

(Spiritual Dangers) Being Under God's Authority

by Don Currin

The importance of being under God's authority and submitting to His plan and structure in our lives, and the dangers of sedition and spiritual shipwreck that result from not doing so.

Duration: 51:43

Scripture: Genesis 19:24-25, Exodus 22:28, Psalm 33:13, Psalm 119:105, Matthew 5:13, Matthew 8:8-10, Romans 13:1

Topics: "Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of looking for the good in others and recognizing our own flaws. He encourages appealing to authority with scripture and sound reasoning, speaking the truth in love. If the appeal is rejected, the speaker suggests responding with love and possibly moving on from the church. The sermon also highlights the significance of submission to God's authority as a mark of true conversion and a measure of a person's faith.

Transcript

Well, good morning everyone. It's a joy to be back here once again, LeMoyne Baptist Church, and my wife, before we left the trail a little while ago, she said, now girls, you be sure and unplug those curling irons. So we've already created a flood.

We don't want to cause a fire too. So she, they're trying to keep everything unplugged over there. Hopefully we won't have any more trouble.

But I just want to commend the men for being out here this morning. Pastor Ron came up here right on the spot and had his vacuum cleaner out there. And Brother Jeff came, Dennis came, and Brother Mike.

And man, what a blessing, you know, to have the men come and serve like that. And especially, you know, when the evangelist comes in and wrecks everything. I walked in this morning about 630.

I wanted to have some time with the Lord. And boy, I just saw this flood coming out from underneath the book room door. So I appreciate these men, their flexibility in coming and, you know, helping me clean up things, mop things up.

And so hopefully we'll get all that dried up before the week's out. Well, I just got to share with you what God's been doing in my own heart. I don't know.

I know that many of you are familiar with him. A man that has just tremendously impacted my life in recent days is Brother John Piper. I've just been feeding, you know, off of Christ through his ministry, a very rich ministry.

The thing I appreciate about John is not only is he theologically accurate, but the passion. I just love the passion. You know, you don't find that in Calvinistic circles.

I mean, I agree with what Spurgeon said, you know, dry preachers make good martyrs because they burn so well. And I don't like that kind of Calvinism, that dry, dead Calvinism. I want some people to be lively in Christ and passionate for the Savior and passionate for holiness and passionate for separation from the world.

And I really appreciate Brother Piper. He's really ministered in my heart. Well, this is not something I received via John Piper, just something the Lord has been impressing upon my heart continuously.

I want to talk to you this morning about the importance of being under God's authority. Next year, we've got Dr. Ted Tripp from *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. He's coming doing a whole different series in a conference that we're sponsoring.

And one of the issues he's going to really address is this thing of authority, dealing with it very biblically and be very word-centered, very Christ-honoring, but just the importance of structured, God-delegated authority in the home. And so we're looking forward to that. And so I have an idea of what I have to share this morning, you know, will not really touch the hem of the garment compared to what he will be sharing with us.

But I'm going to make a stab at it. I want you to take your Bibles, if you would, and look with me in Romans chapter 13. And for the sake of time here in Sunday school, rather than reading this lengthy portion of Scripture, I think that just the first verse will be adequate.

And then I want you to look with me at a couple of other passages in the Word of God. Romans chapter 13 and verse number one. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, the powers, the authorities that be are ordained of God.

These authorities, these people in positions of authority, are there not because they are pure, not because they are possessors of exemplary character. Rather, they are there because they are appointed by God. They're in God's positions of his delegated authority.

And so it's interesting that God is the one that puts them there. For there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God. Now, I want you to, if you would, look with me in Acts in chapter number 23.

You recall that the Apostle Paul is assaulted in Jerusalem in spite of the fact that he has received warnings not to go. Yet he goes anyway into Jerusalem. Sure enough, he's assaulted.

He's drug out of the synagogue. He's brought before one head of state or one authority after another. And you'll notice here in chapter 23, in verse one, it says, And Paul, earnestly beholding the counsel, said, Men

and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day.

Well, apparently this high priest, Ananias, is not very impressed because in verse two, it says, And the high priest, Ananias, commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall. For sinnest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law.

And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wish not, brethren, that he was the high priest, for it is written, Thou shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. Thou shall not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. Now, Paul, in his heart, in his conscience, he knew that a part of God's law was that he was to honor, he was to respect, he was to not speak in a demeaning, derogatory way at all of God's delegated authority.

