influence and allegiance involved in friendship.

John 15:13-15; 14:21-24 Identify what knowing, loving and obeying Christ involve.

Romans 12:1-2; Revelation 2:10 Reflect on continuing faithfulness and the offering of one's life.

Key vocabulary

Hetairos The term Weaver explains as comrade or acquaintance.

Philos The term he explains as an intimate or loved friend.

Allegiance Loyalty expressed by recognizing and following an authority.

Reading notes and questions

CHAPTER 9 | READING QUESTIONS

Understand the Chapter

Answer from the book in your own words. Use the printed page references to find the relevant discussion.

1. Why does Weaver say friendship has great potential both to bless and to wound? How does this affect the choice of companions? *(Book pp. 113-115)*

2. What distinction does he draw between hetairos and philos, and why does it matter to his central question? *(Book pp. 116-117)*

3. How does the Pilate account illustrate the conflict between protecting an innocent person and remaining Caesar's friend? *(Book pp. 117-118, 122)*

4. How do the discussions of mala prohibita, public policy and John Noble illustrate the costs of speaking or acting against a ruler? *(Book pp. 119-125)*

5. What are the four requirements Weaver assigns to friendship with Caesar? Explain the connection among them. *(Book pp. 117-130)*

6. What are the three requirements he identifies for friendship with Christ? How do they summarize the book's argument? *(Book pp. 130-131)*

CHAPTER 9 | BIBLE WORKSHEET

Examine the Scriptures

Read each passage in context. Record observations, explain the author's reasoning and identify any question that needs further study.

1. Read John 19:1-16. Identify what Pilate says about Jesus, the pressure placed upon him and his eventual action. Which parts of Weaver's argument are explicit in the account, and which are broader conclusions? *(Book pp. 113, 117, 122, 128)*

2. Read James 4:4 with 1 Corinthians 15:33. How does Weaver understand friendship with the world? How would you distinguish the allegiance at issue from ordinary contact with other people? *(Book pp. 114-116)*

3. Read John 15:13-15 and John 14:21-24. List the relationships among knowing, loving and obeying Christ. How does Weaver develop these into his closing requirements? *(Book pp. 130-131)*

4. Read Romans 12:1-2 and Revelation 2:10. What does faithful service involve over time? How do these passages complete the study's discussion of obedience and authority? *(Book p. 131)*

CHAPTER 9 | DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Discuss and Apply

Discuss together

1. How can friendship, gratitude or a desire to belong make it difficult to confront injustice?

2. What distinguishes cooperation on a particular good task from giving an institution or person ultimate allegiance?

Case study

A public committee invites a church volunteer to assist with a worthwhile neighborhood project. The volunteer is later asked to praise every decision the committee makes and remain silent about a serious injustice that has come to light. The volunteer values the project and fears losing the relationship.

1. Which distinction between cooperation and ultimate allegiance is important here?

2. What facts should be established before speaking, and what moral responsibility may follow from them?

3. How could the volunteer support a good purpose while refusing false praise or concealment of wrongdoing?

Personal response

Identify one area where you need to grow in knowing Christ's Word, obeying it or remaining faithful when obedience has a cost.

Prayer focus

Pray for loyalty to Christ expressed in truth, love, obedience and patient faithfulness.

Leader Notes Chapter 1

The Institution of Government | Book pp. 1-16

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. God possesses authority in Himself; rulers receive it from Him. Delegation makes them limited and answerable (pp. 1-3).

2. Examples include servant or deacon, exacter of righteousness, and public worship. Each description gives government an obligation, not merely power (pp. 4-5).

3. Family is associated with education, church with grace, and civil government with justice. A valid office does not authorize intrusion into another sphere (pp. 6-8).

4. God institutes authority; people establish political arrangements. Weaver emphasizes a government's obedience and function above a single political form (pp. 8-10).

5. Look for truthfulness, fear of God, hatred of covetousness, wisdom, proven character and familiarity with God's law. Ask learners to explain three (pp. 10-14).

6. Rulers are to guide, defend, protect and execute justice for the people's benefit. Weaver connects these duties with Christ's authority (pp. 15-16).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Romans 13 joins the origin of authority to descriptions of its ministerial purpose. Learners should cite the text before drawing conclusions.

2. Daniel 4 depicts a king's dependence on God and humbling before Him. Distinguish the narrative from later applications to political institutions.

3. The passages combine moral qualifications with practical competence and specific restraints on royal conduct.

4. Weaver distinguishes the divine source of government from its human form. Invite learners to explain how they arrive at that reading.

Case study direction

Look for a careful account of jurisdiction. Concern for another person does not, in Weaver's argument, create unlimited authority over that person.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 2

The Covenantal Nature of Government | Book pp. 17-36

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. One covenant joins God, ruler and people; the other joins ruler and people. Weaver describes mutual obligations under God rather than unconditional personal ownership (pp. 17-20).

