

 **highrock**  
CHURCH



# DUAL CITIZENS

LIVING BETWEEN  
TWO KINGDOMS

SERIES COMPANION



# INTRODUCTION

What are the two topics we're not supposed to talk about? Religion and politics. Talking about them together? *Yikes...* Many of us have learned the hard way to avoid these subjects because we're either burnt out, frustrated, or cynical. We're often left with a series of compromises leaving us feeling disappointed and hopeless. Should Christians go all in on politics? Should we walk away altogether? Or is there another way? Jesus tells us to live like dual citizens- members of His Kingdom, defined by love and solidarity, yet also invested in the world we share with our neighbors. How do we do this? Join us as we explore how Jesus calls us to work towards mutual flourishing even amid a political culture that seems determined to turn us against each other.

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Here we provide space to take notes on the sermon and Scripture text and answer reflection questions that you can discuss with others. When considering the reflection questions, remember that the goal is not to have all the "right" answers—instead, let these questions serve as a starting point for curiosity in your conversation with God and others. See the Appendix of this guide for more resources and opportunities to engage with this study.

Please note this discussion guide is created before the series begins. Discussion questions are prepared before the sermons are written and based on the theme and text for the week. Thank you for your understanding that the topic and focus of the sermon as the pastor writes it may differ from what is written in the discussion questions.

## APPENDIX (PAGE 11)

Offers a deeper dive into the topic as well as resources for Bible study, leading small groups, and links for further support.

- Additional Resources
- Online Bibles
- Prayer Tools
- "Icebreaker" Questions
- Tips for Guiding Conversations
- General Resources for Individual Support

## SERMON SCHEDULE & SCRIPTURE READING

*\*Subject to change at the discretion of the pastors.*

There are no additional reading/viewing materials for this series. However, if you're interested in a book to read (or to listen to on audio) alongside this series, consider [Postcards from Babylon: The Church in American Exile by Brian Zahnd](#).

Sermon	Topic
Week 1	Seek the Good of the City: Jeremiah 29:1-9
Week 2	Living as Exiles: 1 Peter 2:9-12
Week 3	Relationship to Ourselves: 2 Timothy 1:7
Week 4	Relationship to Neighbors: Romans 12:9-21
Week 5	Relationship to Power: Romans 13:1-6

## WEEKLY FORMAT

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT:** Listen to the sermon, read weekly selections/view video links, read scripture passages, and answer questions. (30-40 mins)

**RELATE:** Discuss reflection questions with your small group. (50 mins)

**PRAY:** Use the suggested prayer prompt to conclude your time (5-10 mins)

# CONVERSATION COVENANT

We hope all small group discussions are lively and enriching, but sometimes tough topics will be discussed. The Conversation Covenant\* is an agreement to hold respect and grace toward all participants within a small group, no matter the conversation. Please adhere to the Conversation Covenant or consider creating one that fits your context.

\*Adapted from <https://conversational-leadership.net/conversation-covenant/>

I pledge:

**To act in good faith, with curiosity.** I will assume the best about my conversation partners when entering into our groups. I will give the benefit of the doubt, recognizing that they may know something I don't.

**To show respect.** I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard to the feelings and traditions of others. I understand that I do not have to agree with someone to show them respect.

**To speak the truth.** I won't use rhetorical tricks to try to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the nuanced truth.

**To aim to discover the truth.** I will not enter into a conversation with the purpose of changing the mind of anyone to my way of thinking.

**To focus on what we can change.** I will focus on what we can do differently in the future since we cannot change what we did in the past.

**To take responsibility for the conversation.** I will take responsibility for the quality of the conversation and the abidance of the rules both in principle and in spirit.

**To follow the covenant even when others fail to do so.** I will abide by the rules regardless of whether another person breaks them.

**To respect the confidentiality of the group.** I will not share the stories of group members verbally or in written form (including on social media and online outlets).

**To lighten up and approach the conversation in good humor.** I recognize that humor is a hallmark of a constructive, generative conversation and take the conversation in good humor.