Now, where did he get that from? Where did he glean that from? Well, if you'll notice over in the book of Exodus, just look at one more reference here, if you would, and then if you want to turn to some of these others, you can as we go through the lesson this morning. But in Exodus chapter 22 and verse number 28, here is a part of God's law. This is what Paul had in mind.

Verse 28, Thou shall not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. Thou shall not curse. And the idea there is speak in a way to belittle or once again to demean that authority.

You're not to curse the ruler of the people. You know, it's interesting, brethren, we have a lot of different groups, Christian groups within the church these days. There are some people that would classify a certain group as savorless saints.

Savorless, you remember Jesus said, But if the salt hath lost its savor, it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be trodden under the foot of men. Well, savorless means a lack of distinctiveness, a lack of profoundness as far as walk is concerned. In other words, it's just a bland group of people.

They're not standing for anything. They're not making their mark upon anyone. They're just kind of going with the flow.

I mean, they're like the tide. They just flow in and they flow out. There is nothing unique about them for God.

They are savorless. They are henceforth good for nothing, but to be trodden under the foot of men. There are savorless saints who have lost their distinctness before the world.

Then perhaps there's another category, and that is what I would call slumbering saints. And I don't know about you, friend, but I mean every day of my life. I just turned 52 years of age the day before yesterday.

And every day of my life, I'm provoking myself. I'm stirring myself. I'm seeking to exercise myself.

I'm stirring up the gift of God that is within me. Because, you know, it just seems like it's by nature that we have a tendency to fall back into a lulled state, sort of in a state of spiritual stupor. And I don't want that.

I want to finish well. And I believe one of the ways of finishing well is to stir ourself and to rev up, if we could, this enthusiasm toward God. Not a superficial thing.

Not a spurious thing. Not something that's feely or emotionalism just for the sake of emotion, but something that has a lively faith to it. I was talking to Brother Schenkel last night, and a lady told me who we had for a Bible conference to speak to women.

Carol Trahan told me that she had left her church a year before. And I said, well, tell me, Carol, why did you leave the church? And she said, well, the gentleman preached the Word. He expounded the truth.

We had our meetings Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. We have Bible conferences and all of that. I mean, we would gather to pray.

But she said, the reason we left is because I've got three teenagers, Brother Curran. She's a widow. She said, I have three teenagers, and I wanted them subjected to a ministry that was full of expectation.

When I ministered and would preach, when the men would share the Word of God, there was no expectation. They weren't anticipating God to do anything. She said, when we would gather to pray, there was no spirit of anticipation.

God, You've got to come. You've got to work. And that's what she said I wanted my children to be subjected to.

You see, what's behind that, friend, is not emotionalism for the sake of emotionalism. What's behind it is a spirit of faith, a vital, vibrant faith. Are we believing God to do exceeding great and mighty things? You see, sadly today, many people, and especially even in sovereign grace churches, there's a spirit of slumber, you know.

They're just kind of content with the status quo. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be a part of a church like that.

And I'm grappling right now. You pray for me. And some issues in my life.

There's another thing, another category is what some people call sipping saints. Now, I'll just level with you this morning. I do not drink.

I would not put anything of an intoxicated nature or fermented nature to my lips whatsoever. And I'll say this, as I've studied the Scripture, it was real hard for me to come to grips with this. But I can see, you know, I mean, it's alright to take a little wine for thy stomach's sake.

And I know for merriment and for medicinal purposes, you know, the Bible warrants that or the Bible allows that. But I'll tell you this. I do believe that there's a strong case, a biblical case for total abstinence.

And that's what I believe with all my heart. I'm not going to judge you. I'm not going to sit in judgment against you.

If you if you sip some wine every now and then or whatever. But I tell you, friend, it's just not good. You see, probably the reason my conscience is so lively and sensitive to that very area is because my dad was an alcoholic.

And you don't know what it is to be an only child and live in absolute hell day after day with your dad coming home and taking five or six shots of hard liquor. You don't know what it's like. So I'm not going down that road.

There's another thing. And this is what I want to talk to you about this morning. We not only have savorless saints and slumbering saints and sipping saints, but we've got what I would call seditious saints.

And I really wonder at times, friend, if most of these people that would fall into that category are really saints at all. And let me tell you where I'm coming from as we continue the message this morning. There are seditious saints.

And the word sedition means insurrection. It's an unwillingness to come under the authority of God in their life, whether it's in the home or in the church or in the government. You see, Galatians 5, verse 20 talks about the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these.