2. He interprets the oath as recognition of covenant obligations and conscience as informed understanding of those obligations (p. 20).

3. He emphasizes a quiet, peaceable life in godliness and honesty, asking that rulers be restrained or changed so God's people may serve Him (pp. 20-21).

4. His principle is that breach releases the other party from the obligation violated. Rahab's conditions and Israel's covenant judgments illustrate it (pp. 21-26).

5. They illustrate the colonists' appeal to covenant, limits and the consent of the governed. They function as historical applications of his principle (pp. 26-30).

6. Private sin is judged as personal wrongdoing; public misuse of office affects the covenant community. Weaver says people are accountable when they acquiesce in public evil (pp. 30-36).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Require learners to name the parties in the actual wording before describing the two-covenant model.

2. The prayer passage states a desired manner of life. Weaver's wider covenantal explanation is an interpretation to be traced and assessed.

3. Rahab's agreement includes clear conditions. Ask what warrants moving from that agreement to a broader political principle.

4. David commands, Joab objects and then acts, and the people suffer. The precise grounds of shared responsibility should be discussed from the narrative, not assumed.

Case study direction

Strong answers define the actual obligation and its breach. Avoid treating accountability either as unlimited submission or as freedom from every remaining duty.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 3

The Purpose of Government | Book pp. 37-47

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. Punishing evil and protecting or praising good are complementary duties. Weaver sees government as a ministry of justice bounded by that purpose (pp. 37-38).

2. He places charity with believers and churches and education with families and churches, contrasting these ministries with civil justice (pp. 37-38).

3. He reads the Constitution as a grant of specific powers and treats the welfare wording as explanatory rather than an unlimited grant (pp. 38-41).

4. A prohibition identifies a particular wrong; an open-ended claim to act for people's good can enlarge state power. Learners should explain his reasoning (pp. 41-42).

5. Without a standard, good and evil become subjective. Weaver identifies God's law as the standard by which rulers and citizens are judged (pp. 42-44).

6. He distinguishes inherent moral wrong from statutory offense and argues that this difference matters when righteous conduct is prosecuted (pp. 46-47).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Notice both punishment of evil and praise of good. Ask how the proposed limits follow from those descriptions.

2. The text contains both commands and prohibitions. Weaver's point concerns the specificity and restraining effect of law.

3. Weaver argues that when God defines the good, whatever is contrary to it is evil. He denies that God instigates sin. Ask learners to examine that explanation in context.

4. The passages condemn moral reversal and delay. Their application requires identifying the just, the wicked and the actual wrong.

Case study direction

The exercise distinguishes categories and proportional judgment. A procedural violation is not automatically dishonesty, but its purpose and consequences still require examination.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 4

Obedience to Government and the Word of God | Book pp. 49-60

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. People acknowledge some point at which they would refuse a command. Weaver asks when and to what degree refusal is justified (pp. 49-50).

2. He interprets the bounds as God's moral boundaries. Rulers exceed their commission and people share responsibility when they knowingly follow contrary demands (pp. 50-51).

3. Paul wrote Romans yet was imprisoned for conduct that conflicted with rulers' demands. Weaver treats this as evidence against unconditional compliance (pp. 51-52).

4. In both accounts Elijah treats God's command as controlling. Learners should distinguish the details of hiding, confrontation and the reported judgments (pp. 52-54).

5. Possible examples include the midwives, Moses' parents, Rahab, Daniel, the three Hebrew children and the apostles. Answers should identify an actual conflict (pp. 54-59).

6. Conscience must be captive to God. Deliverance narratives support God's power, but the three Hebrew children acknowledge that rescue is not guaranteed (pp. 57-60).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Weaver takes the image of moved boundaries as an explanation of moral and governmental overreach. Learners should identify the interpretive steps.

2. The midwives fear God and preserve life; the parents hide their child. Discuss the narrative's own evaluation before generalizing.

3. Daniel continues prayer, and the three men refuse worship whether or not God rescues them. Their obedience is not conditioned on the outcome.

4. Weaver reconciles the texts through God's superior authority and the bounded purpose of government. Ask learners to account for both passages.

Case study direction

Look for a specific conflict with truthfulness rather than a general rejection of supervision. The question concerns the employee's own conduct as well as the supervisor's responsibility.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 5

Usurped Authority and Lawful Obedience | Book pp. 61-68

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. Good intentions do not supply a lawful commission. Weaver defines tyranny by the source and bounds of power, not only its harshness (pp. 61-62).

2. He argues that God-ordained powers serve good and punish evil, and that usurped or abusive actions do not acquire binding authority simply through office (pp. 62-63).

3. He distinguishes unavoidable suffering in God's providence from carelessly offering oneself to harm. He affirms willingness to suffer without seeking danger (pp. 63-64).

