

Human Authorities-God's Servants

by Denny Kenaston

Human authorities are God's servants, and they have the power or right to enforce obedience, influencing our lives in various ways.

Duration: 1:24:39

Scripture: Isaiah 66:2, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 6:5-7, Colossians 3:22, Hebrews 13:7, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Government"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and submitting to authority in our lives. He shares a personal story of his own experience of being lazy and receiving discipline at his workplace. The speaker explains that God has established various lines of authority, such as bosses, judges, and government officials, and it is our responsibility to submit to them. He warns that those who refuse to obey authority often face consequences and end up in prison. On the other hand, the speaker highlights the blessings that come from understanding and submitting to authority, particularly in the lives of young people whom God chooses to use.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Praise God for His gifts to us. I appreciated the children's lesson this morning and the way this service has unfolded before us already. I guess just a couple of things, thoughts, reflections about the little send-off here this morning.

Brother Seth and Sister Sarah, God bless you too. As I thought over the years, seeing how God has worked in your lives and to bring us to this place this morning where you are going off to the other side of

the world, my heart just rejoices. You've been faithful.

You've been faithful. That's why you are going. You have been faithful.

Faithful in little things. Faithful in the unseen things. You've been faithful.

And I bless God for you too. And I bless God for all you young people who aspire to those challenges and leave this place from time to time to go and serve. Let's be faithful.

Amen. God bless all of you. I know we have lots of send-offs around here.

And we can kind of get used to them if we're not careful. It's a great privilege to send our young people away. And we thank God for that.

I was thinking about the verse here. I thought it would be a good admonition to us as we go to prayer before this message. To this man or this woman, God says, I will look.

To him or her that is poor. To him or her that is of a contrite heart, spirit. I don't know what I'm doing.

I don't know how I'm going to make it. I need God's grace. Like our brother challenged us this morning.

To this man or woman will I look. He or she that trembleth at my word. Well, we're here this morning and we have His Word.

We're going to open it up. We're going to look at it. We will look at God's Word this morning.

I know we can take it for granted too. We have it all the time. I mean, the food's good around here, amen? We can take it for granted.

And God would have us to come. Somehow He would give us grace this morning. He would help us to come to His Word with that trembling heart.

This is God's Word. We're going to hear God's Word this morning. God says, if you come with that kind of a heart, I'm poor.

I'm needy. I don't know how to make it. I don't know how to go on.

I don't know how to walk through the next week. I need God's direction. I need Him put into my life.

I want His Word to be real to me. If we come with that kind of a heart, God says, I will look. I will look your way.

So, I want to share with us this morning about some of God's gifts. We learned about them already so beautifully. Some of God's gifts.

And we learned that many times we don't see God's gifts as God's gifts. Sometimes we need eyes and ears that we do not have when God brings His gifts our way. A few weeks ago, I was up in Vermont just fulfilling my responsibilities up there.

And there was a need for me to share a message about authority in the congregation up there. And as I shared my heart with that congregation, a message that I preached many, many years ago. And I don't think I preached it even to the congregation.

I preached it to the young people. I mean, let's see, 16 years ago, something like that. I haven't been able to get away from the truth of that which I shared up there in Vermont.

And I feel like we should talk a little bit about authority here this morning. God's gifts to man. Authority.

Human authority. God's servants. Our human authorities are God's servants.

So with that, let's pray for just a moment together. Lord, here we are again. It's us, Lord.

Charity Christian Fellowship. We come, Lord. We bring our hearts to You.

We bring our needy hearts to You. We stand in need this morning. We don't know what we're doing.

We don't know how to do it. We don't know how to say it. We don't know how to hear it.

Oh, Lord. We cry to You even as we were admonished this morning. Would You come and save us this morning, Lord? Present tense, Father.

Come and save us. Come. Look at us this morning, Lord.

Come. Have mercy upon us. By Your Spirit.

And give us ears to hear. And eyes to see. Yes, Father.

Let us see Jesus this morning. Even as we say, Father. That little prayer, Lord.

Let us see Jesus this morning. We want to see Jesus. Open our eyes, Lord.

We want to see Jesus. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Authority is a Bible word. You'll find it in the Bible 36 times. You'll have to look for two different words to find it 36 times.

One is the English word authority. You will find that one in the Bible. And the other one, sometimes, is the word power.

Which is translated from two different Greek words. Dunamis means power. And exousia also means power.

But one means power, meaning might. And the other one means power, meaning authority. So, with those two words, you'll find the word authority 36 times in the Bible.

I want to give you the definition of authority. I didn't get this out of Webster's dictionary. I got it out of Vine's expository dictionary of New Testament words.

It's quite a revealing definition of the word authority. Many people don't like that word authority. Maybe they've had some bad experiences with that word.

And therefore, they're a bit reserved when they hear that word authority. But it is a Bible word. And this is what it means.

Authority is the power or the right to enforce obedience. The power or right to enforce obedience. I know, you hear that definition, you think, Whoa, wait a minute.

And that's exactly why I feel that it's good for us to take a look at this subject. Because that word should not cause reactions inside of our hearts. But, many times, it does.