And in that list of works of the flesh, there is the word sedition, sedition. What does the word mean? Well, the Greek word sedition means a standing apart, a standing asunder. It's where we get our English word division from.

Di means two, two visions. Dave Brevere in his book Undercover, Your Secret Place of Freedom, says it like this. Why are so many churches and homes dividing today? There is more than one vision, which means that one is not submitting to God's ordained authority.

God ordains a set man or leaders because any two headed organization is doomed for division. We've got a diversified division or visions today in the church and in the home. One man said it like this.

The problems facing us in our day are due to men living outside the authority of God. Someone else said it like this. Insubordination is mutiny against God.

Now, I don't know if you heard the story or not, but I think maybe this is a good beginning this morning for the message. But the story is told of a U.S. naval vessel that was out to sea late one evening. Having spotted an unidentified light in the distance, the signalman signaled the vessel to turn 10 degrees east.

Back came a signal saying, no, you must turn 10 degrees west. The captain ordered that the signalman send another message saying, no, you must turn 10 degrees east, which was met with the same response as before from the unidentified vessel. Angered at the reply, the captain commanded the signalman to send a message.

I'm a United States Navy captain. I order you to turn 10 degrees east. The message came back, sir, I am a seaman first class.

I order you to turn your vessel 10 degrees west. The captain ordered the signalman to send a final warning. This is a United States destroyer.

If you do not move 10 degrees east, I will blow you out of the water. To which came the reply, this, sir, is the United States Coast Guard White House. If you do not turn 10 degrees west, you will crash your vessel on the rocks below.

Now, the idea is that tragically in our society today, that there are many professing Christians who have shipwrecked on the rocks of worldliness and perdition because of their unwillingness to submit to God's authority. We cannot alter God's word. And there is principal authority, which is the word of God, that more sure word of prophecy.

But there is delegated positional authority. And those are the people in those positions of authority that you and I, God has sovereignly put in a place to submit to, to honor and to be accountable to. Well, here's the message this morning.

I want to share with you the importance of submission. We're just going to talk about that for a few moments. Secondly, I want us to look at the dangers of sedition, the dangers of sedition.

Thirdly, the crown. It's the word blessing. It's a crown of being under the authority of God in your life.

What should we expect when that is our state, when that's our very heart? And then finally, I don't believe in this my way or the highway type of leadership. I believe a parent that is constantly got their kids under their thumb and man, you're going to do it my way regardless. You know, I believe God needs to do a work in that parent's heart.

I meet pastors all the time that sadly they use their pulpits as whipping posts and they badger their people and manipulate them that, man, you've got to fall right in line. And listen, I don't believe in the subtle power of spiritual abuse, friend. Yes, we have positions of authority in the church, elders and pastors, but I believe that they should minister to the flock of God by being servant leaders.

These men must know what it is to walk under the authority of God themselves and love their people and minister their people more from a servant's perspective, not from a dictatorial position. So I want to talk to you about how to appeal to authority as time permits this morning. Let me just move into this real quickly.

I've got a ways to go. First of all, let me talk to you a few minutes about the importance of submission, the importance of submission. Can I just share a few things under this title? First of all, it is a mercy of God for God to give us this beautiful plan of submitting to his authority.

It is the mercy of an almighty God. Listen, God is not trying to make our lives miserable, friend. He's not trying to oppress or perplex or to agitate us.

Listen, he wants his people at rest. He wants us to walk with a good conscience toward him. He wants our spirit to be stable and at rest before him.

And it can only come by operating within God's structure, God's chain of spiritual command. And it's interesting, you see, the infinite mercy of God. The Bible says in Psalm 33 and verse 13, the Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men.

My heart's just gripped every time I read a warning in the scripture from the Lord, because you see, I know that what's behind that warning is not uncontrollable anger, but rather extraordinary mercy. God knows that we will consume ourselves. He knows you will destroy yourself if you do not listen and heed his commands.

Spurgeon said it like this concerning God's warning of mercy to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Perhaps no figure of speech represents God in a more gracious light than when he has spoken of as stooping from his throne and coming down from heaven to attend to the wants and to behold the woes of mankind. Spurgeon says we love him who, when Sodom and Gomorrah were full of iniquity, would not destroy those cities until he had made a personal visitation of them.

Great mercy, the Lord being merciful even toward Lot beyond that mercy that he extended to that corporate group of people in Sodom. I'll just stop there. There's more to be read there.

