

Lesson 28

Teacher's Manual

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AUTHORITY IN THE HOME

READ & MEDITATE ON: Romans 13:1-7

MEMORIZE: Romans 13:1

INTRODUCTION

God has a plan for order in the world. It includes order among nations, order in the church, and order in the home. This plan includes a primary responsibility for a husband, and also for a wife. It also includes the responsibility of children. God does not intend to smother our personalities, abilities, or talents, nor does He wish to do away with our individuality. He does wish to give to every man and woman an eternal reward. He intends that we all should help one another to achieve eternal favor with God. Homes which exist without clearly defined responsibilities often produce chaos rather than order. Because we love the Lord, we want to obey and please Him in all areas of our lives. We may not always fully understand God's purposes, but we can trust that His chief interest is for our well being. There are distinct differences between men and women emotionally, and physically. These differences lend themselves to divinely appointed offices for both husbands and wives. If we are willing to follow God's instructions, we will reap the benefits of a joyous and fulfilling Christian relationship in the home, and also in the church.

I. TYPES OF AUTHORITY

A. Equal Authority

No human organization has successfully operated without some kind of delegated authority. After the death of Communist

dictator, Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Union attempted a government by "Troika." "Troika" was a Soviet word for a carriage drawn by three horses. A government by "Troika" would be a government with three leaders. The leaders chosen by the Communist authorities were Krushev, Bulganin, and Malenkov. They were to preside over the affairs of the Soviet Union with equal authority. This arrangement of government, by three leaders of equal authority, was short lived. Soon only one leader, Nikita Krushev, emerged as the sole authority in Communist Russia. The other two-thirds of the "Troika" were banished into exile. The experiment in government by a committee was over. Authority was soon vested into one central supreme leader.

B. Sovereign Authority

"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. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Romans 13:1, 2

The Apostle Paul clearly tells us that all authority has God as its author and overseer. Any leader, whether in the home, in the church, in the nation, or wherever, should realize that his authority is a delegated authority. None of us possess any power or authority, except that which God allows us to have. Therefore, all men and women in positions of authority are responsible to God. In Ephesians 6:9, Paul speaks to masters, or men who have authority over other men. He warns masters not to threaten when they rule, because every earthly master has also a heavenly master. God does not respect one person above another, even though some persons may occupy positions of authority in regard to other men and women. This passage in Ephesians refers to people who have authority in secular matters. However, in Hebrews 13:7, 17, we are told virtually the same thing about those who hold positions in spiritual matters. In verse 17, the Apostle tells us that the rulers in spiritual matters "must give account." No leader in any realm, natural or spiritual, may exercise power or authority without regard to the consequences. He will suffer if he misuses authority or fails to recognize that authority is delegated to us by God who is, in the final analysis, the supreme authority in the universe.

E. Governmental Authority

Authority, derived from God, is to be exercised in every area of our human life. Every person is under some kind of authority— (see Romans 13:1-7). We are under some governmental authority, whether international such as the United Nations, or other leagues and pacts between nations, or the governmental authority of our own particular nation. We are admonished to submit to these authorities or powers. We are limited in this submission by the Word of God. God does not intend for any governmental authority, secular, religious, or otherwise, to cause us to violate His Word. Daniel, the Hebrew children, the Apostle Paul, and others, suffered persecution rather than submit to an authority that commanded them to violate a command of God. However, where laws do not violate the precepts of God we should obey them.

F. Ministerial Authority

The church is also a body of believers with leaders who have divine authority to rule, to feed, and to govern. Internationally, the church organization has leaders with delegated responsibilities for the proper and efficient operation of the church organization. In local areas the church has pastors or under-shepherds who are referred to in I Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:7, 17; II Timothy 4:1-5; I Thessalonians 5:14; and I Timothy 5:21. These under-shepherds are to exercise authority, taking care not to be "lords" over God's heritage. The exercise of ministerial authority through service includes: feeding the flock, taking oversight, being an example, watching for souls, preaching the Word, rebuking, reproofing, and exhorting. In these areas of service, ministers must be constantly aware that the true shepherd of us all is extremely interested in the manner in which they exercise their derived authority. Every minister must give an account, and for this reason they are admonished to "...be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1).

