

Last week we saw that sin is rebellion against God’s authority. We also saw that God sets up governments and places who He sovereignly wills into office. (Daniel 2:21) That is true for secular and church governments. (Romans 13:1-2) Today we’ll see that same authority is in the home and in the workplace. It does not mean that it is perfect or that we should obey without question. We’ll look at those times when we should not submit at the close of today’s message.

The third area in which God has established authority is in the home. That authority was established in creation, when Eve was made to be a helper to Adam (Genesis 1:18) but it continued after the fall of man. Genesis 3:16 (ESV) *16b Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.*”

I can testify from years of counseling that a woman’s desire is to have a husband. It is almost a bizarre contradiction of desires. Women desire a husband but then want to lead the husband. If it weren’t for the design in creation and the New Testament clarifications of this passage, you might think the husband ruling over the wife was a part of the curse. (That is supposed to be funny) That is the way many women look at it. Just as in government and the church, submission is a difficult lesson to learn.

The clearest passage on the subject is in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. Ephesians 5:21-24 (ESV) *21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

Spouses are to submit to one another, but the leadership of the home is assigned to the husband. There is no ambiguity here. As Christ leads the church, so the husband should lead the wife. As the church submits to Christ, so the wife should submit to the husband.

How do you submit to one another and yet have the husband lead? The same way Jesus works with the church. He answers our prayers, our requests. He allows us a great deal of freedom, but there are also times when He says an emphatic “No!”. He often gives us a great deal of leeway in how we carry out His direction. He is considerate and understanding, but He is also unquestionably the leader.

The best marriages learn to put the other person first, and yet the husband is respected and has the final say on issues of disagreement. That is the authority God placed in the

Commented [Paul1]: Daniel 2:21 (ESV)

²¹ He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

Commented [Paul2]: Romans 13:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Commented [Paul3]: Genesis 2:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

home. It isn't just this clear passage in Ephesians, but the same instruction for **the wife to submit is found in 1Corinthians 14:34, Colossians 3:18, 1Timothy 2:11-12, Titus 2:5, and 1Peter 3:5,6.** Paul says such submission is according to the God's law, that it is fitting in the Lord, that it will prevent the word of the God from being reviled. Peter writes that it is what women who hope in God do. He calls it a woman's adornment.

"But what if your husband is wrong?" Well, first of all, when the wife makes that kind of statement, she must realize that she is declaring that she has superior knowledge or discernment. She just may have. In fact, she often does. (and all the women said amen!) But God did not make an exception. **The only exception would be when he asks you to do something that is contrary to the direct and clear word of God.**

Even women married to unbelieving husbands are instructed by Scripture to submit to their husband to win them. 1 Peter 3:1-2 (ESV) *¹ Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, ² when they see your respectful and pure conduct.* Respect is one of the greatest needs of men. (Ephesians 5:33) When they are respected they will love. When you don't respect your husband, it causes him to be vulnerable to women that come along and do treat him with admiration.

I could go on with the husband's responsibility to love his wife, which earns respect, but today we are discussing the issue of authority. In every area where submission is taught, there is the reciprocal demand that the one in authority is also obligated to do.

Those who misuse authority given them by God will have to answer to God. It is like the military commander who has asked his troops to do something immoral. In that case you should disobey, but if you do obey, the responsibility lies mainly on the commander.

The government official that uses his power for selfish gain will have to answer to God. The church leader that abuses his power to have his way is accountable to God. The husband or employer who abuses his role as leader will stand before God and give an account. That should put the fear of God in all who lead! (Colossians 3:25; James 3:1)

Employers have also been put in a position of authority by the sovereign will of God. Whether slaves of the New Testament times, or employees of today, we are to obey the boss. Ephesians 6:5-8 (ESV) *⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

Commented [Paul4]: 1 Corinthians 14:34 (ESV)

³⁴ the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.

Commented [Paul5]: Colossians 3:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Commented [Paul6]: 1 Timothy 2:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

Commented [Paul7]: Titus 2:5 (ESV)

⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Commented [Paul8]: 1 Peter 3:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,

⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Commented [Paul9]: Ephesians 5:33 (ESV)

³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Commented [Paul10]: Colossians 3:25 (ESV)

²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Commented [Paul11]: James 3:1 (ESV)

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Just as submission to officials in government and church and the leader of the home bring peace, so it is true in the workplace. The employee that decides he does not like his employer's personality and therefore does a poor job, will not only never be promoted, but he will make himself miserable as well. The Apostle is giving great advice in all situations where there is authority. ⁷ *rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man*, Realize God has placed you where you are and be humble. Submit because the Lord has allowed that authority to be in place. (Colossians 3:23)

Commented [Paul12]: Colossians 3:23 (ESV)
²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.

Demanding to lead in any realm when God has not placed you in leadership is defying God and will make you miserable. (Numbers 16:11) It comes down to a lack of humility. It is turning the issue into a personal conflict and placing yourself above the other person. "I know better than her! I should be in charge!" Well, then God goofed. When we say that we are saying we know better than God.