But once again, for the sake of time, let me give you a second thing concerning the importance of submission. It's the mark of true conversion. It's not only a mercy of God, but it's the mark of true conversion.

Can I tell you this morning, I believe that your profession of faith is suspect if a normal continuous pattern in your life is that you cannot operate under the authority of God. If children cannot obey their parents, if they're constantly bucking their parents, rebelling against their parents, it's not a good sign that they have saving grace in their heart. If a woman is constantly cantankerous, and I mean she's stubborn and self-willed toward her husband in the home, it's not a good sign she's ever passed from death into life.

Let me give you some verses here in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 15. It says, here's one of the reasons that Christ died and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him. That's why Christ died.

There's a dynamic in your heart. Yes, at times there's a conflict that rages. It's ongoing between the flesh and the spirit.

But there's a dynamic by the grace of God in your heart that more and more is putting the pressure on you to be under the authority of God. And you know what? When you're not under the authority of God, you're miserable. And when you're not under the authority of God, there comes such a great pressure, such great chastisement that God brings you back to a place of brokenness where you're willing to submit to that authority.

Galatians chapter 5 verses 19 through 21, once again, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these. And one of those works is sedition, sedition. It's an undermining of the authority of God, either in word or in action.

That's what the word there means. And he goes on to say, and they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. They that continue in that sin that practice such things shall not inherit God's kingdom.

You see, one man said it like this. Now, boy, think about this statement. The purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring men under the authority of God.

Is that what you found? Listen, in my unregenerate state, when, man, I was having at it and doing my own thing. Listen, friend, I wanted to be my own authority. But when God, by the power of the Spirit, uses his gospel to break me and I come and I embrace the mercy of God as embodied in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I'm saved, I pass from death and life.

Listen, friend, it begins a pilgrimage in my life, and it's a pilgrimage of submission. I'm learning to submit to the authority of God more and more in my life. All right, here's another thing.

Not only is it the mercy of a loving God and the mark of true conversion, but it's the measure of a man's faith. I want you to look with me, if you would, at the story there in Matthew chapter number eight. Turn there with me for a moment.

Matthew chapter eight. You remember the centurion who came to our Lord because he had this afflicted servant. Matthew eight and verse number five.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion beseeching him. A centurion was a man that had leadership. He had control over a hundred different Roman soldiers.

And it says that this particular man apparently had great compassion for those around him, where it says in verse six and saying, Lord, my servant life homesick of the palsy grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but you just speak the word only and my servant shall be healed.

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I said to this man, go and he goeth and to another come and he cometh. And to my servant do this and he doeth it.

Notice the man's not making any demands on the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, you just give the order. You just give the word just as I give them the word.

You just give the word and my servant will be healed. It goes on to say verse 10. And when Jesus heard it, he marveled.

It's interesting. Do a study on that when Jesus marveled. Very interesting.

Very significant, insightful things there about the marveling of Christ. And he said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Listen, how do we measure faith in a person? Do we measure it because they've just got a lot of the word of God memorized? Listen, I know faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Praise the Lord for that. But listen, friend, the true yardstick, the true measure of a person's faith is their submission to authority. And I look in churches today and I tell you, you find people that are vacillating, that are unstable, that are struggling.

You know what it can all be traced back to? They have a very small faith because they've never learned the importance of exercising, being diligent in this matter of being under the authority of God. There's no greater place of rest and strength than to learn to operate under God's delegated authority. It's the measure of a man's faith.

Listen to this right here. It is also the manner of a spirit-filled man. Look at Galatians chapter 5 and verse 21, if you would.

Galatians chapter 5. Now, you see, as you read here in Galatians chapter 5, these are evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit, being under the control of God's Spirit. And by the way, I wish we had time to go into this, but I don't want to engender any confusion here. But, you know, as I'm studying the scripture, I'm finding that there are two fillings of the Holy Spirit.

There's a filling of the Holy Spirit for personal walk and sanctification, but there's a filling of the Holy Spirit, what the old-timers referred to as a baptism of the Holy Spirit, when the Spirit comes upon and empowers or endures you for a work of the ministry. And when they talked about the ladder of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they were talking about revival, when God comes. You see, the first one is in our control.

It's a sin not to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5.18. Being not drunk with wine, but being filled with the Holy Spirit is the idea there. And therefore, it's a command to all believers that we're to be filled, we're to operate under the control of the Holy Spirit. But that second filling of the Holy Spirit is an endowment of power.

