

# Submitting to Authority



## Facing Giants – Series

Ps. Waweru – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017

### Sermon Notes

In today's sermon in the series **Facing The Giants**, today we look at the topic:

**Submitting to Authority.** Why does God call us to face the Giant of Submission to Spiritual authority in an ever rebellious culture?

#### **QOD: Why do you think Bobi Wine won this election?**

First of all, the Bible is very clear on the subject of submission, not just in the church, but also for husbands, wives, children, and employees, to civil, parental, and spiritual authority.

As I read the scriptures I see a couple of words in the Bible that are synonymous with submission; **Honor, respect, giving, love and humility**

Find a person who understands submission to authority and you'll see a person who is humble, full of love, unselfish, accountable, and personally responsible.

Find a person who does not understand submission to authority and you'll see a person who is prideful, full of criticism, selfish, self-ruled, and spiritually irresponsible.

**BIBLICAL SUBMISSION IS NOT SLAVERY**, It is a very fundamental principle of life that is to be practiced in the world and the church. This is what makes this a giant for most of us! We live in a culture that glorifies independence and an ungoverned life.

**If you understand the principle of submission, you will understand the practice of submission**

There are many scriptures on how spiritual authority should govern and guide the church as well as instructions about the right response to authority, both civil and spiritual.

### **The Basis for Spiritual Authority**

- Ephesians 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Jesus is head of the church and He has established these offices and the people to be leaders with authority in those offices over the church. God also gives these leaders **the responsibility to serve, oversee, and establish HIS word and commands for HIS church in the earth**

- Hebrews 13:17 **Obey** them that have the rule over you, and **submit** yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. 18 **Pray** for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Clearly this is not talking about civil authorities, but spiritual authority. It says our attitude to Spiritual authority must be to

**OBEY, SUBMIT, But also to PRAY for spiritual leaders.**

**Submission to spiritual authority is about a functional relationship of love and honor, to God first, then to man.**

Look at these two scriptures about **honoring spiritual leaders.**

1 Tim. 5:17 *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.*

1 Thess. 5:12 *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

**People who have the biggest problem with authority in the church usually carry resentment because they want to be in charge themselves and can't be or have been hurt and carry an unresolved offence.**

**WARNING:** Beware of people who are always finding fault with the leadership of the church and the church itself. They are wolves in sheep's clothing.

- a. Their heart is rebellious and their fruit is pride and dishonor.
- b. They seek to destroy people, the church and even the faith while lifting up themselves and their "cause".
- c. They are bitter against leaders or leadership and long for control or influence.

**Watch out** for them for they claim to love God and His commands.

### **The function of Spiritual Authority**

More than ruling over people, **spiritual authority has an obligation to Jesus Christ to love, feed, and protect the flock of God.** And God has given them His grace and authority to govern. Along with that responsibility comes **instruction, counsel, warning, correction, and even rebuke when necessary.** Spiritual authority is more than a title; it is a relationship with people. They stand as servants, ministers, and even spiritual parents in the lives of God's people.

1 Cor. 4:14 *I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.* 15 *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.* 16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*

In many instances Paul gave commands to the church and even put people out of the church for disobedience and sin. In fact one time Paul said that the leaders of the church were to turn someone over to Satan that they learn not to blaspheme. Listen to this scripture;

2 Thess. 3:10 *For even when we were with you, this we **commanded you**, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* 11 *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.* 12 *Now them that are such we **command** and **exhort** by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.* 13 *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.* 14 *And if any man **obey not our word** by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

**Leaders are to be a strong godly example and to lead in strength and certainty.** However, many people are offended by this quality and cry “spiritual abuse”. They are simply offended at God’s word rather than the leader.

Submission isn’t a power struggle but rather a mutual relationship of love, humility, and respect.

Submission is a principle that should be practiced in every area of life, including the church, for it is **godly order and divine principles for safety and success.**

**If you Understand the principle of submission and you’ll understand the practice of submission**

1 Peter 5:5 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* 6 *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

This is another example of spiritual leadership and authority

As Christians we are commanded to **LOVE** and **SERVE** one another. (Gal. 5:13)

**The real love of Jesus is expressed through submission**

This is not about the abuse of a title but rather a mutual relationship of love, humility, and respect that starts with our submission to God first than man.

**Civil Authority**

Rom. 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. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For **rulers** are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is **the minister of God** to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is **the minister of God**, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

1. The correlation between governmental authority or “non-spiritual” authority and God’s authority is very clear.
2. God has not only established authority among men but, honors their judgment and punishment
3. “The higher powers” or “rulers” are called **MINISTERS OF GOD** (vs 4) so one could say that they are a type of “spiritual authority”
4. First the natural then the spiritual. Why would God expect you to obey the natural authority and not the spiritual authority? Isn’t it God that places pastors and elders over the church to feed the flock of God and to watch over the church?

**NOTICE: Only those breaking the law have an issue with the law! It’s the same in the church; only those who hate authority will not submit to authority. But those who understand the principle of authority understand the practice of submission.**

- Joshua with Moses

Numbers 27:20 (the Lord speaking to Moses about Joshua’s ordination) *And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.*

Joshua 1:16 *And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. 17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.*

We see that the principles of submission were operating in the Old Testament in the Life of Moses and the Children of Israel, who were called “the church in the wilderness” by Stephen in the Book of Acts.

A key here is that Joshua was referred to as, “Joshua, the servant of Moses” long before He was placed as the Leader. Also Joshua was called the “minister of Moses”.

Submission is about being a servant out of love for God and others. Jesus constantly admonished the disciples to be servants and to lay their life down for the Gospels sake instead of being concerned about ruling over people.

**Submission is a position you take and then a condition you live**

**The Blessing of Submission**

- Jesus submitting to his parents or those over Him in the Lord. Luke 2:51 *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

Jesus not only showed us submission to natural authorities but He also demonstrated submission to spiritual authority when he said, *"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."* (John 5:30)

**Look at the results of His submission to His natural authority,**

*"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."* Luke 2:52

And of course look at the results of His submission to His spiritual authority.....

Jesus developed favor with God and man by being under authority and therefore being answerable for His character

**Look at the lives of those who do not like spiritual authority, most often they refuse to be answerable for their character.**

#### **ABUSE OF AUTHORITY:**

Has there been abuse with spiritual leaders? **ABSOLUTELY!** Just as there has been abuse with money, love, and freedom, but that doesn't make those things bad or invalid. The mistakes by church leaders and Christians is not an excuse to violate godly principles. But they must be upheld and practiced the way God intended.

The Bible is very clear about how spiritual leaders and authority in the church ought to behave and minister. It gives several strong warnings towards abusive and greedy leaders. Jesus called them hirelings and on many occasions openly rebuked them.

Being a spiritual leader in the church is not about the title one has but rather the responsibility of the title.

Acts 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

1 Peter 5:2 *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

If you have experienced or are experiencing abuse in the hands of spiritual leaders, manipulation, being made to do things against your will, threatened or even having your money taken from you, please leave and seek counsel from trusted leadership.

**Finally:**

When you understand the principle of submission you'll understand the authority of God.

The point of submission to spiritual leaders, and civil authority is **love and submission to God first then to man.**

1 John 3:16 *hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

**Ministry:**

***Dealing with the Giant of submission to Authority***

- a. Those who need to begin to submit and honor God's authority in their lives
- b. Those mistrustful of authority because of hurt or being taken advantage of.
- c. Salvation

**Take Out: For the week**

**a. Find out who are the legitimate God given Spiritual and civil Authorities in my life?**

**b. Am I submitted to both my Spiritual and Civil Authorities? Where do I need to have bold conversations about this issue?**