Some years ago, in fact, 1988 was the time that we did this. The congregation here spent a little time brainstorming on the subject of authority. And we kind of opened the subject up.

I'm not sure if it was a Wednesday night. It's hard for me to remember back to 1988. Forgive me.

But it was 1988. We took this subject of authority. And we looked at the different levels of authority.

The different types of human authority. Which God has given to man. And we opened it up for the congregation to share different ways in which human authorities affect our lives.

And I wrote down the list. Or I don't think I wrote this list, if I remember right. My daughter, Rebecca, wrote this.

It's her handwriting. Back in 1988. So, she was a lot younger then.

But she kept track of these. And we just kind of threw it out. Government authorities.

And everybody shared different ways in which the government, the human authorities of government affect our lives. And we wrote all those down. And I want to share them with you in a few minutes.

But first of all, I want to just list these five areas of human authority. Which God, in His loving kindness, has given to man. The first one that I have written here is parental authority.

That applies to every one of us in this room. God used and is using parental authority in our lives. Secondly, there is marital authority.

Those of us that are married, you wives, you understand what marital authority is. God has placed that in your lives. Thirdly, we have governmental authority.

And I think that's self-explanatory. As we walk through this life, we find ourselves continually face to face with governmental authorities. Fourthly, we have ministerial authority in our lives.

Because we have been born again, and washed in the blood of the Lamb, and part of a New Testament church, God has also given us ministerial authority. And lastly, there is occupational authority. And not everyone in this room has that, but many do.

That's your boss. Occupational authority. Before we look over this list that the congregation put together back in 1988, I would like us just to look at a few verses to validate each one of these structures of authority in a Christian's life.

First of all, parental authority. The Scriptures are very clear there. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment, with promise, that it may go well with thee while you're on the earth. That's parental authority. We could read other verses, but I don't think we

need to.

We all know these verses. Second of all, marital authority. The Scripture tells the wives, wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands in the Lord, as unto the Lord.

We find this in Ephesians and also in Colossians. And then reading in 1 Peter, we'll turn there because I can't quote that, but let's just look in 1 Peter at governmental authority, chapter 2 and verse 13. Listen to God's Word as He admonishes all of us how we are to relate to the governmental authorities that are around us.

God says, submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well. For so it is the will of God that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Now we could also read in Romans chapter 13, where it speaks about the powers that be being ordained of God and those powers being ministers of God and whosoever resisteth those powers or that authority resisteth the ordinance of God.

We could read those verses, but I don't think we will. Also then, turning back to Hebrews 13, just a few pages in your Bible, ministerial authority, we find these verses. Hebrews 13, verse 2, I'm sorry, that's not the right verse.

Verse 7 and then 17. This 7 looks like a 2. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation. And then also in verse 17, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable unto you.

And then lastly, in Colossians, and chapter 3, and verse 22, Servants, or workers, Obey them, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done.

And there is no respect to persons. That verse is spoken in the context of our authorities at work. Alright, let me just very quickly go through a few practical ways in which these human authorities affect our lives.

First of all, the government authorities. They have the power or the right to enforce obedience upon us. They enforce us to pay taxes.

They make us keep traffic laws. We have to get building permits when we want to build something. They have educational laws that they put on us.

All you mothers know about that, you know, filling out the affidavits and all the things that you do in order to have the right to school your children at home. It is the government that puts those laws upon us. There are work laws that we have to submit to that the government puts on us.

The government has certain moral conduct laws that we are forced to obey. There are burial laws. There are marriage laws.

There are recreational laws. There are littering laws. And there are all kinds of other laws that I didn't even list yet.

But they're there. We all recognize them. And somehow, by God's grace, we have all learned to live with them.

Haven't we? Sometimes we may grumble a bit about them. I remember very clearly when they came out with the new seat belt laws that I grumbled about that one. And I was not quick to obey that.

I have to admit that. I thought that's an infringement upon my liberty to make me do those things and put my children in those chairs and belt them in and all of those things. But God, who is faithful, would not allow me to keep that attitude.

And He dealt with me until I do with delight get into my car, grab my seat belt, and hook it on. The government has made me to do that. And God, through the government, has dealt with me until I can do it with a good heart.

And I do, but belt my seat belt in with a very willing heart. Number two. Church authority.

We threw that subject open. And this is what we got. Ministers have the authority, the power, or the right to enforce obedience upon the congregation in areas of moral conduct.

And we could branch out into many things there. But just a few of them that I wrote down here, looking at scriptural examples, Paul told the Thessalonians that if some of the men there don't work, don't let them eat. Interesting that he would have such authority.

He changed the communion service in the Corinthian church. He encouraged some of the brothers in Thessalonians and also in Romans to withdraw from those who caused divisions. He also gave definition to them about who were widows and who were not.

And gave them clear direction of what they should do and who they should give money to and who they shouldn't give money to. He had that kind of authority. Paul passes on many directives throughout the New Testament.