# PREPARE

The following questions are jumping-off points for personal reflection. Engage with them to awaken your awareness of themes in this sermon series. Pay attention to the questions that stand out to you and look back on them throughout the series to see how God might be speaking to you.

## CONSIDER

- What are your first impressions of the words religion *and* politics? Are you drawn to talk about them with others, or do you try to avoid them?
- How do you see your faith connecting to politics (or your views on politics)? Can you think of an area in your life where you aren't sure how faith and politics are connected or relevant to one another?
- What is something you'd like to learn about relating faith and politics during this series?
- As you enter into these discussions, how would you describe your spiritual life at the moment? Is there something you believe God is asking of you? List this (or these) below:

# WEEK 1: Seek the Good of the City

## Jeremiah 29:1–9

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Jeremiah 29:1–9

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection:

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. After being removed from their homeland, what do you think it was like for the Israelites to hear, “Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile” (Jeremiah 29:7). What doubts or questions might they have had? How does it speak to you?
3. What ideas or impressions about politics, especially as a way to invest in your communities, do you bring into this series? What seems challenging about this topic for you? What gives you hope?
4. Drawing from the sermon, what does the idea of being ‘dual citizens’ mean? How does it help you understand loving God in the different contexts of your life, especially outward-facing ones?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Gives thanks for the gifts we receive through our communities and the opportunity to serve God and our neighbors. Ask for wisdom as we begin to explore what it means to be dual citizens, thoughtfully engaged in our world as faithful members of God's kingdom.

## Jeremiah 29:1-9

1 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) 3 He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

4 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” 8 Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9 They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD.

# WEEK 2: Living As Exiles

## 1 Peter 2:9–12

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 1 Peter 2:9–12

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener options are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Reflect on the line from 1 Peter 2:10, "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." How can a passage like this help inform or shape the way you relate to others (your public life)?
3. Drawing from the sermon and reading, what do you think it looks like to be appropriately invested in politics – neither 'checked out' nor 'overly invested' – guided by your faith?
4. How did this sermon help you understand living in 'exile' and being an 'ambassador' for Christ? How do you see these ideas applying today?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Ask God for eyes to see God's working amidst our world, and for strength to be faithful in whatever earthly contexts you find yourself in this week.

## 1 Peter 2:9–12

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

# WEEK 3: Relationship to Ourselves

## 2 Timothy 1:7

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read 2 Timothy 1:7

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener options are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Think of people in your life that you would characterize as having a 'non-anxious presence.' What does this presence look like, and how do you think it connects to a relationship with God?
3. What is one way that fear, anxiety, or feelings of scarcity are holding you back from loving others or living into God's call for you?
4. Drawing from the sermon and your discussion, what would help you bring a specific fear or cause of anxiety in your life to God this week? What would it look like to make this part of your prayer life this week?
5. What gives you hope that God's healing and transformation are possible in our relationships and/or in us as individuals?

**PRAY** | Begin with a silent reflection, recognizing you are loved and valued by God. Pray for strength and healing around a specific fear or point of anxiety in your life or for someone you know.

## 2 Timothy 1:7

7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

# WEEK 4: Relationship to Neighbors

## Romans 12:9–21

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Romans 12:9–21

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener questions are available in the Appendix. As we continue to discuss engaging in (sometimes) challenging relationships with others, we recognize there are certain sensitivities in our relationships to be aware of. If particular needs come up in your discussion, please reach out to one of our pastoral staff at Highrock for guidance or getting connected to other means of support.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. How did this sermon challenge or expand what peacemaking (Romans 12:18) can look like? What does this make you think about peacemaking in your own life? How can you be a peacemaker?
3. Consider a challenging relationship in your life, especially with someone (or a group of people) who is on a different side of a political or social issue from you. What would it look like to have a better relationship with them? As appropriate (i.e., recognizing each situation is different), is there something you feel called or would like to do to take a step forward in this relationship?
4. Have one person re-read Romans 12:9–21 to the group. What's one thing that stands out to you? How can you try to show genuine love (12:9) to others this week?