4. He reads the prohibition of killing as including a positive duty to preserve life, including one's own life (p. 64).

5. Each relationship has a purpose and jurisdiction. No office creates a right to require wrongdoing or exercise unlimited control (pp. 64-65).

6. The priests oppose the king's unauthorized temple action. Weaver treats this as resistance to an abuse rather than rejection of kingship (pp. 67-68).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Learners should explain the connection Weaver makes between the source of authority and its stated purpose. Discussion may identify disputed inferences.

2. He affirms both preserving life and faithfulness under unavoidable suffering. Neither passage should be used to erase the other concern.

3. The passage includes the husband's duty of love and care. Weaver denies that submission authorizes commands contrary to God.

4. Uzziah enters a priestly sphere and is confronted by priests. The office, act, objection and outcome should all be named before application.

Case study direction

An adequate answer identifies a particular jurisdictional claim. It should not assume that election or benevolent purpose makes every instruction valid.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 6

The Degrees of Resistance to Tyranny | Book pp. 69-79

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. Verbal resistance, flight and violent self-defense are the three categories. Weaver distinguishes verbal assault from threats to life rather than prescribing one response to every conflict (pp. 69-70).

2. Elijah answers an accusation with a counterclaim about the cause of Israel's trouble. Weaver also discusses letters, appeals and legal argument as verbal means (pp. 69-70).

3. He cites Christ, Joseph and Mary, David, Elijah and Paul as examples of flight intended to preserve life rather than express cowardice (pp. 70-72).

4. Urijah is pursued and killed; flight may fail. Entire congregations or communities may also be unable to flee (pp. 72-73).

5. The historical accounts illustrate his claim about Christians resisting attack. He then states that history alone is insufficient and turns to Nehemiah (pp. 74-78).

6. He allows defense of people and work while denying that weapons may be used to advance the work by making converts (pp. 78-79).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Different situations involve different kinds of opposition. Ask learners to describe the circumstances before generalizing a response.

2. The narratives show flight used to preserve life and avoid capture. They do not supply one rule for every conflict or outcome.

3. Prayer and practical preparation appear together. Learners should distinguish what Nehemiah does from the general principle Weaver draws.

4. His reconciliation distinguishes spiritual mission from defense against attack. Encourage close contextual reading and clear identification of his inference.

Case study direction

The proposed options concern words and relocation, not a threat to life. Strong responses reject the simple equation of moving with cowardice and consider proportionate, constructive action.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 7

The Pastor as Magistrate | Book pp. 81-100

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. All believers are to oppose evil, but Weaver distinguishes this duty from particular public responsibilities and callings (pp. 81-83).

2. His illustration distinguishes immediate preservation of life, later private vengeance, and punishment carried out in an entrusted public office (pp. 82-84).

3. He uses the terms to describe restraint, judgment, delegated authority and representative office, including spiritual leadership (pp. 84-90).

4. Possible examples include Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Phinehas and Jehoiada. Require the specific event, office and failure Weaver identifies (pp. 91-96).

5. The pastors illustrate the role Weaver assigns to spiritual leaders in his account of American resistance. Historical examples do not by themselves establish a biblical command (pp. 96-99).

6. Interposition concerns a lesser magistrate's responsibility when a higher one fails. Weaver moves through levels of office and concludes with spiritual leaders (pp. 90, 99-100).

Scripture discussion notes

1. The interpretation depends on the capacity in which a person acts. Encourage learners to state Weaver's distinctions before evaluating them.

2. Weaver understands gods here as officeholders accountable to God, not as authorization to worship rulers. Psalm 82 judges corrupt conduct.

3. Phinehas is presented as a priest in a particular covenant setting. Ask learners to identify the steps required for any wider application.

4. Jehoiada acts as high priest, and Hebrews commends faith. Learners should explain how Weaver connects these accounts with pastoral office rather than assume the connection.

Case study direction

The chapter's distinctions should rule out treating private grievance as public commission. A title alone does not settle the question of the action's purpose, jurisdiction or accountability.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 8

Statism Is Idolatry | Book pp. 101-112

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. Covetousness places desire over God's command. Weaver uses Adam and Eve to illustrate replacing God's word and will with one's own (pp. 101-102).

2. He treats idolatry as overthrowing God's law and allegiance, rather than identifying faithfulness simply with loyalty to the state (pp. 102-103).

3. The examples show rulers introducing or promoting worship and using political power to shape the people's conduct (pp. 104-106).

4. He argues that law is religious, rulers seek to perpetuate their power, and government's force tempts fallen people to control others (pp. 105-107).

5. The image represents total jurisdiction across life. His account of a church feeding the poor illustrates government claiming control over an activity he assigns to the church (pp. 107-108).

