

(Basics) 71. Submission to Authority

by Zac Poonen

Submission to authority is essential, but it must be submission to God's will, not to human authority that goes against God's will.

Duration: 12:40

Scripture: Acts 5:29, Romans 13:1-2, Romans 13:4, Romans 13:6, Hebrews 13:17

Topics: "Submission To Authority", "Rebellion Against God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of submitting to authority as instructed in the Bible. He references Romans 13:1, which states that all souls should be subject to the higher powers established by God. The preacher also mentions Acts 5:29, where the apostles declared that they must obey God rather than men when faced with questioning from the high priest. He explains that rebellion against authority is rooted in Satan, who encourages rebellion in various areas of life such as the home, society, and the church. The preacher concludes by urging listeners to submit to the authorities God has placed over them to avoid fellowship with Satan.

Transcript

We want to consider today whether the matter of submitting to authority in our home or in our office or in the church is an essential thing, when we should submit and when we shouldn't. This is a very relevant topic to the decisions we have to take in our daily life. When we look at the origin of sin, we have looked at this before in a study quite a while ago, we find that sin originated in the universe when a created angel rebelled against God's authority.

Lucifer was the head of all the angels and he decided that he is not going to submit to the authority of God, his creator, and he rebelled against that authority. And as soon as he rebelled, he was cast out and he became the devil, cast out of heaven. So we find that the question of submission to authority was something that arose way back in the beginning of creation.

The great controversy there was, shall I submit to authority or not? And throughout the ages, this has been the great question that has caused problems in every area. When do we submit to those whom God places over us and when can we say no? Are we to be slaves without any opinion or anything that we can do on our own? Are we to just blindly do what other people tell us to do? Well, let me say first of all, quote you this verse from Acts chapter 5 and verse 29, where when the apostles stood before the high priest who was questioning them, they said to him, Acts 5.29, we must obey God rather than men. Now, there

are no two ways about that.

We must obey God rather than men. If it's a question of, shall I obey God or shall I obey any man, the answer is clear. I have to obey God.

So if a man tells me to do something contrary to what the Bible says, I never have to listen to him, even if he is an authority over me at home or in the office or in the church or anywhere. But it must be something that God has clearly spoken in the Word. Like, for example, God says we should not bow down to idols.

And somebody tells you to bow down to idols, you can say, I'm sorry, sir, I can't do that. Or if you're a wife and your husband tells you to go and murder somebody or to give your body in adultery, you can say, no, I'm sorry, I won't do it. I'm not going to submit to you in that area.

These are examples of where a wife can say no to her husband. Even a child can say no to his parents. But when I say what God has told you, I don't mean what you feel God has spoken in your heart.

Because in some of those things, it may be just your own feeling. You say, well, God has told me to go here. That's not in Scripture.

And if you are under some authority, God has placed you under some authority, then you better submit to that authority. And if he tells you not to go there, don't go there. Even if you feel like that in your heart, if that person is an authority over you, you must submit to his authority.

It's the other way around, too. If he tells you to go somewhere and you don't feel like going, if he's an authority over you, you've got to submit to him. When Jesus came to earth to undo the works of the devil, God kept him under the authority of Joseph and Mary for 30 years, not for one or two weeks.

For 30 long years, as a child, as a teenager, as a young man in his 20s, we read Luke chapter 2 and verse 51, continued in subjection to Joseph and Mary at Nazareth. That's the way the 30 years of his life is described. He continued in subjection to Joseph and Mary in Nazareth.

He came to undo the works of Satan. Satan is the author of rebellion, rebel against authority. He teaches children to rebel against parental authority.

There are three areas, basically, where we have authority structures. One is in the home, where parents are an authority over their children. The other is in society, where we have government or the police or secular authorities in your place of work, your boss.

These are all secular authorities in society, placed over you for things to be conducted in an orderly way. God has planned that in society as much as he has planned parents in a home. And it's your duty to submit to those authorities.

The third area is the church, where God places elders to whose authority you need to submit. And in all these areas, if you rebel against authority that God has placed over you, you're going to be in fellowship with Satan. Because he was the first person who rebelled against authority.

And he's the one who instigates people to rebel against authority even today. He instigates children to rebel against parents, students to rebel against their teachers, workers to rebel against their bosses, and employees to go on strike, and form trade unions to fight against the management, and many things like that. Now, to ask for your legitimate rights as a worker in a factory is perfectly right, even if it's asked for it

through a trade union.

But to rebel against authority, that's wrong. So, we need to see that rebellion is of Satan. Now, when we see that Jesus subjected himself in Nazareth to Joseph and Mary, we could ask ourselves this question.

Who was perfect in that home in Nazareth? Were Joseph or Mary perfect? Neither of them. They were just an Old Testament couple who had their struggles and problems like all married people have. Joseph and Mary must have lost their temper at each other, like all married couples do.

They would have had their disagreements and their tensions in the days when they didn't speak to each other, and so many things like that. They were far from perfect. They were an Old Testament couple in a living in a time when victory over sin was not even promised.

And when you look at New Testament couples today, the way they live, you can imagine how an Old Testament couple lived. That was not a perfect home. Far from perfect.

Don't think that Joseph and Mary were saints. That's a delusion that Satan has put upon a lot of people. They were ordinary people who needed a savior.

Jesus was perfect. He never sinned. Joseph and Mary sinned.

And yet, Jesus lived in subjection to an imperfect authority over him for 30 years. Everything they said and asked him to do were probably not absolutely perfect. But he did it.

If it was not contrary to God's will, he did it. Maybe they called him to do something at a particular time when he was very tired. He still got up and did it.

He did not sin. He probably was tempted, like all children are, to feel it was not fair. But he still did it.

He was tempted in all points, like we are. And he didn't do that just when he was five or six years old. He did it after the age of 30, till the time he moved out of his house.

I want to say to you, young people, as long as you live in your parents' house, dependent on them, follow Jesus' example. You cannot do better than that. Those are the first steps towards being a spiritual man or woman.

Children, honor your father and mother. Obey your parents. Do what they tell you.

And it will go well with you, and you will live long on the earth. And your example is Jesus himself. It doesn't matter if your parents make mistakes.

Jesus' earthly parents also made mistakes. But he still obeyed them. God does not ask us to submit to perfect authorities.

There is no perfect authority in the home or in society, in the church, anywhere in the world. Everybody is imperfect. But he tests our humility by asking us to submit to imperfect authorities.

It's the same in society. The Bible says in Romans chapter 13 that every soul should be subject to the higher powers, to the governing authorities, for there's no authority except from God, Romans 13.1. And those which exist are established by God. So, he who resists an authority has opposed the ordinance of God.

They will receive condemnation. And he goes on to say a ruler is, verse 4, a servant of God. And those who collect your taxes are servants of God, verse 6. So, pay your taxes to them.

People who don't pay their taxes are rebelling against authority. It's the same thing in the church. In the church, God has appointed elders.

And the Bible says in Hebrews 13.17, Obey those who have the rule over you and submit to them. For they keep an account over you, watch over your souls as those who will give an account to God. This does not mean that we have to submit to some religious leader who sits in our church and calls himself our priest or pastor if he is not a spiritual man, if he is not one who is accountable for your soul.

Your parents, you have no choice over. Your government, you have no choice over. But when it comes to a church, if you feel that the church you are in, the leadership is not spiritual, God doesn't ask you to stay there.

You can move out and find another church where the leadership is spiritual. But when you find one church like that, you must submit to the leadership. This is very important.

The principle of submission to authority has been demonstrated by Jesus Christ. That's how salvation came. Let us learn that from Him.

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