**PRAY** | Ask God to make our love sincere, to avoid being conceited, and to make us people of peace who reflect the peacemaking heart of God.

## Romans 12:9–21

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.  
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.



# WEEK 5: Relationship to Power

## Romans 13:1–6

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights
- Read Romans 13:1–6

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener questions are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. What ideas, images, or questions come to mind for you around submitting to authorities? As you feel comfortable sharing, are there events or experiences that inform your relationship to this topic?
3. How did this sermon help you think about relating to government or authorities as Christians? What important nuances or perspectives did it add to your understanding of relating to authorities?
4. How has this sermon, alongside other messages in the Dual Citizens series, caused you to think differently about relating to power as a Christian? What does it mean for you, as a follower of Jesus, to be a dual citizen?
5. Recalling the first sermon in this series, how can you become more involved in the political/civic process to seek the good of others where you live?

**PRAY** | Ask for God's help in distinguishing good from evil, and for wisdom and insight from others when the difference between the two isn't clear. Pray for the courage to take action as a follower of Jesus and seek the good of others where you live.

## Romans 13:1–6

1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.

# APPENDIX

Below are resources to look into if you are interested in diving deeper into some of the topics covered in this series. If you need resources that more specifically address your own experience, demographic, or faith journey, please reach out to a Highrock pastor or to [smallgroups@highrock.org](mailto:smallgroups@highrock.org) and we will be happy to help!

## ONLINE BIBLES

- [Blue Letter Bible](#)
- [Bible Gateway](#)

## PRAYER TOOLS

- [The Prayer of Examen: Tracking Our Moods](#)
- [Breath Prayer/Prayer of the Heart](#)
- [Divine/Fixed Hour Prayer](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Imaginative Prayer Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Imaginative Prayer/Ignatian Contemplation](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Recall & Paraphrase Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Lament](#)
- [Laughter and Prayer](#)
- [Palms Up, Palms Down](#)
- [Pray a Psalm in a Nature Setting](#)
- [Praying with your Body](#)
- [Welcoming Prayer](#)

## “ICEBREAKER” QUESTIONS

- What was a small win from your week?
- Share a High/Low from your day or week.
- On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing coming into this meeting?
- If you were to describe yourself as a weather forecast today, what would you be? Example: sunny, partly cloudy, rainy with a chance of snow, etc.
- What song would be the theme track for the day you had?

## GENERAL RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- [Spiritual Practices](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Parenting & Kids—Understanding each other through Milestones](#)

## TIPS FOR GUIDING CONVERSATION

- Allow everyone space to share. It's ok to ask what people are thinking even if they don't volunteer to share right away. But always give people the option to decline to share. Example: "Hey, Fred, you've been a little quiet and I'm curious to know what you think. Would you like to share anything?"
- Remember there aren't necessarily "right" answers. Encourage participants to simply be curious about what came up for them or others without the pressure of feeling like they "should" have thought or felt anything in particular. Example: Instead of asking "What is this story supposed to be communicating?" ask "What did you notice?"
- Embrace the differences. Affirm that different people can come to different conclusions regarding the same thing. Example: "Interestingly, the text reminded Susie of ABC, while it reminded José of XYZ. Both can be present and true."
- Adapt to suit your group's needs. Sometimes conversation is free-flowing and sometimes it's easier to move through discussion questions one at a time. Do what feels suitable for your group, but don't feel pressured to answer/discuss every single question.

- Encourage curiosity by modeling curiosity. Asking someone “Tell me more about XYZ” can be a really simple but effective tool to go deeper in conversation.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It's natural to want to fill silences or pauses in a conversation. But don't be afraid to sit in silence with your group members. Sometimes thoughts just need time to percolate, so don't feel like you have to rush to another question if no one shares immediately.
- Refer back to the Conversation Covenant. This is the posture that we as Highrock hold as we gather in groups. When the conversation gets tough, you can always refer back to the Conversation Covenant to remind the group that everyone has agreed to abide by this covenant in small group meetings.