

Lesson 8: Respect for Authority

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Just to show you that God is consistent with things, look up Ephesians 6:1-3. Which commandment are these verses talking about.

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 6:1-3 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'— which is the first commandment with a promise— 'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'"

Now, ask your parents that same question. What did they say?

When that scripture talks of sowing to please the Spirit what do you think that means?

In each of these, the nature of how we obey is as important as being obedient in the first place.

Before we close out this chapter, lets take one more look at respect for authority. When God led His chosen people out of Egypt, He laid down some simple rules. I believe all of you have heard these at least once before. Lets look at them. Open your bible to Exodus 20:1-12. Read these verses and write down the first 5 of the Ten commandments and what they have to do with you respecting authority.

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Respect for Authority

I. Introduction

Heb 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

All of our lives, from birth to death, we are constantly under the authority of someone else. Our parents are our first authority figures. Later we come under the authority of teachers, employers, political leaders, doctors and others. Throughout all of this, we are also under the authority of God. Yet we constantly find ourselves disrespecting those that are in authority over us. We make jokes about politicians elected over us. We do not obey and respect our parents. Sometimes we even disrespect God. This is one of the most difficult lessons to learn and to follow.

II. Week 1

Key Concepts: Where does authority come from?

Romans 13:1 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

King David spoke of God's authority over everything. In 1st Chronicles 29:11 he says, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all." God is in charge. As the verse that starts this section states, it is God who establishes the authority over us. It is not by the power of a person.

Not because of who their parents were. Not because they were elected. They are in their place because God put them in place. As such, rebelling against the lawful authority over us is rebellion against God.

Think about that. That is the same sin that Satan committed – rebellion against God. How many times have we rebelled against authority? I am not talking about starting a revolution or anything but the little stuff: back talking our parents, being disrespectful to a teacher in school or maybe said something disrespectful about a leader. This puts those little things in a different light doesn't it?

Make a list below of ten people that you encounter day to day that you need to respect. Think carefully. Include even those that you may not be respecting now.

If all authority comes from God, then we are obligated to respect those in authority over us. Lets look at that word respect. Respect is an attitude of admiration or esteem. Respect is closely tied to obedience.

Memory Verse:

1 Chronicles 29:11 "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."

V. Week 4

Key Concepts: How should we obey authority?
Proverbs 25:6 "Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men"

Attitude is everything! Surely you have heard those words before. How we obey is as important as obeying. If you obey, but with a reluctant or bad attitude, you are not being respectful to the authority that asked for your obedience. In the military, such behavior is called silent insolence and is a punishable offense!

Look back at the opening verse for this chapter. When we exalt ourselves in the presence of those in authority over us or place ourselves among "the exalted" we are not carrying ourselves with a respectful attitude. We are putting ourselves before others.

Lets look at that a little deeper. Open your Bibles to Galatians chapter 6. Starting with verse 6 read to verse 10. This verse talks directly about how we obey. When it refers to sowing – it means obeying God in a general sense but also committing yourself to witness to other people. What do you think it means to sow to please your sinful nature?

stop people from worshiping God. The penalty of this law would lead to Esther and all of God's people to be killed. Look carefully about how she did this. She was respectful and obedient to the king. She prayed and fasted and asked others to pray and fast with her. She asked the king why he supported the law. God blessed Esther's obedience and her respect she showed for the authorities above her – including Haman who was the one who wanted her dead! Because of her respect for authority, God used her in a mighty way.

The book of Daniel has many examples of Daniel and his friends submitting to the punishment of an unrighteous government because they would not compromise their faith but would not disrespect the government that ruled over them. Daniel was thrown into a lion's den. Shadrack, Meshack and Abendego were put in a fiery furnace. In each case, their obedience to God and their respect for the authority over them led to their being saved and God being glorified.

Not only are we to obey and submit to those leaders that we might not like, we also are expected to pray for them. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Write below who we need to pray for specifically and why.

Memory Verse:

1 Timothy 1:1-2 "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

III. Week 2

Key Concepts: Why should we obey?

John 5:19 – "Jesus gave them this answer: 'I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'"

King David was a man who understood authority. He was not always a king. He started out as the youngest son. His older brothers and father were authorities over him. He joined the army. His officers were authorities over him. He served King Saul who also was in authority over him. King David understood respecting those who were placed over him even when that person was not kind to him. As we read our Bibles we find out that King Saul tried to kill David many times. Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 24:1-10. Read this story very carefully. How did David show respect to King Saul?

Why did David show this respect to King Saul when he wanted to kill David?

Just think a little further on this. Who in the Bible had the most authority but yet submitted to worldly authority – for your sake? Well if you don't know the answer, remember Jesus is usually a good guess and it is the right answer here. Yes, Jesus was fully God and fully man. He created the universe yet submitted to the authority of the Roman Governor of Judea, he submitted to the Sanhedrin even though it cost him his life. He did all of that, all so that you would be forgiven. How little is asked of us to submit to the authority over us.

Memory Verse:

Hebrews 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

IV. Week 3

Key Concepts: What if the person in authority is not good?

1 Peter 2:13-14 – "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right."

Read the verse above carefully. Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends here on earth. Peter was given authority, by Jesus, over the church after Jesus rose from the dead. The people who had conquered Israel were the Romans. While Peter was alive, the Romans were pagans. They worshiped many false gods. They taxed the people unfairly and killed many of Peter's people. Yet Peter was willing to obey a wicked and corrupt government even though that government would put him to death for his faith. Have you ever had a teacher that treated you unfairly? Based on 1 Peter 2:13-14, how should you treat that teacher that is unfair?

Jesus talks about this very thing. He tells us that we must LOVE our enemies (Matthew 5:44)! Not only that but when people wrong us or treat us badly, we have to "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39). Think on that for a bit.

If we only love and respect those who are easy to love and respect, we are not being obedient to what God wants us to do. It is when we love those who hurt us that we are submitting to God.

But what do you do about those in authority that look to harm us or turn us away from God? Guess where we are going to look? That's right, the Bible. In the book of Esther we have an awesome story about how God used an ordinary girl to do something extraordinary. Think about how intimidating her circumstances were. The second most important person in the Persian Empire convinced the king to pass a law that would