Commented [Paul13]: Numbers 16:11 (ESV)
¹¹ Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?"

Just humbly submit and do your part as unto the Lord. Can you look past any personality or personal preference and just do it for Jesus? That should always be our mindset regardless of whether it is paying our taxes, participating in church, the home, or place of employment. (1Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17)

Commented [Paul14]: 1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)
Do all to the glory of God.

Now, what if...? Because our old nature is rebellious and self-focused, we immediately want to look for exceptions to the rule of submission to authority. There are exceptions. Just be sure to check your heart as to why you want to find the exceptions.

Commented [Paul15]: Colossians 3:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Let's start with government. I mentioned to you that the New Testament authors ignored Nero and Caligula. You will be a much better witness if you ignore the Bush or Obama hysteria. Speak out against the issues if they are ungodly, but not the person in office. Let me give you an example from the life of David.

King Saul had rebelled against the Lord and an evil spirit troubled him. He asked David to play a harp to sooth him. The problem grew worse until one day while David played the harp, Saul tried to spear him. (1Samuel 24:9-10) David fled but faithfully returned to serve again. Saul tried to kill him again. David had to flee for his life. You can flee if the government unjustly wants to kill you. That's good to know. Right?

Commented [Paul16]: James 3:1 (ESV)
¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

David received some assistance from a priest. Saul found out and murdered the priest and his family. (1Samuel 22:17) That makes Saul a pretty bad guy, wouldn't you say? He took a small army and hunted David to kill him out of sheer jealousy. David was given an opportunity to kill Saul. David's friend told him God had delivered Saul into his hand. But David couldn't kill him. In fact, he was convicted about cutting off the corner of his robe. (1Samuel 24:4-6)

Commented [Paul17]: 1 Samuel 22:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ And the king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me." But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of the LORD.

Commented [Paul18]: 1 Samuel 24:4-6 (ESV)
⁴ And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe.
⁵ And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.
⁶ He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed."

He had a second chance. The army of Saul was after him again, and God had put them in a deep sleep. David and a fellow soldier walked into the sleeping camp of Saul. The

soldier asked if he could kill Saul with a single, silent blow. David forbade him to do it. Instead, when he was safely a distance away, he rebuked Saul's bodyguard for not doing his job. (1Samuel 26:8-9)

So can you disobey when the king is a tyrant, or has done evil things? Only if it is to save your life or if ordered to disobey the Word of God.

Consider this; Jesus paid the Temple tax to a corrupt temple priesthood. (Matthew 17:27) He also overturned the tables of the moneychangers. (John 2:15-16) The tax was mandated by God's word. The merchandizing in the house of God was forbidden in the Word. (Jeremiah 7:11) Our ultimate authority is the Word of God. The Word of God says to submit to rulers and authorities. (Titus 3:1) But it also says that God's house is to be a place of prayer. (Isaiah 56:7)

Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned by Rome for casting the demon from a girl. (Acts 16:19) They were beaten and put in stocks but were singing songs of praise. An earthquake opened their stocks and the prison doors. (Acts 16:22-26) Even though they could have walked out, they submitted to the unjust Roman government. The results were the salvation of the prison keeper and his family and probably many of those in prison as well. They did, however, raise the issue of the Roman government breaking its own laws that forbade scourging of its citizens. They asked for and received an apology. (Acts 16:37-39) What a great example of obedience in the face of injustice, yet pointing out their breach of the laws of the land.

But what about religious leaders? Well, let me first say that if you are in a church that blatantly mishandles the Word of God, or discredits it, or if the pastor is unrepentantly in sin, you should leave and find a Bible believing, God honoring assembly.

But what if you are in a fellowship and you don't agree with a minor doctrine or a decision of the elders? We have so many good churches here in Sedona; you are certainly free to find the one you think the Lord is leading you to join. But if you are looking for the perfect church, good luck. When YOU join it, it won't be perfect. **We have to wait till heaven for perfection.** There will never be one that has your exact beliefs. Find out where God wants you, not where you want to be.

If an elder is in sin, we have clear instruction that two witnesses of that sin, or breach of the standards of an elder, should bring it to the other elders and let them deal with it. The elder may have to step down for a time or permanently. Trust the elders to judge the situation according to God's word. (1Timothy 5:19-20)

Next is an example of those in spiritual authority asking believers to disobey the Word. Peter and John were imprisoned by the religious leaders for preaching the Gospel. Upon their release they were commanded to not preach in the name of Jesus. Their response

Commented [Paul19]: 1 Samuel 22:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And the king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me." But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of the LORD.

Commented [Paul20]: Matthew 17:27 (ESV)

²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Commented [Paul21]: John 2:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.

¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade."

Commented [Paul22]: Jeremiah 7:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD.

Commented [Paul23]: Titus 3:1 (ESV)

¹ Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,

Commented [Paul24]: Isaiah 56:7 (ESV)

⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

Commented [Paul25]: Acts 16:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

Commented [Paul26]: Acts 16:22-26 (ESV)

²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.