And listen, as Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, the only thing we can do is ask for it. You can't conjure it up as a sovereign work of God. And when God sends it and clothes a man or a family or a community or a church or a nation with His presence, His glory, He's empowering them to do a work during the context, in the context of a season of spiritual refreshment from the presence of the Lord.

That's what we long to see, even in these days. But it's the manner of a spirit-filled man, Galatians 5, verse 21. He mentions these evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

I said Galatians, I'm sorry, Ephesians 5, verse 21. And here's what he says, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. You know, my wife said to me one day, she said, Don, you know, submission is not submission if you always agree on everything.

It's when I don't agree, but yet I'm still willing to submit. I'm still willing to come under authority. And how do we really determine whether a person's walking with God, whether they're operating under the control of the Holy Spirit? Well, this is how you can do it.

You're submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Ladies, you know what a good definition of submission is? Submission is ducking so God can get to your husband. It's when you try to take things into your own hands, you know, that's when God puts the pressure on you.

But I mean, you've appealed to Him in love. You've appealed to His conscience. You've prayed for Him.

You've set a right example for Him. You're not a double-minded hypocrite, but you've loved your husband. And so now God said, All right, let me have him.

You duck and I'll get to him. That's submission. It's the man of a spirit-filled man, a spirit-filled woman.

Let me give you something else. It's the memorial of the godly. Man, listen, ever think about David's life? A lot of people think, you know, well, a man after God's own heart.

People in the world think an adulterer, you know, justify their sexual sin by saying, Well, you know, David, you know, he did that, you know. But listen, the thing I marvel about David was against incredible odds, tremendous pressure, here is a man has the opportunity to take the life of Saul on two different occasions, but he chose not to because he knew that he was not to lay his hand upon Saul. In most people's mind, it would be totally justified to snuff out the life of one that is just enraged towards you and is seeking, just dogging your steps to take your life.

But listen, what does this man do? Well, the Bible, let me just give you some scriptures here in 1 Samuel chapter 24, verses 1 through 6. David spares Saul's life in the cave of En-Gedi, but cuts off the skirt of his garment. But it's interesting. He cuts off the skirt of his garment.

And the Bible said he's smitten in his conscience. It troubles him. Interesting thing today is you find in homes and in churches.

I mean, people will demean or belittle their authority. It doesn't bother them at all. But it did David.

David was smitten in his conscience. Listen to this. David spares Saul's life in the wilderness of Ziph.

He tells Abishai to not kill Saul in 1 Samuel 26 and verse number 9. And furthermore, you find that later on after Saul's life has been taken out, there's a lad that comes. This youthful Amalekite who assisted in Saul's suicide. He comes to David boasting in what he's done and expecting some reward, some compensation.

And guess what happens? David takes off his head. Why? Because you're not to touch God's authority. You pray for them.

You appeal to them. But we need to be extremely careful what we say, what we do in relation to them. In spite of Saul's murderous intent, David called Saul, my Lord and the Lord's anointed.

Was he qualified to be a spiritual leader? Probably not. Humanly speaking. But God put him in that position because of his sovereign appointment.

His sovereign pleasure. It's hard to reason the ways of God sometimes, isn't it? Well, let me give you for a few minutes the dangers of sedition. Just a few thoughts here.

Look with me in Matthew chapter 6. Now, you'll not want to miss this. Look at Matthew chapter 6. I want to give credit where credit's due. And I know maybe he's not the most popular fellow, you know, in sovereign grace circles.

But I've got all of his books. And I tell you, at times he's challenged me in some areas. His name was Watchman Nee.

And Watchman Nee, in my opinion, wrote one of the greatest books on authority entitled Spiritual Authority. Tremendous. Just absolutely extraordinary with some things that he shares.

And as you begin to meditate and you begin to search the language, you find that what he's saying is right on. But here's one thought that Watchman Nee shared in this little book on spiritual authority. First of all, one danger of sedition is it opens the mind to satanic deception.

It opens the mind to satanic deception. Look at Matthew chapter 6 and verse 13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The idea there is from the evil one. Now, notice what he says. There's a colon.

I'm reading from the old King James. There's a colon at the end of the word evil. And then notice the transitional word for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen. Now, what's Christ speaking of here at the end of the model prayer? He's talking about the importance. He's underscoring the importance of authority.