G. Family Authority

A fundamental, primary area where authority is exercised is in the home.

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H. Other Types Of Authority

There are seven basic areas of authority. They are summarized as follows:

has constituted authority for the protection of those under authority. We have noted previously that God recognizes authority in international affairs, in national affairs, and in church affairs. It would be unreasonable to assume that God would protect mankind by secular governmental powers, and protect the church by divinely called authorities, but leave the home without the protection of divinely appointed leadership. In Genesis 2:24, the family, whether composed of only two members, husband and wife, or of several members with children, and in some cases grandchildren, was God's primary organization on earth.

A. Order In The Home

1. The First Family

Adam was given power over creation, (Genesis 1:29; 2:19). He was also given authority in the home, (Genesis 3:16). This authority in the home should have been exercised as all other authority would eventually be exercised...with benevolent oversight. We note that it was Adam who received divine instruction in regard to the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, (Genesis 2:16, 17). We may safely assume that God expected Adam to adequately communicate this divine command to his wife, Eve. God did not speak directly to Eve until after she had eaten of the forbidden fruit. Just how Adam communicated the divine command to Eve we are not told, however, it was not sufficiently made clear to her to protect her from the guiles of the devil. Adam must bear a portion of the guilt for the fall of the human race because he was Eve's divinely appointed shepherd and protector. It would be foolish to assume that Eve was simply rebellious and wayward, as "one-flesh" Adam and Eve were alike entrapped by Satan. Adam failed to communicate divine truth in such a way as to protect Eve. Eve failed in interpreting and following the divine instructions communicated to her by her husband. She acted independently to determine the destiny of her family, and furthermore, the entire human race. It is not unreasonable to assume that the failure in the Garden of Eden was as much caused by a failure to exercise proper authority, and response, as by a failure to resist temptation.

God uses the same word rule in Genesis 3:16 as he used in regard to authority in the church in Hebrews 13:7, 17.

2. The New Testament Church Family

In Ephesians 5:23, "the husband is the head of the wife," Paul says that the man has the delegated authority of God to

D. Christ Our Example Of Submission

Not only did Christ set an example of leadership when He served the apostles, but He also gave us an example of submission. Christ, as God, is the Head of the Church and the leader of authority of the body. As man, He obeyed the will of the Father (Spirit) in all things. In Hebrews 10:7, He stated that He came to do the will of God. In John 8:29, He said, "I do always the things that please him." We may compare this with I Corinthians 7:32-34, which refers to the wife's desire to please her husband. Thus we see, in Christ, the example of the husband's role as overseer and also the wife's role as the subject. The husband will find himself fulfilled as he exercises authority through love. The wife will find herself fulfilled as she exercises submission in response to the husband's demonstration of Christ-like love.

III. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR AUTHORITY

God's purpose for authority is that He might exercise His leadership through delegated under-shepherds. A leader's responsibility is to provide the protection, security, and atmosphere in which to develop character for those under his care. God wills eternal life for every person on earth. Not willing that any should perish, God administers His will through divinely appointed leaders. Among these subordinates are ministers, husbands, and parents. In regard to children, our highest good is achieved through the scriptural application of divine principles for authority. Any failure on a leader's part to lead as God leads, or to submit as Christ submitted to the will of the Spirit only frustrates this purpose. God's purpose is to administer His divine will for the common good of His subjects.

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be the leader in the family. He is not a dictator. His headship is similar to that which Christ exercised over the church. Christ does not cram His will down our throats, but He wins our obedience through the exercise of benevolent authority. Paul said, "...the love of Christ constraineth" (II Corinthians 5:14). The husband is not superior to the wife in the eyes of God. Galatians 3:28 declares male and female to be equal as to individual worth. The husband is not the exclusive decision maker, nor is he always right. Passages of Scripture which further state man's position of authority and responsibility are I Corinthians 7:34; I Corinthians 11:3, 8, 9; Ephesians 5:33; and I Timothy 2:13, 14.

