

TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 9: Submission (5a)

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

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **Luke 14:33**

33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Step 3: Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter – **Luke 14**

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

1. In this lesson, you will learn that submission is much more than obedience.
2. Can you see how the phrase "Take My yoke", Jesus invites us to submit to Christ's authority – to trust Him?
3. We will learn that Christ's use of the word "hatred" refers to the authority to which a person submit, not to natural affections.
4. We will read a story that illustrates the serious implications of choosing which authority to obey – civil authority, a husband's authority or Christ's authority.
5. We will learn the implication of being a "dead man", that is, having died to self and living in and for Christ as we relinquish all rights even to blessings.

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

Chapter 5a per the author – Keith Phillips:

Joyful submission is the second mark of a disciple. Submission is much more than obedience. It is an inner attitude of trust in your sovereign, loving and omniscient God.

During my first year in Watts, I was walking down 103rd Street with three teenage friends. Suddenly one of the guys yelled, "Hit the ground!" A second guy shoved me down just as a bullet screamed over my head.

I was shaken. As I brushed myself off, I asked these guys how they knew a bullet was going to be fired, especially since it came from behind us. One of them grinned at me and quipped, "You mean you've got an education from UCLA and you don't know the sound of a gun cocking?"

I was grateful for their expertise and from then on, I was happy to submit to their leadership in surviving on the streets. They never had to tell me something twice. Their word was law. I trusted them.

Christ invites us to trust Him: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

"Take My yoke" means to submit to Christ's authority, to trust Him. Submission is the precondition for the rest Christ promises His disciples.

When I began driving a car, I grudgingly observed the speed limit. My motivation for obeying the law, however, was not trust, but fear. I did not want to get a ticket and face the consequences of paying a fine and higher insurance rates. The state was satisfied with my compliance with its authority, regardless of my motivation.

But Christ is not pleased with obedience alone; He also wants His disciples to be submissive—to trust Him. There is a great difference between submission and obedience.

The Pharisees provide a classic example of obedience without submission. They obeyed the letter of the Law without understanding the spirit by which God intended it to be interpreted. They did not trust the judgment of God because His higher law of love was foreign to them.

The Bible also records incidents of submission without obedience. If the laws of men conflict with the laws of God, the disciple can still maintain a submissive spirit by openly demonstrating his trust in God.

Peter and John maintained a submissive spirit toward God even while they disobeyed an unjust law. When those in authority over the apostles commanded them to stop teaching about Jesus, they refused to obey (Acts 4:18-20). They resumed their teaching about Christ and even prayed for boldness in doing so. Their submission to God's supreme authority required that they disobey their temporal authorities.

Please note that Peter and John did not hide their disobedience, but preached openly, trusting God with the consequences. They were willing to suffer further punishment if the authorities so ruled, knowing that their public obedience to God would bring Him glory.

Had the apostles felt guilt if someone "caught" them doing what they believed was right, they would not have had a submissive spirit. An act done with a submissive spirit causes no guilt. If a disciple openly disobeys temporal authorities in direct obedience to God's will, like Daniel's unlawful prayer (Daniel 6:10), and is willing to suffer the consequences, he is submissive.

In the 1960s many Christians participated in nonviolent protests against the unjust laws of racial discrimination. They knew that all men were made in the image of God and that dignity is our birthright. Black believers sat illegally in seats reserved for white bus riders and boldly requested service in white restaurants. They openly defied the civil authorities by obeying a higher law. Throughout their demonstrations these Christians remained submissive to God— free of guilt and willing to suffer the consequences.

A disciple strives to maintain an attitude of trust in God's authority no matter what the cost. Four biblical truths guide him in this pursuit.

Christ's Authority Is Supreme

Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26,27). Christ's use of hatred here refers to the authority to which a person submits, not to natural affection. Your submission to Christ, your trust in Him, must be so great that by comparison your allegiance to conflicting authorities is like hatred. Submitting so completely to Christ's authority is unreasonable for anyone but a dead man—that is, one who has made Christ the Lord of his life.

People in the inner city are often confronted with conflicting authorities. Hattie is the mother of several of our Bible club children. They live in extreme poverty, often going without food or sufficient clothing. As we met the physical needs of this family in Christ's name, Hattie came to love Jesus and obeyed His command to follow Him.

Her husband was a "mule," a transporter of narcotics from Mexico to Southern California. Frequently, he forced Hattie and their children to assist him. He would strap a package of heroin to Hattie's leg, concealing it beneath her dress. Or he would attach it to his children under their clothing. He threatened to beat or even kill his family if they refused to obey. Motivated by fear of physical abuse, of which they had frequently been victims, they obeyed.

When Hattie accepted Christ, she faced a severe crisis. She knew she was disobeying God by breaking the law of the land and by endangering her children. But if she refused to obey her husband, the consequences would be dreadful.

Which authority takes precedence? To whom should she submit, Christ or her husband? Jesus left no doubt. Christ's authority is supreme (Matthew 23:10). So, risking her own life and those of her children, Hattie obeyed Christ, took up her "cross" and followed Him.

As I struggled to understand what it meant for me to trust God, Luke 14:33 hit home: "So no one can become my disciple unless he first sits down and counts his blessings—and then renounces them all for me" (LB, italics added). When I listed my blessings, all of the things I count dear— my wife, my children, my work, my health, my friends, my reputation, my home—I realized that any one of these could be my god. I had to admit that if God chose to take one or all of these away, I would face a real crisis.

But then God reminded me that I was a dead man. And a dead man has no possessions. I relinquished all rights to these blessings when Christ became the Lord of my life. Now He is simply loaning them to me. If God chooses in His divine wisdom to remove one or all of these things I count so dear, I believe that He knows best and will give me the grace to continue to delight in Him.

Some believers attach qualifiers to their obedience, like, "I'll go anywhere for you, God—except Watts," or "I'll do anything you ask, Lord— if you guarantee no harm will come to my wife." What this really means is, "I won't go anywhere or do anything, Lord—unless I okay it."

Whenever we place a stipulation on our obedience to God, we completely deny our trust in Him. Any reservation about submitting to God discloses that we think we can take better care of ourselves than God can, that God does not know what is best for us. How foolish! Anything less than joyful submission is a denial of God's supreme authority, wisdom and love, and of our self-death.

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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 (except study questions) is taken from the book without revisions.

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