

AUTHORITY and SUBMISSION

REFERENCE SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9

INTRODUCTION

It is stated in Ephesians 5:18 that the Believer is to be filled with the Spirit. Verses 19 – 21 of this same chapter, list some of the evidences that a Believer is filled with the Spirit. One of these evidences is the Believer's ability to both handle and respond to authority properly.

SUBMISSION on THREE LEVELS

- Submission towards God. James 3:7a – Submit yourselves, therefore, to God.
- Submission towards one another. This is not a command to do any and everything anyone says, but it is a command to mutually serve one another, to seek each other's wellbeing and advantage in all things. Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."
- Submission is required to those in official places of authority; for example, husbands, parents, employees, etc. Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God."

It is apparent from the above, that submission is required, in some degree, by all people; regardless of age, race or gender.

The last instructions given in Ephesians, before successful warfare against the devil can be waged, is in regard to submission and authority. If the Believer is to be effective in the Christian life, it is imperative that the principle of submission is understood and obeyed.

As previously stated, submission is evidence of a Spirit-filled life. Submission, as well as ruling properly (authority), can only be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God does not require the Believer to submit to anything that clashes against His will. If one were to obey man's unjust rule rather than God's rule, he would be acting in defiance of God's divine authority. Acts 5:26 – 29, "Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them ... before the council; and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name? ... Then Peter and the other apostles answered, and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

DEFINITIONS

- Authority
The right to exercise power.
- Submission
To yield oneself to the authority or will of another
A military term meaning "to come up under"
- Rebellion
Opposition to one in authority
Open and armed defiance of or resistance to an established government

- Resist
To stand against, withstand or oppose
Originally a military term meaning “to range in battle against”

THE RESPONSIBILITY of THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Whatever the position of power one may hold, they must be aware that their power was given to them by God. They are only ministers and servants of God. Therefore, the one in authority becomes a steward of God’s power; and he will be required to give an account to God of his use of it.

God does not give power to men for the purpose of their self-exaltation or for them to master and rule over others. Instead those who are in authority have been given power to seek the benefit and edification of others. Their power should be motivated by and exercised in love.

SUBMISSION and AUTHORITY WITHIN the GODHEAD

God’s requirement to submit is exemplified within Himself. Within the Godhead is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are not three gods – there is only one true and living God. The true God is manifested in three persons. Each member of the Godhead has a separate role and function. Each member of the Godhead respects the role of the other.

- God, the Father
God, the Father holds the place of supremacy within the Godhead.

John 10:29. My Father, who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.

John 14:28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for My Father is greater than I.

- God, the Son
God, the Son is under the Father; not in equality, for they are one. But, in purpose, work and order, the Son is under Father.

John 17:4. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do.

Mark 14:36. And He (Jesus) said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee. Take away this cup from Me; Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

Matthew 22:44. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

- God, the Holy Spirit

God, the Holy Spirit is under submission to the Father and the Son.

John 14:16. And I (Jesus) will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter,
that He may abide with you forever.

John 15:26. But when the Comforter Is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father,
even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.

AUTHORITY and SUBMISSION CORRUPTED THROUGH the FALL of MAN

In the beginning, the God of all power delegated a portion of His power to man (both male and female).

- Psalm 62:11. God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.
- Genesis 1:26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Man, through disobedience to God, and obedience to Satan, has transferred his power and authority. Everything that was under man, fell along with the fall of man. Authority and submission has now come under the bondage of corruption.

- Luke 4:6. And the devil said unto him. All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.
- Romans 8:20, 21. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
- Genesis 2:18 – 24 reveals that man and woman were created equal, although they had different functions and responsibilities. Because of the fall of man, what was once loving authority has become tainted with slavish rule, and what was once loving, respectful submission has become tainted with resistance and rebellion.
- Genesis 3:16b. And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Desire – A desire to stretch out after, to run after or over.

Rule – To have dominion, govern or rule over (as a slave-master).

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