And even as he's speaking to Timothy and also to Titus, he says, I want you to do these things and teach these things and do it with all authority. And that wasn't a bad word when Paul used it. It was a good one.

So that's in the area of moral conduct. Also, just following along a little bit more, we see the Scriptures give ministers the responsibility of exercising discipline at times upon its members. We also see the membership of the congregation.

One of the reasons why we feel it's important that people commit themselves to a local fellowship is so that they, from their hearts, can say, I want somebody to watch over my soul. We see ministers exercising their authority in baptism. Also, in other church ordinances like the laying on of hands, ordaining of other ministers, and also the anointing of oil when someone is sick.

They also exercise their authority at times when they give counsel to those within the flock. Let's move on to number three. Parental authority.

Parents are given the responsibility by God to counsel, to direct the schedules of their children. I mean, they tell you what time to get up, and they tell you what time to go to bed. They can enforce obedience upon you in your habits.

They can enforce obedience on the way that you dress. They can affect your manners. Amen, boys? Thank God for mothers who have a bit of concern about boys and their manners.

Amen? Amen? They can enforce obedience on your manners, and God stands up for them. They can say, don't talk while you have your mouth full of food at the supper table. They can do that.

They can enforce obedience on our possessions. You can get a new bike, or you can get an old bike, and you just have to live with that. They affect our language.

They influence our activities. They determine where we're going to live, the location we live. They even affect the house we live in.

If mom and dad decide that we're going to live in an old run-down shack, and that's all that we can afford, we will be living in an old run-down shack. Parents are called upon by God to punish their children at times. They choose who your friends are.

They can enforce submission upon you in a multitude of different ways. They choose the kind of literature you read, and the music that you listen to. They have authority over your attitudes, and I think that that's enough there.

We got down to O. We could keep on going. That's a long, long list. Alright, let's move on into marital authority.

In marital authority, the husband is the head of the wife, the Scripture says. He gives direction, and these again, these just came from the congregation. They're not coming from me.

They're just brothers and sisters, and some of you were sitting in that meeting in 1988. Father, husband, gives direction to his wife on how to raise the children. He gives direction on how to spend the money.

He gives direction to his wife on speaking, when to speak or not to speak. He directs her life on the clothes that she should wear. He gives direction on how the house should be kept.

He gives direction on schedules, when people are going to get up or go to bed. He even can give direction on the kind of food that he would like to have at the table. He gives direction on where we go.

He gives direction to the wife on where she's going to live. And that same old rickety run down house, she's going to live in the same way. He gives direction on what kind of work she might do.

He gives direction on the church that she goes to. He even gives direction on the friends that she has. And he gives direction on the activities that she may involve herself in, in her days and in her weeks.

See here. Alright, now let's go to the employer and consider. Employment.

Think about this now. This is your boss. Some of you that have bosses.

In fact, how many of you have a boss? Let me see your hand. Put it up there real good. You have a boss.

You work for somebody else. This man tells you what time you're going to go to work. And he tells you what time you're going to work to.

He determines your wage, which affects many, many areas of your life. I mean, if he says you're going to work for \$10 an hour, it's going to affect the way you live your life in comparison if he decides to give you \$12 an hour. This man has a lot of influence over your life.

He has authority over your attitudes. He has authority over your performance. He can come alongside of you anytime he wants and say, I don't think your attitude is very good today.

Is there something wrong? And you have to bow to that man's word or that woman's word. You have to bow. He tells you how to work.

He has the authority to hire you. And he also has the authority to fire you. He has authority over your clothes.

If the boss decides that he wants you to wear a uniform, providing that it isn't against the convictions of the Word of God, then you must wear the uniform that he wants you to wear. He has authority over your moral conduct while you're at work. And if he has a caution about something that you're doing or something that you're saying, he has the authority to walk up to you and say, I do not feel good about what you're doing right now.

And you have to bow to that. He has authority over the location of where you work. Sometimes a boss will come in and say, you're being transferred to another place.

And people do it all the time. They move all the way across the country because the boss said, we're moving you over here. He affects your vacation.

He tells you if you can have a vacation and he tells you how long that vacation can be. And you have to go to him and say, could I have a few days off? He has authority over your education. If he feels like you need to learn something, if he feels like you need to go to a welding class or some course to further your education in accounting or whatever it is, you do what he says.

He has authority over public relations in your life. If he feels like there's something not quite right between you and another employee, he has every right to come to you and say, I don't appreciate the way you're getting along or not getting along with someone and we have to bow to that. And he also has the authority to delegate authority to someone else.

And he can say to that guy over there who started working there two years later than you did, I want you now to be in charge. And he can say to you, you are to be obedient to this man over here. And guess what? We have to do what he says.

That's just a few of the ways that we wrote down back in 1988. But here's the point this morning. Parental authority, marital authority, governmental authority, ministerial authority, and occupational authority.

When you put the five of those together, we have to face the fact that we are surrounded by human authorities. We have to face the fact that we are surrounded by people who do have the power and the right to enforce obedience in our lives. And we have to face the fact that God is the One who did that.