6. He connects fear with obedience and argues that legal enactment cannot turn moral wrong into right (pp. 109-112).

Scripture discussion notes

1. Colossians expressly links covetousness and idolatry. Weaver extends this concern to human attempts to become their own lawgiver.

2. Jeroboam fears losing his kingdom and redirects worship. The motive and stated effects should be drawn from the narrative.

3. The texts connect reverence, conduct and departure from evil. Learners should identify the actions that demonstrate allegiance.

4. Weaver denies that legal approval alone determines moral right. Applying the claim requires identifying the actual rule and the relevant biblical reasoning.

Case study direction

An institution can possess expertise without possessing infallibility. Rejecting unlimited authority does not require condemning every decision made by that institution.

Leader preparation notes

Leader Notes Chapter 9

Friendship with Christ or Caesar | Book pp. 113-131

Suggested responses to chapter questions

1. Friends may bring deep comfort or deep betrayal; companions also influence conduct. Weaver therefore urges care in choosing intimate associations (pp. 113-115).

2. He contrasts acquaintance with intimate friendship or allegiance, illustrating the difference through Judas before presenting Christ and Caesar as rival final authorities (pp. 116-117).

3. Pilate recognizes innocence but faces pressure to prove loyalty to Caesar. Weaver uses the episode to connect allegiance with participation in injustice (pp. 117-118, 122).

4. The examples develop his claims about persecution, regulation of conduct and suppression of criticism. Treat the historical and public-policy material as the chapter's illustrations (pp. 119-125).

5. He lists persecution of the godly, refusal to speak against Caesar, rejection of rivals and repudiation of Christ's kingship. Each places Caesar's claim above another obligation (pp. 117-130).

6. Know His Word, obey His Word and be faithful unto death. The close joins knowledge, conduct and costly allegiance (pp. 130-131).

Scripture discussion notes

1. The passage presents innocence, pressure and a decision. Learners should explain the steps by which Weaver develops a wider account of allegiance.

2. Weaver concerns himself with an order opposed to God, not simply the physical creation. Discuss influence and allegiance without equating all human contact with endorsement.

3. The texts connect friendship with revelation, obedience and self-giving love. Answers should cite the relationships rather than merely repeat the three labels.

4. A living sacrifice describes sustained service; faithfulness may be costly. Ask for thoughtful application rather than claims about another person's motives.

Case study direction

The volunteer need not equate a useful cooperative task with unquestioning allegiance. Strong responses establish facts, resist concealment and consider a truthful, constructive response.

Leader preparation notes

Group Review

Use these prompts to trace the whole argument. Give a book page or Bible passage with each answer. Return to the relevant study if your group needs a fuller discussion.

1. Chapter 1 How do the source, purpose and limits of authority belong together?

2. Chapter 2 What responsibilities do rulers and people owe to God and to one another?

3. Chapter 3 Why does the definition of good and evil matter to the exercise of justice?

4. Chapter 4 How does Weaver reason about a conflict between human commands and obedience to God?

5. Chapter 5 What distinguishes recognition of an office from approval of every action by its holder?

6. Chapter 6 How do verbal resistance, flight and self-defense differ in purpose and setting?

7. Chapter 7 Why do office, jurisdiction and accountability matter to claims of public responsibility?

8. Chapter 8 What makes a claim of human authority a claim to ultimate allegiance?

9. Chapter 9 How do knowing, obeying and remaining faithful express friendship with Christ?

Final Study Project

Prepare a brief written response or a five-minute group presentation. Use at least three chapters and three Bible passages. Support conclusions with evidence, acknowledge unresolved questions and distinguish the book's argument from your own application.

A question of authority and allegiance

A community institution is carrying out a useful service. Its leaders begin insisting that loyalty requires public approval of every decision. A serious allegation of wrongdoing arises, but facts are disputed. Some members want to ignore it for the sake of the institution; others want to reject every responsibility connected with it. You are asked to help the group think carefully about the matter.

1. Identify the offices, responsibilities and limits involved. Which facts must be established before reaching a judgment?

2. State a biblical principle about authority and explain how Weaver uses it. Distinguish the text's words from the inference you draw.

3. Explain how accountability and allegiance bear on the disagreement. What would truthfulness and fair treatment require?

4. Propose a constructive way to seek clarity and address the concern. Name a limitation or unresolved question in your proposal.

Personal Study Plan

Return to this page after completing the group review and final project. Choose a manageable plan for continued reading and faithful practice.

1. One conclusion I can now explain from Scripture and the book is

2. One interpretation or historical claim I want to investigate further is

3. One responsibility in my family, church, work or community that I need to fulfill more faithfully is

4. One practical step I will take, and the person with whom I will review it, is

Reading and follow-up

Passage or chapter to revisit _____

Date to review this plan _____ With whom _____

Closing prayer

Ask for humility to keep learning, wisdom to judge fairly, love for those affected by your decisions and faithfulness in the responsibilities entrusted to you.