

## NO AUTHORITY, EXCEPT FROM GOD

I do not at all believe that I am overstating the case when I say that many of the problems we have in our society today stem from and are directly caused by wrong attitudes and wrong responses to authority.

- a. Our **prisons** are filled with people who have flagrantly disrespected and rebelled against the laws put in place by civil authorities . . . and have disrespected law enforcement officers charged with the responsibility of enforcing those laws.
- b. Our **family courts** are filled with husbands who have abused their authority in the home . . . and wives who have disrespected and rebelled against the authority of their husbands . . . and the situation, in many cases, has resulted in domestic violence and/or divorce.
  - ▶ In many **marriages** the problem has not escalated to the point that it has been brought before a judge, but there is continual tension, and arguing, and bickering and the root problem is a lack of respect by one or both marriage partners with regard to what God's Word says concerning authority in the home.
- c. The same is true of the relationship of **parents to children**.
  - ▶ In many homes, parents do not demand respect and obedience from their children, and most children certainly aren't going to give it voluntarily . . . so there is constant tension, and arguing, and whining, and complaining, and fussing and fighting in the home.
- d. The problems in **our schools** is very much a problem with regard to attitudes and responses toward authority.
  - ▶ The school officials in many cases do not have the authority they need to create and maintain a healthy and productive learning environment.
  - ▶ The students who haven't learned to accept and respect authority at home bring their disrespect and defiance of authority right into the school.
  - ▶ Oftentimes, parents evidence attitudes toward the authority and decisions of school officials that shows they disrespect the authority of the school officials . . . and their children pick up on that and behave accordingly.
- e. In **the church**, it's no different.
  - ▶ The Lord intends that every congregation appoint elders, when there are two or more men who meet the qualifications and want to do the work of elders.
  - ▶ But some members don't want elders, because they don't want to submit to the authority of elders.
  - ▶ Some members *think* they want elders -- but, in reality, they just want to try to get their way by persuading 2 or 3 men to do what they want instead of having to persuade all the men.
    - Some members *say* they respect the authority of the elders -- but they show their true attitude when they disagree with a decision by the elders and refuse to submit to their decision.

The Bible writers talk about the various attitudes people have toward authority and the various ways in which people respond to authority.

- a. To be sure, there are those who **understand** and **accept** and **respect** authority.
  - ▶ The best example is Jesus.
    - Heb 10:5,9 -- "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: . . . 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
    - Jn 8:28,29 -- "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."
  - ▶ Another outstanding example is The Centurion who appealed to Jesus to heal his servant.
    - Matt 8:5-10 -- "Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.' 7 And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' 8 The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' 10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'"
- b. But some **resist** authority.
  - ▶ Rom 13:2 -- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever **resists** the authority **resists** the ordinance of God, . . ."
- c. Some **despise** authority.
  - ▶ 2Pet 2:10 -- "and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and **despise authority**. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to

- d. Some **reject** authority.
  - ▶ Jude 1:8 -- "Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, **reject** authority, and speak evil of dignitaries."
- e. Some **usurp** authority.
  - ▶ 1Tim 2:12 (KJV)-- "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to **usurp authority** over the man, but to be in silence."
- f. Some **abuse** authority.
  - ▶ 1Cor 9:18 -- "What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not **abuse my authority** in the gospel."
- g. Some treat authority in a **hypocritical** manner.
  - ▶ Matt 21:23-27 -- "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

What about you and yours?

- a. What's going on in your **marriage** . . . with respect to authority?
- b. What's going on in your **home** . . . between you and your children . . . with respect to authority?
- c. What's going on at **school** and in the **workplace** . . . with respect to authority?
- d. What's going on with you and the **church** . . . with respect to authority?
  - ▶ Do you take the decision of the **elders** (or the men of the congregation) as something to consider but not necessarily to accept and abide by?

In this sermon I want to start at "square one" and establish what the Bible teaches about authority.

- a. You need to examine your own attitude toward the authority of those who are in a position of authority over you.
- b. You need to make sure that you understand the role of authority.
- c. And you need to make sure that you accept and respect legitimate authority.

With all of that in mind, I want to begin by reminding you that . . .

### 1. God is Sovereign -- everywhere, over everyone, over everything, and always.

There is *no place* where God is not sovereign . . . and there is *no one* who is not under His sovereignty.

God is sovereign . . . the king, the ultimate authority . . . ever was, is, and ever will be.

He is the Creator of all that is.

- a. Gen 1:1 -- "In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth."
- b. Gen 1:26,27 -- "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; . . . 27 So **God created man** in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
- c. So the psalmist David says, "Know that the LORD, He is God; **It is He who has made us**, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture" (Psa 100:3).
  - ▶ Rev 4:11 -- "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."

He is the King . . . the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

- a. Psa 10:16 -- "The LORD is King forever and ever; . . ."
- b. Psa 47:7-9 -- "For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding. 8 God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne. 9 The princes of the people have gathered together, The people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted."

Secondly, I want to impress upon you that . . .

### 2. There is no legitimate authority except from God.

Rom 13:1 -- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, . . .**"

So . . . all legitimate authority is given (ordained) by God.