It is God who surrounded us with human authorities. Amen? And this is good. Now, sometimes it may come in an old raggedy, dirty old paper bag like was held up here today.

And sometimes it comes in a nice, beautiful bag with flowers and beautiful colors on it. But either way, it comes from God. As I was meditating this morning, I thought about the many paradoxes in the Word of God.

You know, God says to us, and we don't understand it, but it doesn't matter whether we understand it or not, we know that it's true. God says, the way up is down. Imagine that.

God says, if you want to find your life, lose it. God says, if you need, give. These things do not make sense.

Well, it may be in your own heart, as you sit here this morning, that you say also, this doesn't make sense, that God has surrounded my life with many different human authorities. Well, may I just interject to you this morning, it doesn't need to make sense. We do not have to understand.

We do not have to see to the depths of it. God's ways are not our ways. God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

I thought about the song we were singing this morning in light of my message, and I thought, yes Lord, that's right. Even behind a frowning providence, there is a smiling face. God's ways are not like our ways.

So if we sit here this morning, and even there's that uneasy feeling going on inside of our heart as we begin to open up this subject, we must remember, we don't have to understand all these things. The fact is, and we all know the fact is, that God has surrounded all of us with human authorities. Alright, let's move on.

God wants these authorities to have a profound influence in our lives. God will, God wills or wants to touch your lives through these avenues. You may say this morning, well, God is my authority, and that's all I need.

Well, that may sound very spiritual in the beginning. But if you think it through a bit, you will realize that is not a spiritual statement, but rather a statement of anarchy. God is my authority, and I don't need any others.

Well, then I don't need a father. I don't need a mother. I don't need my husband over me.

I don't need my boss over me. I don't need the policeman. There are five divine purposes for authority in all of our lives.

Five. And there may be others, but we will look at these five. Let me list them quickly.

Number one, God wants to build character in your life through a human authority. Number two, God wants to give protection over your life through human authorities. Number three, God wants to give direction to your life through human authorities.

Number four, God wants to give encouragement to your life through human authorities. And number five, God wants at times to bring discipline upon your life through human authorities. Now let's see how this works in reality.

And I'd like for us to just follow this little thought here this morning. I'd like to take you to a small town and relate to the policeman in a small town. Just for the sake of our illustration this morning.

A small town. In this area where we live, most of us do not know the policeman. I mean, how many of you know the policeman in your area? You've got a casual, good relationship with him.

See? Very, very few. Maybe a couple who do rescue squad runs and things like that. You know the policeman, but otherwise you don't.

But in a small town, maybe a town of five or six hundred people, everyone knows the policeman, and the policeman knows everyone. And by the way, he's not the cop. He's not the cop.

I feel that's a disrespectful word to use for the minister of God who watches over our lives. He's a policeman. So let's go to this small town and look these things over a bit.

The policeman in the small town. There he is, sitting in his police car as you are driving down the road in that little small town. He builds character in your life without even saying one word to you.

Amen? All you have to do is see his car sitting over there and character is built in your life. In fact, it's so much that way that I've noticed at certain places where they need some authority, they'll put a police car there, put the lights on flashing, and there's not even anybody sitting in it. And that police car builds character in the lives of the people who drive by and see it.

That's just the way it is. In fact, I've seen a couple of places where they have a police car sitting there with the lights on and a dummy sitting behind the wheel. That's all he is.

But that dummy, because of who he represents, is building character in everybody's life when they drive by. Amen? That's the way it is. You see that policeman and your heart is alerted to do what is right.

He trains you to drive the speed limit. He trains you to stop at the stop signs. And whatever else it may be that you're doing, that policeman provides character and accountability in every one of our lives.

Not long ago, in fact, when we were driving up to Vermont, if you've ever made the trip up to Vermont, you'll find out there are policemen everywhere, more than anywhere else where I've traveled. We must have seen ten police cars on the way up to Vermont. What a joy to be able to drive all the way up to Vermont and not have any of this going on inside of your heart because you're driving the speed limit.

Alright, let's go to the second point. Protection. Maybe the policeman is sitting there in this small town and he keeps his eye on the flow of traffic and all these things and finally after some time, he realizes, you know, that intersection over there is getting pretty heavily traveled.

I believe we need to put a stop sign in that place right there. And so he goes through the proper channels and maybe an ordinance is passed and a stop sign is placed over there on an intersection that used to be not very busy but now it is getting more busy. What is he doing? He is protecting your life by putting a stop sign at that intersection.

Let's go on to number three. The policeman also gives direction for your life. And many a small town, I'm not sure if it's still that way anymore, but I know it used to be and it was good, but many a small town has a curfew.

You know? You know what the curfew is for? That's for young people. They have to be in by a certain time. And that curfew has an amazing way of giving direction to a young person's life.

I mean, if the curfew is 11 o'clock, at a quarter to 11, all of a sudden, all of the young people that are out, wherever they may be, at a quarter to 11, they start heading toward home. And there they are. They pull the car into the driveway or drive their bicycle into the driveway or they walk into their driveway and they are home by 11 o'clock.

The policeman is directing their lives. Number four. The policeman is there to give encouragement to your life.

