

Matthew 22: 15-22      “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, Give to God what is God’s”

Background information:

A group of political leaders (Herodians who supported Herod and Rome) and Jewish leaders (Pharisees) talk with Jesus and try to trick him. They start by flattering Jesus then ask him if it is lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? If Jesus says yes, then the Pharisees can claim that he agrees with Roman occupation and oppression of the Jews. If Jesus says no, then he can be considered a revolutionary against Rome.

Jesus tells the group that he is aware of their flattery and that they are hypocrites. He asks the group whose picture is on the coin used to pay taxes. The group tells him that the emperor’s picture is on it. Jesus then tells them: “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

At first it appears that Jesus is telling the group that it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar (Rome). The last part of the answer seems to confuse the situation. The world and all within it, including us, are God’s.

1. We belong to God but there are many things in our environment that want to pull our attention away from God. What are some things that try to get your attention away from God?
2. What can we do to try to reduce the distractions that are in our world?
3. Is there a way to turn a distraction into giving back to God?
4. Can you think of anything you can do if you think you are being distracted by the world?

Activity:

Think of some of the ways you can give back to God what is God’s. Make a list or draw pictures of your ideas!

Peg Siegenthaler