And he says, this should be our desire and our prayer. Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Now, what is the evil? What is this particular specific area that God is trying to safeguard us against? Well, as you read on the next phrase for thine is the kingdom, the authority and the glory.

You see, the tendency is, is we can collaborate or we can yield a temptation of Satan to buck or to resist the authority of God. And here in the context, our Lord is saying, don't you be conscious of promoting your

own kingdom, because when you do, you've got to be the authority. You've got to be in control.

You see, it's like Alan Redpath says, we can never honestly pray thy kingdom come until we pray my kingdom go. For thine is the kingdom. It's not my kingdom, God.

And the tendency is, is to collaborate, to get in the coops with the devil, you know, who wants to rock authority and undermine authority. No, Lord, no, Lord. For thine is the kingdom.

For thine is the kingdom. Lord, I choose not to yield to the temptation to resist or to rebel against the authority of God in my life. And he said he believed that it would open the mind to satanic deception.

This is the warning here, the admonition. And then you'll notice something else. Look with me at Leviticus chapter number 10 for a moment.

Leviticus chapter number 10. You remember the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu in verse number one. And what is a powerful text? Look at verse one.

The Bible says in Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron took either of them his censer and put fire therein and put incense therein and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. Now look at verse two. And there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them.

And they died before the Lord. Now, these guys apparently put on the priestly garb. I mean, they could go into the temple.

No doubt they took the right incense burners and they put the right incense in there. But did it ever occur to you what made this strange fire and why it incurred the wrath of God? Why did God snuff out these two lives? You ever think about it? Very interesting. There was one thing that they did that caused God's judgment upon them.

They were never to offer incense before the Lord independently of the authority of God. They went into this place without accompanying Aaron. They were never to do that.

Here they took matters into their own hands. I'm going to offer this fire before the Lord. And here, let's say their teenage or their youthful passion.

They said, we'll do it. And so they go in and do it. But they do it independently of God's authority.

God kills them. It can bring swift judgment. By the way, you see that today in the contemporary church movement.

They're operating independently of God's authority, independently of God's word. And I believe that there is more strange fire, wildfire, sadly, that leads to hellfire than there is spiritual fire. They think they're doing God a service.

There's something else you'll notice here. It leads to apostasy. You see, sedition will lead a person to apostasy.

In Jude, verse number eight, listen to this. He says, likewise, also these filthy dreamers. He's talking about the apostate here.

They defile the flesh. And notice something else that's characteristic of their life. Jude says they despise dominion.

They despise authority. And they speak evil of dignities. Albert Barnes said it like this.

In regard to this matter of dominion, he says, that is, they regard all government in the state, the church, and the family as an evil. Advocates for unbridled freedom of all sorts, defenders of what they regard as the rights of injured men, and yet secretly themselves lusting for the exercise of the very power which they would deny to others. See, the truth of the matter is, what lies at the root of people always having a problem with authority, saying, well, no man is going to tell me what to do.

Nobody is going to lord over me. The truth of the matter is, is they want to be lord. They want to be a deatrophies in the church.

They want to be in control. Well, let me give you a third thing this morning to consider. The crown of being under authority.

The crown of being under authority. It's the place of true freedom, as Dave Brevere says in Proverbs chapter three. Listen to this just for a moment.

Proverbs chapter three. Here we have the relationship between a father and his son. He says, My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments.

For length of days and long life and peace shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. Bind them about thy neck.

Write them upon the table of thine heart. So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Do you really believe that? You believe that's inspiring? Huh? I do.

There is a blessing for you. Now, listen, your world may be falling apart around you financially and other ways. But I tell you, if you're at peace with God because you're operating under God's authority, I tell you, it's well with your soul.

So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Submitting to mercy and truth, forgetting not the law of his father, but operating in obedience under those directives. God says that this young man would find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Speaking of the home and relationships in the home, I was up in Maine years ago and there was a pastor's wife that told me about a daughter that they had allowed to go to Bible school. And she began to see a young man, you know, that was not apparently acceptable in the parents' eyes. And I want you to listen to the story here.

It's a testimony of this mother, this pastor's wife in Maine. She said, after a very difficult period in which our daughter withdrew her affection from us, she went away from her home to attend the Christian college of her choice. We had forbidden her to see an unsaved young man whom we had allowed her to date outside the will of God.

Hers was not rebellion against our rules. She obeyed. But in her broken heart, she believed that we were wrong.