And again, we miss this one most of the time because we don't have much interaction with police. But in a small town, a policeman is definitely an encouragement to do what is right in that little town. And he will give encouragement to your life.

It's not unusual at all for a policeman to walk up to somebody and say, I appreciate the way you drive around here. I've been noticing you. I appreciate the way you get home when you're supposed to be or whatever else it may be.

Policemen do that in a small town. And lastly, sometimes policemen bring discipline upon our lives. And all you have to do is go through that stop sign when you're supposed to stop and you will find out that the policeman brings discipline into your life.

And it is discipline. It is a spanking. And if you've ever gotten a ticket, you know it's a spanking.

Doesn't matter who you are in this room. Doesn't matter how old you are. Doesn't matter how big you are.

It doesn't matter how smart you are. When those little red lights start flashing behind you when you're driving somewhere and that man pulls you over on the side of the road, you've just got a spanking. Amen? And it doesn't feel good.

It's humiliating. It's embarrassing. Five divine purposes for authority, human authority in our lives.

Character, protection, direction, encouragement, and discipline. All of those. You see, I chose this morning to use the illustration of the policeman because we all have those lines real clear.

I don't think there's anybody in this room if the policeman pulled you over and walked up to your car door, I don't think there's anybody in this room that would be thinking, the policeman pulled me over, but that guy, you know, he drinks too much. I don't need to listen to him. Nobody has any kind of attitudes like that toward the policeman.

It doesn't matter who the policeman is. It doesn't matter what kind of life he lives when he's off duty. It doesn't matter how many mistakes he's made.

When he walks up to the side of our car door, we roll down the window and say, yes sir. And he asks us for our driver's license and we quickly get it and hand it to him. And there's no guff in our hearts.

Amen? We all understand those lines of authority. Five, divine purposes. I think about my own experience some years ago.

Many years ago. 31 years ago. That's a long time ago.

But I remember when I used to work at UPS, I got a spanking at UPS. When I started working there, loading the trucks, working my way through Bible school, when I started working there, I was a lazy man. Being in the army often makes you lazy because there's nothing to do.

And I was lazy. And I went to work at UPS and they put me in this truck loading these boxes and throwing them in there and stacking them up. One day the boss called me into the office and said, Denny, I'm not happy with your work.

You're not working fast enough. Now, that was rather embarrassing for him to say that and humiliating. But I really didn't have any choice.

He was the boss. Remember? The lines were clearly drawn. And he said, You're gonna have to do better or you're not gonna have a job.

Well, I left his office there very humbled and went back to my little trailer and grumbled. Do you ever do that? Children, do you ever do that when you walk out of the room after mom or dad is giving you a little direction? Well, I went back to my trailer and I grumbled. Not working hard enough.

These boxes are so heavy. I can't keep up here. Man, this is tough.

And I kept on working. But I didn't learn my lesson. Two weeks later, I was in that office again.

And he sat me down again and he said, Denny, this is your last warning. You are lazy. And you are not working hard enough.

If you don't straighten up, you don't have a job. Oh, the lines of authority were very clear. I went back to that truck.

Again, very humiliated. But something clicked inside of me. And I realized, I'm gonna lose my job.

I'm a preacher. What a humiliating thing. What a terrible testimony.

How will I put my way through school? How will I feed my family? I better wake up and get busy. And I started to work. And I worked.

And I worked. And finally, I mastered that truck. And as soon as I mastered that truck, they gave me another truck.

And the first thing I thought was, What? These guys? But remember, the lines of authority were clearly drawn. And we need that second truck. And I started jumping back and forth, loading two of them.

And when I mastered that second truck, guess what they did? They gave me a third truck. That's how lazy I was. When I thought one was too hard.

But by the time that boss got done with me, I was doing three trucks all night long. And UPS, they're no dummies. They work part-timers.

I work the 10.30 to 4.30 in the morning shift. But they work eight hours out of you in six hours. I mean, you work hard.

But you know what? God built character in my life through that. God gave direction in my life. God gave encouragement in my life.

After that, the boss brought me into his office again and said, Denny, you're doing a good job. We're going to promote you. We want you out of the truck and working on the dock.

And about six months after that, he brought me into the office again and said, Denny, we want you to be a manager at UPS. Now, that would have never happened if that boss wouldn't have spanked me back there when I was doing just one truck. Character, protection, direction, encouragement and discipline.

God works all of these in our lives through human authorities. What about your life this morning? Do you have a boss? Is there conflict in your life? Is life miserable for you? Life was miserable for me until I learned what God was trying to teach me. Life was miserable for me.

But once I realized the lines of authority and brought myself into place, all of a sudden everything changed at UPS. And that which seemed to be a great burden was a great joy to me. And by the time I left there, I loved working hard.

How about your life? Is there conflict in your life? Is there trouble in your life? Are you trying to figure out how to wade your way out of something? Maybe God is trying to do something beautiful in your life. Maybe He sent one of His servants your way. But you have not clearly seen the lines of authority yet.