B. Authority In Love

We are not left in doubt as to what the word love means in the context of marriage. Particularly the husband's affection toward his wife. He is to love her as Christ loved the church. Make no mistake, this is love demonstrated by sacrifice. As Christ gave His life for the church, the husband is to love his wife to the point of sacrificing his own life for her if necessary. Such love would never be demonstrated by domineering lordship. This love can only be demonstrated by benevolent oversight, or by serving (John 13:1-7). No pastor could expect the right kind of obedience from a church if he ruled in lordship. No husband could expect obedience and submission from his mate, unless he demonstrated his affection through sacrificial love. This is not to say that the wife is to demand certain types of expressions from her husband before she decides to submit. She is told this in numerous passages of scripture, (I Timothy 2:11, 12; Titus 2:2-4; I Peter 3:1, 5, 6). It is a well established principle of the Word of God that a wife is to submit to her husband in willing obedience. Such submission is natural when a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church. We obey Christ because He loved us and gave Himself for us. No wife need submit to a husband who gives instructions which are contrary to the Word of God.

C. Mutual Responsibilities

Briefly, all Christians are to submit one to another and all Christians are to love one another, (Ephesians 5:21, John 15:17). When God assigned the husband the responsibility of leadership and the wife the responsibility of submission, He did not intend that these should be their exclusive duties. He did intend that the husband's primary responsibility would be to lead and to love as well as submit; and the wife's primary responsibility would be to submit as well as to love.

1. Man-To-God Relationships

a. Sovereign—God's imperial authority

Ephesians 1:20, 21
Hebrews 1:1-5
Revelation 19:6

b. Varacious—the authority of God's Word

Psalms 119:142, 151
John 16:13

c. Conscience—the inner knowledge of right and wrong

Acts 24:16
Romans 2:15; 9:1
II Corinthians 1:12

2. Man-To-Man Relationships

a. Delegated

Spiritual Leadership
Government Officials
Employers
Family

b. Stipulated—specified roles and responsibilities

Colossians 3:18-22

c. Custom—yielding to local custom or tradition

Romans 13:7

d. Functional—authority by reason of special training or service

Example: Wreck on highway
Doctor, Emergency Unit, Policeman, Wrecker

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II. GOD'S ORDER OF AUTHORITY IN THE HOME

In the key passage on authority, (Romans 13:1-4), we are told that all divine authority is to promote good works and to resist evil works. While men sometimes carry authority without discretion, God

C. Benevolent Authority

"And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

Luke 22:24-26

In this passage Jesus contrasts Christian authority as He exercised it, and worldly authority as the Gentile leaders exercised it. The authority that Christ exercised was characterized by loving service. Though He had all power He did not need to display His divine prerogatives (choices), but rather displayed His sincere love for the disciples over whom He was in authority by serving them. We might call this BENEVOLENT OVERSIGHT. This is oversight that is characterized by loving, self-giving service.

Another key scripture is found in John 13:2-5. In this passage we read that Jesus knew all things had been given into His hands, or that He had all authority. The stage was set perfectly for Him to exercise lordship if He had so willed. Instead of that, in verses four and five John states, "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:4, 5). Again we see the exercise of benevolent oversight or authority administered in loving service. We, therefore, may generalize that the two basic types of authority are autocratic authority which Jesus labeled "lordship" and benevolent authority which has the main characteristic of "loving service."

D. Autocratic (Lordship) Authority

In contrast to the authority that Christ exercised was the authority exercised by Gentile rulers who acted as Lords, demanding respect and honor, whether deserving or not; simply because of their position of authority. Apparently the Gentile rulers chose to not be aware that their power and authority was derived from God, and was only delegated to them as servants of God. We may conclude that Jesus is a primary example of proper administration of authority.

