

Submission to Authority

James 4:6-8

Introduction: Lack of submission will keep God's presence out of our lives and will keep satanic influence in our lives. Lack of submission is lack of humility, which is prideful. We may work hard to exalt ourselves but apart from submitting to we will not receive *His* exaltation.

God has always had the principle of authority established even before the creation of the universe as we know it. The Triune God Himself is the highest authority with archangels under Him and many angels under them. *One of the ways in which we submit to God is in how we submit to His delegated authority.*

God regulates His established authority His laws which regulate the actions of His creatures. The breaking of God's laws is considered to be a challenge to His authority, also known as disobedience and rebellion. The breaking of God's laws, or the challenge to God's authority always brings negative consequences.

I. The History of Rebellion

1. The Rebellion of the Angels

- a. Isa. 14:13-14
- b. Satan's desire to be equal with God led to his rebellion against God, attempting to usurp God's authority. He later became Satan (the adversary).
- c. He led a number angels in his rebellion with him (Rev. 12:7-9)
- d. Rebellion against God's established authority always leads to one's downfall (Luke 10:18)
- e. This is why God equates rebellion to witchcraft because both has its origins in satanic influences (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).

2. The Rebellion of Man in the World

- a. God established one simple law, which was that man was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17)
- b. Enticed by Satan, man blatantly rebelled against God (Gen. 3:5-7)
- c. Like Satan, man desired to be like God rather than submitting to God. Like Satan, this brought his downfall.
- d. Rebellion against God's authority is what sin is all about (Rom. 5:12)

- e. “If man does not learn to know God’s mind or seek instruction from God’s delegated authority, if he depends on his own independent thought—thinking this is good, it tastes fine, it feels good, I will gain wisdom by eating it—then he will not only have rebelled against God but also God’s established authority on earth.” – Watchman Nee
- f. Man has continued to rebel against God ever since (Rom. 5:18-19)

3. The History of Rebellion

- a. We can trace man’s challenge of God’s authority throughout the majority of the Scriptures. However, we will only look at a few examples.
- b. Aaron and Miriam Rebelled against God’s appointed leader (Num. 12:1-15).
- c. “Not content with second place, Miriam and Aaron, led by the devil, tried to remove Moses by a coup. They cloaked their treachery in piety: ‘Has the Lord spoken only by Moses? Has He not spoken by us?’” – Oswald Sanders
- d. Korah rebelled against Moses’ authority and God took this personally (Num. 16:1-33).
- e. “As God would not allow anyone to commit an offense against Himself, so He would not allow anyone to commit an offense against His servants. As He did not permit the people to sin against His prophet and His priest, for He had established His authority among the people of Israel. Many times the Israelites were judged and punished because they violated God’s authority.” – Watchman Nee
- f. God takes any rebellion against His servants personally (1 Sam. 8:7)

4. Our Lord Jesus Brings the Example of Proper Submission

- a. There has been only one man who has been fully submissive to the Father, that is the second member of the Triune Godhead, our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ (John 5:19, 30; 8:28).
- b. Our Lord’s submission to God went even to the point of an agonizing death (Phil. 2:5-13)

5. Submission to Secular Governmental Authority

- a. Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-14
- b. Christians are obligated to pay taxes, obey traffic laws, and other civil laws that do not go against God’s clear revelation of His will.
- c. Christians are only permitted to reject government law when it goes against God’s law (Acts 5:28, 29).

II. The Authority of the Church

1. The law of the body of Christ. The body of Christ should be delighted in obeying its head, unfortunately, there are rebels in the body just as we may find sickness in a physical body.
 - a. Acting independently of the body is rebellion. When we act independently then we are not in subjection to the head.
 - b. Independence is disobedience to the Lord.
 - c. What should be done to a cancer or any other type of sickness in the body? What would be done if we allow the cancer or sickness to remain in the body?
2. Submission to Church Authority.
 - a. Matt. 18:15-20
 - b. The church has authority from God. The church has the authority to bind and loose and to turn wayward people over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. 5:1-5).
 - c. The church often fails to exercise such authority and will have to give an account to God one day for allowing sin to run rampant in its midst.
 - d. No doubt that others have abused this authority and have destroyed lives unnecessarily. The main purpose for exercising God's authority is for restoration.
3. Those Representing God's Authority in the Church
 - a. The ministry gifts, which include the elders (pastors) are God's representative authority in the church (Eph. 4:8-16).
 - b. 1 Cor. 16:15-16