And because you do not see them, you're kicking and fussing and carrying on and dragging your feet and complaining behind the door, like I did in the trailer, whatever it may be. Maybe God is trying to work in your life and you are frustrating God's plan for your life. These principles apply in so many ways, it would take me a week to make all the applications.

Can I trust God and your heart to make them where you sit today? We are all surrounded with human authorities. The lines are very clear in God's mind. They're not gray.

They're not blurry. They may be in our own minds. We may have imagined all kinds of things.

We may have come up with some idea why it's okay for me, in my situation, to kick against whoever the authority may be. We may have found a reason, a way, to explain it away, to excuse what we're doing or how we're feeling. But wait a minute.

Wait a minute. Don't miss what God is trying to do in your life. He works through human authorities.

They are God's servants in so many ways. They are God's servants. Maybe it's your marriage, sisters.

Maybe that's where the lines are not clear. Maybe it's church lines that are not clear. Maybe it's parental lines that are not clear.

I thought about it yesterday as I was praying and working on this message. I thought, you know, a lot, a lot of the children and the youth that are in this room, you work. Your boss is your dad.

Your boss is your dad. That can be good. But it can also not be good.

Because sometimes when dad is the boss, sometimes the boys or the girls think, that's dad. He can't fire me. I'm still here.

And the lines of authority get a bit gray when dad is the boss or mom is the boss. But I want to assure you this morning, the lines of authority are very clear in God's mind. And sometimes I've thought about it, even as I've worked through these things, having been boss to my children through the years.

Sometimes I've thought, you know, it would be good for sonny boy to go to work for somebody else where the boss can just simply walk right up to him and say, you know, you're not working very fast and if you don't straighten out, you're not going to have a job. And all those beautiful things that happened inside of my heart when I was at UPS happened in the heart of that boy. Whereas when dad says the same words, somehow sonny boy just doesn't take it very seriously.

But I assure you, boys, the lines are just as clear in the face of God if dad is your boss and also your dad. When dad says you need to work harder, in God's mind it is just as if you had another boss telling you it's time to straighten up or you're going to lose your job. I don't know where those lines are.

They get gray. They get gray in the areas of husbands and wives. They get gray in the areas of parents and fathers and sons and daughters and mothers and sons and daughters.

They get gray. Somehow in our minds we decide that we must balance these things with other things. You know, sometimes we flip over to the other side and say, well, you know, my dad, he doesn't have a very good relationship with me.

So, I'll have to listen to him. Yeah, well, tell that to the policeman when he rings on your doorbell. Tell that to the policeman when he walks up to the side of your door and says, driver's license, please.

Say, well, who are you? I don't know you. We never spend any time together. When you get a better relationship then you can tell me that.

Try that with the policeman. It doesn't work. And I'm all for having relationships.

That's right. But that's one of those principles that's for the authority side. Remember all those balancing principles? How they balance each other? Yes, that's for the authority.

The authority should be saying, wait a minute, what about the relationship in the life of my child? What about the relationship in the life of my wife? Whatever it may be, it's good for the authority to say that. But when those under authority start saying that, the whole thing gets gray and blurred and all of a sudden the lines of authority aren't there anymore. See? I mean, tell the boss that, you know.

Show up there at 10 o'clock in the morning instead of 8. See what the boss says. Hey, where were you? You're being harsh with me. Hey, it's 10 o'clock.

You're being harsh with me. Try that with the boss and see what he says. We all know what the boss would say.

Try that with the boss. Say to the boss, I know it's 10 o'clock and I need to be here at 8 o'clock, but, you know, we don't have a real close relationship and, you know, we really should and, you know, you really should talk to me more and spend more time and maybe if we get a close relationship, you know, I'll come in at 8 o'clock. He won't buy that.

You understand? The lines of authority. Don't misunderstand me now. Dad, you need to build relationship with your sons, your daughters.

Mom, you need to do the same. Those principles are right. They stand.

We make it easier to obey when we do that. But to those of you that are under authority, whether it is a boss, whether it is the policeman, to hold that thing up there and say, not until we get this relationship better, that won't work. The lines of authority have just gotten gray and it won't work.

That's not how God sees it, I guarantee you. Remember? Sometimes God sends His gifts in an old, dirty paper bag. And if you just receive that gift, you may get the sweetest flower of the whole bunch.

But many times we look at that gift and say, that brown, old, dirty paper bag, what in the world am I going to do with that? I don't think I need to submit because that old bag is dirty and brown. Think about it. I chose this morning the policeman and the employer because those lines are real clear in all of our minds.

We understand that principle very well. I think we do. Maybe you're not all successful, but you understand the principle very well.

And to the degree that your boss or that policeman steps into your life, you will do what he says. It really isn't any different in God's eyes, the different lines of authority that God gives to us. It really isn't any different.

Think about the father at home with me for just a few minutes. Why are we so hard on our fathers? Why do we think they're so unreasonable? Think about God the Father for a few moments. Think about what He asks us to do.

God the Father. He asks us to do things that we do not understand. He tells us if you want to gain your life, you must lose it.

