

God-Honoring Authority

God's Plan for Leading and Following Others

I. God is the source of all authority

1. All authority _____ .

“...He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15).

Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has informed Him? ...Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust...It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. (Isaiah 40:13,15, 22)

2. God has _____ a _____ of His authority to men:

“...fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

3. God has given _____ a measure of authority over _____:

- **Government**—*Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God (Romans 13:1).*
- **Church leaders**—*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account...(Hebrews 13:17).*
- **Husbands**—*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything (Ephesians 5:22-24).*
- **Parents**—*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth (Ephesians 6:1-3).*
- **Masters and, by application, employers**—*Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ (Ephesians 6:5).*

- 4. Definition of human authority:** “The God-given _____, _____, and _____ to _____ and _____ others, for their good and to fulfill the good purposes of God.

II. Authority is part of God’s nature and plan

1. Authority and submission are found in the _____.

... that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me... (John 14:31).

When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

2. Authority and submission were intended to be a part of human relationships _____ Paul bases his teaching about the differing roles of men and women on God’s plan in creation, prior to sin entering the world:

For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake (1 Corinthians 11:8-9).

A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve (1 Timothy 2:11-13).

III. God’s plan for those who have authority:

1. With authority comes the _____ to care for those under authority and to bring about God’s good purposes. Those in authority will give an account for their stewardship of what God has given them.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account (Hebrews 13:17).

“Again, it (the kingdom of heaven) will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them...After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. (Matthew 25:15,19, NIV)

2. Authority in the Kingdom must be used to _____ in contrast to the worldly selfish use of authority.

And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’” But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. “For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves (Luke 22:25-27).

3. Use of authority should correspond to the _____ of those being led
- Children vs. adults
 - Times of peace vs. times of war
 - Emergency vs. normal life
4. Various spheres of authority have _____ from God to enforce their authority.
- Corporal punishment: _____
 - Death penalty: _____
 - Church discipline: _____
5. Human authorities should work together and recognize the jurisdiction that God has given to each

6. Authorities should uphold and encourage the _____, _____, and _____ of those they lead.

- God has given people personal and property rights

You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:15)

- Being made in the image of God, people have God-given dignity, talents, and gifts that are to flourish under God's good plan.

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers (1 Peter 3:7, NIV).

- Christians should be treated as fellow-heirs of the kingdom and as equals.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (Matthew 23:9-12, NIV).

7. Authority is broader than simply enforcing God's commands; it includes directing how those commands should be practically lived out.

IV. God's Plan for those who are under authority:

1. Those under authority are to _____ to and _____ those who lead them.

_____ yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Show proper _____ to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, _____ the king (1 Peter 2:17, NIV).

Servants, be _____ to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable (1 Peter 2:18).

Servants, be submissive to your masters with _____, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable (1 Peter 2:18).

In the same way, you wives, be _____ to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives (1 Peter 3:1).

...wives, be _____ as they observe your chaste and _____ behavior (1 Peter 3:1-2).

2. There are steps we can take when we _____ with those in authority over us.
 - _____—begin with an attitude of humility
 - Clarify whether it is a _____ or _____
 - _____
 - Appeal to _____
 - If necessary, _____ rather than man, otherwise submit

3. A command from an authority should be disobeyed when it clearly _____ as revealed in His word. Scriptural examples are:
 - The Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh and did not kill the baby boys—(Exodus 1:20-21).
 - Moses and the Israelites disobeyed Pharaoh and left Egypt—(Numbers 33:3).
 - Obadiah disobeyed King Ahab and rescued 100 of the Lord’s prophets—(1 Kings 18:3-4).
 - The apostles chose to obey God rather than men—(Acts 4:19-20, 31).

4. Leaving a relationship of authority is sometimes _____ . At other times it is required because of _____ .
 - Children grow up and leave parents; we change jobs; we change churches

- Leaving abusive authority is sometimes permissible:

Jesus' parents, following the command of God, fled from the authority of King Herod who sought to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:13-18).

Moses, at the command of God, led the Israelites out from under the oppressive authority of Egypt (Exodus 3).

In the Mosaic Law, a slave woman was allowed to go free from her marriage to her master/husband if he did not provide her with food, clothing, and conjugal rights (Exodus 21:8-11).

- Even when leaving, authority should be honored as much as possible, as David honored Saul (1 Samuel 24, 2 Samuel 1)

5. In _____, believers are to _____ when called by God to suffer under the leadership of harsh, unrighteous or ungodly authority, remembering Peter's instruction.

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (1 Peter 2:18-25)

V. Church leaders should exemplify godly authority

1. Church leaders should _____ by remembering:

- They are responsible for those who are precious to God

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

- They will give an account to God for their leadership

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you (Hebrews 13:17).

- They must resist any impulse to use authority for selfish ends or lord it over the flock

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away (1 Peter 5:2-4, NIV).

- They should be careful with church discipline
- They should respect the authority of the individual, family, employer, and government (Ephesians 5:22-6:9)
- They should unflinchingly use their authority when it comes to teaching the truths of the gospel and the principles of godliness.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you (Titus 2:11-15).

...I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:1-2, NIV).

Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4:9-12, NIV).

- 2. Conclusion:** Although human authority is often abused, a God-imitating relationship of leadership and submission that is according to His plan is _____, life-giving, beautiful, and often _____.