She wouldn't respond to our hugs and kisses over the next year. How wrong it was of us to let down the standard. And now we were paying the price.

We thought our daughter's love for us was gone forever. During her first year at Christian college, she sent home a Mother's Day card with a message similar to this. Listen to this right here.

This is beautiful. This young lady wrote to her mother and said, thank you for being my mother. I wish I had known before now how much you really do love me.

I used to think that yours and dad's rules were a ball and chain to imprison me. But now I know that they were an anchor to keep me where I belong. I love you so much.

Well, God certainly honored that commitment, that brokenness and that response and repentance of that young lady. For today, God gave her a very godly man as a husband. She's in ministry today with her husband.

The crown of being under authority. It's a place of true freedom. It's also a place of quiet rest.

Isaiah chapter 30 and verse 15 says, in returning and rest shall you be saved. In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. Can I ask you this morning? Is it really well with your soul? I heard John Piper say the other day, every morning I get up and said, the devil sits on my face.

You know, friend, he doesn't need disobedience on our part to do that. I mean, it's hard enough on us, you know, Satan relentlessly assaulting us and oppressing us. But you know, sadly, many of us, we give ground to Satan in these areas of rebellion and unwillingness to submit to authority.

And all it does is just seems to give more of an open door for Satan to come in and afflict us, to torment us in our life. Is it well with your soul? Do you know what it is to be at rest with God? You know, a lot of young people these days, and I've even had some adult men that I've gone and tried to appeal to in the context of church discipline who would resist me. They didn't want to hear it.

They would spurn my counsel. They would disregard my reproof. And yet what was behind it all is I'm enjoying life now.

I'm free. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. I'm not going to have to worry about this church watching over me and telling me what to do.

And they think it's freedom. And man, listen, all of a sudden, their whole life fragments, their world falls apart. And I'm thinking, and this is freedom? I mean, this is what they long to have.

And now that they've got it, I mean, you're talking about compounding the bondage. It's almost as if weakly that bondage is compounded. You see, the Bible says the way of the transgressor is very hard.

Hard. But also, it's a place of divine affirmation. In 1 John 3, verses 18-22, listen to what John says, My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

And hereby we do know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. But beloved, if our heart condemns us not.

Have you ever tried to pray before? It's like your prayers were just bouncing off the ceiling. It was like this cloud of oppression was over you, and you knew exactly why it was there. You knew why the heavens were brazen over.

Your heart's condemning you. God is greater than your heart. He knows all things.

But beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Is that your heartbeat? Is that your holy passion? Is I want to please Him in all things? I don't know about you.

I just share my own heart, friend. There's enough inner corruption left in me to indict me and cause me to suffer 10,000 hells over. But it's because of the loving mercy and the electing love of a heavenly Father that delights.

And let me... Listen, yes, I know the Scripture says, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. That should be our standard to strive toward, friend. But I tell you, there's so much inner corruption in us that we're not even aware of.

But our throne right and our privilege of walking with the Savior does not depend on every part of our being, every withhold. God wants us to be consciously sensitive to whatever He shows us, where to confess that, to where to walk in that, and leave the rest with Him. But I ask you this morning, do you have a condemning heart where you feel just oppressed? Or are the heavens open above you? Do you have confidence toward God? And whatsoever you ask, you receive of Him.

Do you know what that is? Do you have that dimension of spiritual reality in your life? Let me just close this morning. It's time's up, isn't it, Pastor? Okay, I'm sorry, okay. All right, let me just give you these things.

I'll just move through them quickly. How to appeal to authority. Can I tell you this morning, there's nothing that delights me any more than for my children to come to me and appeal to me.

Say, Dad, would you reconsider this? Dad, would you pray about this a little longer? Dad, have you considered this right here? But see, when they withdraw and they sulk and they pout, and man, they're just so bent out of shape toward me, and I sense that, I tell you, friend, it really grieves me, it offends me, and oftentimes it provokes me to wrath. It's not right that I get provoked to wrath, but sometimes I'll yield to my flesh. But I tell you, there's nothing that I welcome as a father any more than for my children to come to me and say, Dad, would you just pray about this a little longer? Would you reconsider what you've said? Can I make an appeal to you? I delight in that, and so does, I believe, any spiritually-minded authority.

Any spiritually-minded authority. Let me give you these things. First of all, first step in appealing to authority is begin with the appropriate authority.