He tells us the way up is down. It doesn't make any sense at all. No matter how long He tries to explain it to us, we will not understand it.

God the Father trains us by many disciplines. He asks us to obey. Sometimes, no questions asked.

Just do it. Sometimes He asks us to suffer. And He says, I want you to have a good attitude when you do.

He leads us through every step of the way, doesn't He? Why are we so hard on our dad? Why must he be so perfect in order for me to submit my heart to that man called my father? Why are we so hard on the dad? The motivation is love. That's what the motivation is. Authorities.

God's servants. And God's heart is love. In whatever the situation is, in whatever circumstance you may be facing, in whatever cloudy providence it may be, no matter how difficult it is, human authorities are God's servants.

Amen? I know we could do some balancing. We could do some qualifying here. But I just plead with you this morning to consider again, the boss and the policeman.

The motivation is love. That policeman, he can be an arrogant fellow. He can be a real character.

He can walk up to the side of your car and scold you and let you have it. Somebody told me a story here just the other day of someone who got called to jury duty. You know, they didn't want to go to jury duty.

So they wrote a letter of appeal and sent it back in. The authorities, the government, they sent a letter back and said, appeal is not accepted. You must come to jury duty.

But the person, he thought, he didn't even read it. Threw it in the trash can. He got another letter in the mail.

And guess what? It was stronger than the other letter. And this letter said, it was a registered letter by the way, you must appear before the judge on such and such a day. And they went there to make their appeal again.

And that judge scolded them and carried on and humiliated them and told them how wrong they were, why they didn't show up for jury duty. I mean, he was harsh. And then fined them \$300 and said report for jury duty next week.

You know what they did? They reported for jury duty next week. They stood before the judge with gum in their mouth. You know what the judge said? Get that gum out of your mouth! Do you know what they said? They got that gum out of their mouth so fast.

I mean, just like that. You say, well, that's a mean judge. Well, he is a little mean.

But you know what? He's the judge that takes care of all the people who refuse to come to jury duty. That's who he is. He's the guy that gives them the spanking because they refuse to obey the law that was given to them.

And you know, when you refuse to obey the law that was given to you, God's servants by God's hand get stronger until we learn our lessons. Oh my, so much to say. In any of these five areas of authority, you could be missing a great blessing here this morning.

I know they don't all apply to everyone in this room. But you could be missing a great blessing here this morning. Maybe the policeman is a cop to you.

And you don't have a problem driving way over the speed limit. And you know, coming up to the stop sign, slight tap on pedal, that's what stop means, you know. Slight tap on the pedal, S-T-O-P, and right through.

And that's okay. Someone said, you're not speeding unless you get caught. Imagine, such a mindset is that.

You're not speeding unless you get caught. Someone asked me the other day, I was driving with someone and they said, we were driving on the highway and he said, Brother Denny. Yes? I got a question for you.

Sure, go ahead. Tell me the truth, brother. Do you drive the speed limit? He was asking it in a bit of a sarcastic way.

And I looked over him and I said, Brother, of course I do. Then he didn't know what to say. Somehow, I think he thought, Oh, everybody just talks about it, but nobody does it.

Maybe you're missing the character building that God wants to do in your life just by submitting to the authorities, the magistrates that are around us. Maybe you're missing 20%. Then maybe you're having trouble at home too.

That's another 20%. Maybe you're fussing and carrying on with your boss. That's another 20%.

Pretty soon, who's going to build character and protect and lead and encourage and discipline your life? Guess what? You live like that for a few years, you are going to be one flat-spotted person with lots of flat spots in your life. Think about the men in prison. Do you know why they're there? Do you know why the prisons are full of men and women today? We've been looking at it for the last hour.

Those prisons are full of people who said, I don't need these authorities in my life. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. He has no right to talk to me that way.

Oh yeah? I'll show him. I'll just go get another job. Right? What's the problem? Problem is not the bosses.

I guarantee you. The prisons are full of people who did not learn these lessons when they were growing up. Who would not learn how to submit to those authorities that God lovingly surrounded them with.

The prisons are full. But on the other hand, let me give you this evaluation in closing. I've been watching young people for a lot of years.

31 years. I've been working with and watching young people for 31 years. Do you know what those young people are like that God picks up and uses? They have these lines clear in their minds.

They're the ones who found those lines and got into place. Oh, maybe they had a skirmish or two with the boss. Maybe they had a few skirmishes with mom or dad.

Maybe they knocked heads a couple times with the preacher. But they found their place. And the lines were clearly drawn in their minds and in their consciences.

And once they found their place, they began to prosper. God began to build character. God began to direct them.

God began to encourage them. God began to discipline them. And all the other things that He does through human instruments called authority.

And as time went on, it became evident to everyone else, there's a blessing upon that young person. And guess what? They're the ones who go away. Now, this message is not just for young people this morning.

It's for us dads. It's for us moms. It's for the wives.

It's for the workers. It's for the youth. It's for the children.

It's for all of us. Every one of us in this room, we're surrounded with human authorities. Imagine that.

Perfect God. Powerful God. Wise God.