²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

Commented [Paul27]: Acts 16:37-39 (ESV)

³⁷ But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out."

³⁸ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.

³⁹ So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.

Commented [Paul28]: 1 Timothy 5:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

²⁰ As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.

to those in authority was to appeal to the highest authority. **"We ought to obey God rather than man."** (Acts 5:29)

But here is an example of respect for even unjust authority. When Paul was being tried by the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, the High Priest ordered that the guard strike Paul. Fiery Paul shot back, "God will smite you, you whitewashed wall." (Acts 23:3) Someone asked him how he could speak to the high priest like that, and Paul humbled himself and apologized. He quoted a Scripture that condemned his own words. **"You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people."** (Acts 23:5) Paul knew that regardless of right or wrong, the Scripture does not allow us to make personal attacks of the one God has allowed to be in the position. (Exodus 22:28) For a moment, it had become personal. Paul then turned to a spiritual issue. He saw his mistake and corrected himself.

The great reformer Martin Luther saw the errors of the church he served. Instead of attacking the leader, he put the 99 issues he believed were in violation of the Word of God on the door of the church. He wanted to discuss what the Word said versus the stand of the church. It was only when he was commanded to violate the Word of God that he was free to come out from the authority of that church.

I have been in that position of being under a leader who was in sin. It is a difficult place to be. He held the position by God's sovereign will. I had to be careful to only speak the facts and only to the appropriate people. I did not leave or stop serving until the Lord clearly spoke to me through the Scriptures and I had exhausted every other recourse. It was not long after that the Lord removed the person from that position.

Can we trust God? Can we walk in the place of humility? Can we do as David did and honor those in authority no matter how imperfect they are, and trust that God will remove them in His perfect time if He so wills? (1Samuel 26:10)

I'm often asked, "Well, what if the Holy Spirit is leading me in a different direction than the elders?" (Numbers 16:2-3) It is a very valid question. We long to be sensitive and obedient to the Holy Spirit. We just need to be sure it is the Holy Spirit and not our own desires. What we think we hear and the interpretation of what we hear is often what we want to hear. Our hearts can deceive us. God can test us. But **God will not ask you to go against His word.** If He asks us to submit to authority, we should, unless the higher authority of His Word clearly overrides that authority. (1Thessalonians 5:12-13)

In the past, I have witnessed how God has dealt with those who resist His authority. At times, I did not think certain issues were that important, but God dealt severely with the individual that resisted God's authority. We see that in the Bible accounts as well. Saul would not listen to Samuel, Miriam with Moses, a nation with Jeremiah, and many more examples show us that God does not take it lightly. (Proverbs 5:13)

Commented [Paul29]: Acts 5:29 (ESV)

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Commented [Paul30]: Acts 23:3 (ESV)

³ Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?"

Commented [Paul31]: Acts 5:29 (ESV)

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

Commented [Paul32]: Exodus 22:28 (ESV)

²⁸ "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."

Commented [Paul33]: 1 Samuel 26:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish."

Commented [Paul34]: Numbers 16:2-3 (ESV)

² And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men.

³ They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

Commented [Paul35]: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV)

¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you,

¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

Commented [Paul36]: Proverbs 5:13 (ESV)

¹³ I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors.

God places people in authority for His purposes. We oppose them at our own peril. It is in humility and submission that we are blessed. We should serve as if serving the Lord and we will find life to be much more peaceful and joyful.

If the authority over you is disobeying the principles under which they are serving, we have every right to point that out. We should discuss it and see if what we are seeing is really what the authority believes. Often differences are misunderstandings. But, if they ask us to disobey the Word of God, we are free to disobey them in that particular issue. **Ultimately, we are always to submit to God who established all authority.**

Even Jesus, our perfect example, always submitted Himself in all these areas of authority. The only ones He spoke against were religious authorities, and He did so by appealing to the higher authority of the Word of God. (Matthew 23:23) He knew all authority is established by His Father and would ultimately end in glorifying God.

Humility with submission is the place of blessing. (Proverbs 22:4) Is that where you are in regards to God, government, church, home and employment? It's not easy, because we have to die to our pride, but it is the place of blessing.

Questions

- 1 What are the four areas in which God has established earthly authority?
- 2 What is God's authority in the home?
- 3 What descriptions do Paul and Peter give to a wife's submission to her husband?
- 4 What is the exception to the command?
- 5 With what attitude should we work for our employer?
- 6 What was the example David set with Saul?
- 7 What was the example of Paul with the High Priest?
- 8 What was the example of Paul and Silas in the Roman jail?
- 9 How did Paul challenge the civil authority?
- 10 When must we clearly reject the demand of authority?
- 11 What is our ultimate authority?

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Commented [Paul37]: Matthew 23:23 (ESV)
²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

Commented [Paul38]: Proverbs 22:4 (ESV)
⁴The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.