Ladies, you shouldn't be going to your husband or to your pastor over your husband. If you've got a problem, you know, in the home there, I think the first place you need to start with is the appropriate authority. You go to your husband first.

You talk to him. And I believe that you shouldn't go to the pastor unless your husband gives you the liberty to go to him or go to the elders. But a lot of times I see women, you know, what they'll do is they'll go to the pastor, they'll go to the church leadership, and they'll totally avoid their husband.

They're not even involved in this situation. I mean, it's between her and her mate, but yet what they'll do is they'll override him and go to another authority. So we need to go to the appropriate authorities.

Number two, we need to be sure we have a clear conscience with the person in authority. Make sure that your conscience is clear toward those in authority. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.

Can I go to my authority knowing that my heart is pure, my relationship is open between me and him or me and them, our authority, our elders in our church? Because, you see, if there's something in your crawl, there's something that's bothering you and agitating you, if you try to go, it's going to cloud the whole picture. You can't think straight, and they have a hard time responding in a God-honoring way because they can sense the tension of your spirit. Number three, very important, is the glory of God your motive? A lot of times, you know, we go, I'm going to get this thing off my chest, you know.

Well, that shouldn't be our primary motive. Our number one motive should be God's glory. Colossians chapter 1 and verse 10, and then approach the person with reference and in a spirit of meekness.

2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 24, the servant of the Lord must not strive and be gentle unto all men. Somebody gave the definition of loneliness of mind years ago. Loneliness of mind is that when I look at the other person, I see the new man.

When I look at myself, I see the old man. But you see, sadly, it's just reverse, isn't it? We look at the person we've been out of shape about, we're always looking for the flaws in their life, the corruption in their existence, and we're always looking for the best in us. Loneliness of mind is that when I look to others, I see that which is good and worthy of praise.

When I look at myself, I see the flaws. Then here's the fifth thing, appeal with the scripture and sound reasoning. Make sure that the information that you present to this person is accurate.

Appeal with the scripture and sound reasoning, speaking the truth in love, Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 15. Then finally, write a respond if the appeal is rejected. What happens if the authority doesn't see it your way? What should your action be? Or perhaps your course of action in some remote situation should be to just very gladly, very lovingly move on from the church.

But most of the time, I believe it can be resolved at the foot of the cross. And even if they don't agree with you, be willing to say, all right, God, it's in your hands now. I've done what I need to do.

In recent days, I'm having to deal with some theological issues toward our elders. You pray for me right now. I've already started the process.

I've dealt with round one. I've got about four more rounds to go. And I'm hoping that they're going to give me an audience.

Right now, it's kind of iffy. But I feel like that that is what I ought to do. I ought to quit talking about it to other people that are not involved.

Sometimes I do that. There's a tendency to do that. Sometimes my spirit's not right.

Our responsibility is if it's a decision on the part of the authority of the church that grates against us, that we do not agree with, we ought to take that to the Lord in prayer. We ought to seek the Lord for counsel from his word. And then we ought to go in and lovingly appeal to that authority.

And say, brother, I need some understanding on this. This is what I see. This is what God's shown me.

Tell me what you think. And this is what I intend to do right now with our elders. I want them, every one individually, look me in the eye without any contention whatsoever and just say, brother, tell me what you believe.

Do you concur with this or do you disagree? And I feel like that will be an appropriate, a very God honoring thing. Because look, I'm not looking for any preeminence. I'm not looking to cause problems.

I'm doing it because of the welfare of the church and more importantly, the glory of God. And that should always be our aim. Amen.

I hope this will be an encouragement to your heart. So a lot of scattered thoughts here. But perhaps the Holy Spirit may use a few to really help you in your own walk with the Lord.

Shall we pray together? Thank you, dear Lord. Thank you, dear Father, for giving us answers to every need in our life. Every need.

Lord, if it's not addressed in your word, perhaps it's only because, Lord, we have not taken the time to study and flesh it out. Lord, this matter of authority, Lord, as I said at the beginning of this message, I've only touched the hem of the garment, Lord. There's so much more to be said about it, the importance of it.

Lord, in a generation that we live in today that's full of anarchy and insurrection, sedition, rebellion. What a needed message. For even, Lord, this spirit of rebellion has infiltrated our homes and the churches.

So, Lord, help us to live in such a way that our very lives, Lord, will be characterized as a people of great faith. And that great faith is manifested through a submission of heart and action that brings honor and glory to Christ. We ask these things in his name.

Amen.

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