Beautiful God. Spotless God uses imperfect humans to mature me and guide me and protect me and direct me. I can't figure that out.

But I really don't need to. God is in charge. If He wants to use some dirty, old, worn out bag as a gift in my life, that's fine.

Some of the most powerful lessons that God has wrought in my heart, He did through very imperfect authorities. May God help us. I know I'm not done, but I'm done for today.

God bless. To this man why look, even to him that is poor, for the contrite spirit and tremulous of my word. Thank you, Brother Denny.

I just... Oh, how... How we love the Lord's law. How we love His Word. I just had to think this morning, truly, thy Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

And Proverbs says, Proverbs 1, Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil. I just had to think, brothers, you were sharing, you know, as we... considering the speed limit again, you know, we're quiet from fear of evil when we just stay within the realms of... of the law of the land. And we can apply that to every given area of authority that was mentioned this morning.

We can be quiet from fear of evil and we can dwell safely all the days of our lives. Thank you, Brother. Brother, that was just a tremendous word this morning to our hearts.

Let us consider it deeply. Take it in as from the Lord and from His Word. May God change those areas of our lives that He's spoken to us about this morning.

Maybe there's a given area that God has spoken to you about that He wants to change your direction, how you view authority in any of these given levels that were brought out this morning. May God help us. Okay.

I'll open it up for the congregation to share a word of testimony or maybe a word of confession in what you heard this morning in this message. So get your hands up and we'll get the mic to you at this time. Go ahead.

Just thinking about driving the speed limit. I can just testify that there's been times when I saw myself running late for work or something. I said, God, I'm late, but I trust You.

I'm going to drive the speed limit. And God was faithful. I appreciated the clear definition of authority.

The power or the right to enforce obedience. I also appreciated the verse that was referred to a couple of times there. Isaiah 66 to trembling at God's word.

And I think of the balance of God's word and God's spirit. They're never in competition, but they're always in harmony. I think in my home, as a dad, I want to have that balance of the spirit and the word working together.

And I think of my children. And one of the ways that God has blessed us in the last couple of years is by compiling what we've come to call a wisdom notebook out of our own need and our own desire for a balance of spirit and word. We've put this together and it's simply a compilation of wisdom verses.

If I see a child is not responding the way he or she has been trained, we'll give them time to go and read a verse or two from the wisdom notebook and see if they might tremble at God's word. See if the spirit might put it heavy upon them. But you know, it doesn't stop there.

If they don't respond to that, then we lovingly administer discipline and drive that folly out. But I see for how many years as I was finding my way, it was straight to the spanking. To me, a good authority, and I have a long way to go, but a good authority is one who magnifies the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the

written word in a child's life in hopes that someday when I give that child away to leave and cleave, they will have developed a sensitive ear to the voice of the Spirit and the authority of God's word.

I don't pretend to have arrived, but I'm thankful for that balance of the Spirit's authority and the word's authority. And I'm very thankful for the message this morning. Thank you, Jeff.

Any others? Get your hands up. If some people have a problem with authority, over them, they think, well, they'll get out of under that. Say, if you can't submit to your boss, well, I'm going to be my own boss and start my own business, and nobody tells me what to do.

Well, they'll find out soon that that won't work either because even though I'm the boss in the business, I soon find out that if I don't submit to the customer, build with the materials he wants, and do it the way he wants, and when he wants it, and how, and so on, I'll be in trouble too. And in the same way, if you don't want to submit to authority, I'll try and get around it. I'll run against another place.

Also, with Daniel's message after that, I feel I need to give praise to the Lord. He has delivered me out of trouble this past week. We were traveling all night from Missouri through a desert as far as where shops would be to fix the brakes on the vehicle.

Morning came as we stopped at a service station for gas. Someone was driving. He mentioned that the brakes felt soft.

They went to the floor. Well, we stopped okay. I could have forgot about it or ignored it, but I thank the Lord I didn't.

I probably checked it out. First of all, there's brake fluid there, but I pumped the brakes and found out that I was pumping brake fluid out on the road. And within sight, it was daytime.

Our shops were opening already. And within sight of where we were, while there was a Ford dealership there, in a few hours we were on our way again. So I just want to thank the Lord how everything worked out fine.

I didn't miss my appointments for the next day of waiting, and others had their appointments. And my mother-in-law wouldn't have appreciated at her age to sit around longer. So the Lord delivered us out of trouble.

We couldn't even have an accident or so, but everything worked out fine. And I couldn't ask for much better. So I want to praise the Lord for that.

Thank you, Luke. You know, I just had to think of the first half of your testimony there, how you shared that if we don't learn that lesson, we will bump up against it somewhere else. And I just had to think of the long-lasting consequences of either one of the directions that someone takes.

You know, Brother Denny stood before us this morning. If he wouldn't have learned that lesson at that period of his life that that boss was giving him there at the UPS, you know, he may not be standing before us here this morning. You know, just think of the long-lasting effect that it can have on a person's life as you think of this very principle.

God help us in this matter. Is there any others quickly yet before we close down here? Okay. Thanks again for laboring the Word of Doctrine.

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