- a. Rom 13:1 -- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and **the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**"
- b. 2Cor 10:8 -- "For though I should boast somewhat more of our **authority, which the Lord hath given us** for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:"
- c. 2Cor 13:10 -- "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to **the authority which the Lord has given** me for edification and not for destruction."

**The authority Jesus had while He was in the world was the authority given Him by God.**

- a. Rev 17:14 -- "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for **He is Lord of lords, and King of kings:** and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."
- b. Jn 17:2 -- "Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as **You have given Him authority over all flesh,** that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."
- c. Matt 28:18 -- "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
- d. Eph 1:19-23 -- "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

**The authority the apostles had after Jesus left this world was the authority given them by God.**

- a. Matt 19:28 -- "So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"
- b. 2Cor 10:8 -- "For even if I should boast somewhat more about our **authority, which the Lord gave us** for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed--"
- c. Lk 9:1 -- "Then He called His twelve disciples together and **gave them power and authority** over all demons, and to cure diseases."
- d. Lk 10:19 -- "Behold, **I give you the authority** to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

**The authority the Holy Spirit had when He was sent into the world was the authority given Him by God.**

- a. Jn 16:13-15 -- "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."

**The authority man has over God's creation is the authority that was given to man by God.**

- a. Gen 1:26,27 -- "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
- b. Psa 8:3-9 -- "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-- Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!"

**The same is true with regard to . . .**

- a. **Civil authority** (The authority civil rulers have is the authority given them by God)
  - ▶ Rom 13:1-6 -- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices

evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing."

- ▶ Tit 3:1 -- "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,"
- ▶ 1Pet 2:13-17 -- "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."
- b. **Parental authority** (The authority parents have is the authority given them by God)
  - ▶ Eph 6:1-2 -- "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:"
  - ▶ Col 3:20 -- "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord."
- c. **Husband's authority** (The authority husbands have is the authority given them by God)
  - ▶ Eph 5:22-24,33 -- "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. . . . 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."
  - ▶ Tit 2:4-5 -- "that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."
  - ▶ 1Pet 3:1-6 -- "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror."
- d. **Elders' authority** (The authority elders have is the authority given them by God)
  - ▶ Ac 20:28 -- "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."
  - ▶ 1Tim 5:17 -- "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine."
  - ▶ Heb 13:7,17,24 -- "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. . . . 17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. 24 Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you."
  - ▶ 1Pet 5:1-3 -- "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;"

### 3. How you respond to God-given authority is how you respond to God and His authority.

Rom 13:1 -- "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. **Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, . . .**"

At the beginning of the sermon we looked at the different attitudes people have toward authority and the different ways people react and respond to authority.

- a. Some **resist** authority
  - ▶ And I want you to understand: When you resist God-given authority, you resist God's authority.
- b. Some **despise** authority
  - ▶ And when you despise God-given authority, you despise God's authority.
- c. Some **reject** authority
  - ▶ And when you reject God-given authority, you reject God's authority.
- d. Some treat authority in a **hypocritical** manner.

- ▶ And when you treat God-given authority in a hypocritical manner, you treat God's authority in a hypocritical manner.

Now examine yourself.

- a. What is your attitude and response toward **civil authority**?
- b. What is your attitude and response toward the authority of **the elders** (or, in the absence of qualified elders, the decisions by the men of the congregation)?
- c. What is your attitude and response toward the authority of **your husband**?
- d. What is your attitude and response toward the authority of **your parents**?

#### 4. Accepting and submitting to God-given authority is a proof and demonstration of faith

1Pet 2:13-16 ~ “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man **for the Lord's sake**, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 **For this is the will of God**, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but **as bondservants of God.**”

- a. Peter then uses the master/servant relationship as an example, and shows that servants should submit to their lawful masters “because of conscience toward God”.
  - ▶ 1Pet 2:18,19 ~ “Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if **because of conscience toward God** one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.”
- b. Paul, in giving similar instructions concerning the master/servant relationship, makes the same connection between faith in God and submission to authority.
  - ▶ Col 3:22-24 ~ “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, **fearing God**. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, **as to the Lord** and not to men, 24 **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward** of the inheritance; **for you serve the Lord Christ.**”

Likewise, Peter says that faith/trust in God is demonstrated when wives willingly submit to the authority of their husbands.

- a. 1Pet 3:3-6 ~ “Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who **trusted in God** also adorned themselves, **being submissive to their own husbands**, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”

And, in Rom 13:4,5, Paul says we must submit to civil authorities because of conscience toward God.

- a. Rom 13:4,5 ~ “For he (the governing authority, bw) is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for **he is God's minister**, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also **for conscience' sake.**”

#### 5. Your attitude and response to God-given authority is a matter of eternal consequence -- it matters!

Rom 13:1,2 ~ “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and **those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.**”

- a. R. L. Whiteside: “To resist the government does not simply mean to fail sometimes to obey a law; it is to take a stand against the government -- to defy the authority of the government. To do this is to array oneself against both God and the government, and in so doing brings upon himself the judgment of both.”

Col 3:22-25 ~ “Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 **knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance**; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be **repaid** for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”

Matt 7:21-23 -- “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

**Conclusion.**

One qualification with regard to submission to human authorities: "We must obey God rather than men"  
(Ac 5:29)