

TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 10: Submission (5b)

Offered by Ron Lively, M.Div., M.A. – BiblicalMentoring.org (Studies)

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **Ephesians 1:22-23**

22 And he put all things under his feet
and gave him as head over all things to the church,
23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter – Ephesians 1*

Step 4: Questions for Personal Applications and/or Group Discussions:

1. Do we as disciples have the same authority that the Apostles and Paul did in the early Church? Why? Who gives us the authority?
2. Does our attitude towards those God gives authority to reflect on our attitude toward God?
3. Can you agree that our authority is great only because of whom we represent.
4. Do you agree with Phillips who writes that "unwillingness to submit to those in authority over us is a great sin with severe consequences".
5. It is important to acknowledge that BiblicalMentoring.org as a ministry operates under the authority of a Governing Board.

Step 5: *Read and discuss the Content from the book:*

Chapter 5b per the author – Keith Phillips:

Christ Rules Today Through Delegated Authority

Jesus declared, "...All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." On this basis He commissioned His disciples to "Go...and make disciples of all the nations...." Implicit in this command was the investment of His authority in His disciples to build and regulate His Church, for He said to do it "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:18,19).

Jesus told His disciples, "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me" (Matthew 10:40). Here was the chain of authority: Christ represented the Father; the apostles represented Christ. To receive an apostle was to receive the Father (John 13:20); to reject an apostle was to reject Christ and the Father.

The Apostle Paul frequently referred to his God-given authority: "For even if I should boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I shall not be put to shame" (2 Corinthians 10:8). And often Paul exercised his authority: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

The first disciples delegated the authority they received from Christ to those they trained. With Christ's authority they appointed Church leaders (Acts 6:3,6; 14:23) and commissioned them to instruct others, who in turn would teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

Paul entrusted his authority to Titus (Titus 1:5) and instructed him to "speak to the Christians

there as sternly as necessary to make them strong in the faith..." (Titus 1:13 LB) and to correct them "as one who has every right to do so ..." (Titus 2:15 LB).

Paul expected the Christians to submit to the authority of two of his disciples just as they would to Christ Himself: "Please follow their instructions and do everything you can to help them as well as all others like them who work hard at your side with such real devotion" (1 Corinthians 16:16 LB, italics added). In the New Testament Church, second- and third-generation disciples freely exercised authority.

Since all authority comes from God (Romans 13:1-5) and He gives authority to those whom He chooses (Ephesians 4:11,12), our attitude toward those in whom He entrusts authority reflects our real attitude toward God. Whenever His delegated authority touches our lives, Christ requires us to acknowledge it and joyfully submit to it just as we would to Christ Himself. Our submission is a declaration of our trust in God.

You Receive Authority Through Submission

The authority a person exercises is determined by the authority to which he submits. The Roman centurion knew that if Christ spoke one word, his servant would be healed. The centurion explained his confidence: "For I also am a man set under authority..." (Luke 7:7,8 KJV). He understood the power vested in delegated authority. As long as he was in submission to his leaders, every command he uttered carried the authority of the Roman emperor. To disobey him was to demean the emperor.

The centurion's authority was great because of whom he represented. The centurion recognized this same principle in Christ. Since He represented God, and was completely submissive to the Father's will, every word Jesus uttered was invested with God's authority (Ephesians 1:20-23). The centurion's confession, "I also am a man set under authority," encapsulates the scriptural basis for all true authority: a person who is not in submission has no right to exercise authority.

One day I saw a massive traffic jam in downtown Los Angeles. A man was standing in the middle of a busy intersection stopping traffic at will, first from one direction, then another. Finally, he stopped traffic coming from all four directions.

The motorists were furious. Bystanders were yelling. I didn't know what to make of it. The man looked competent. He was well dressed, clean shaven and apparently not a bit disturbed by the ruckus he was causing. But I could not figure out his motives. There was no fire, no accident, no injury.

When the police arrived and escorted the man to the curb, the crowd jeered and hollered, "Throw him in the nuthouse! Take him to a psychiatrist!" They had passed judgment on the man and were ready to commit him to an institution because he had obviously exercised an authority that was not his. He was not a policeman or a fireman. He was simply a citizen—trying to find his contact lens! The crowd concluded that anyone who would exercise authority without being under authority must be insane.

A Christian has no authority unless it comes from Christ. And since Christ rules through delegated authority, when we refuse to submit to those in authority over us, we lose our authority. We find an instance of this when John instructed Gaius not to obey Diotrephes, because Diotrephes did not obey John (3 John 9-11).

Unwillingness to submit to those in authority over us is a great sin with severe consequences. Paul writes, "And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thessalonians 3:14,15).

A believer who refuses to submit to those in authority over him is like a runaway child. He will try to fend for himself, but without adult supervision his survival is in serious jeopardy. One who deprives himself of a spiritual guardian's protective custody rejects God's provision for his nurture and faces a tenuous future. Trust is a disciple's strength (Isaiah 30:15).

When I started ministering in Watts, I was not in submission to anyone. Soon I realized that without being under the authority of godly men, I had no authority. That was bad for me, but worse for those to whom I ministered.

I prayed diligently for a group of men to whom I could submit, because "in the multitude of

counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14 KJV). And I knew that God had spoken to early Church leaders corporately (Acts 15:28).

First John 4:1 says to "test the spirits" before submitting. This is a command to seek the leadership of godly people. I recognized that these men had to meet certain biblical requirements in order to receive God's authority. Both individually and corporately they needed to submit to God's Word as their absolute authority (1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). They needed to have proven their Christian commitment (2 Corinthians 8:22) by serving others (Matthew 20:26,27) and by being faithful in all things, like their stewardship of money (Luke 16:10-12). In summary, they had to live their faith, providing a model that I could emulate (3 John 11).

And the Lord faithfully provided these men. They became the Executive Board of World Impact. Once I had verified their commitment to God, I knew I could trust God's leadership through them to actively guide and admonish me.

pp.51-54

Step 6: *Share personal prayer requests then each person prays for the other's requests.*

Source: The Making of a Disciple by Dr. Keith Philips. Pub. by Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981. ISBN 0-8007-1181-5. Introduction by Robert E. Coleman. Content below (except study questions) is taken from the book without revisions.

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