

Msg #145 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*
“Authority”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today let's talk about submitting ourselves to the authority which has been placed over us. This is pretty much an unpopular subject with most people. If you ask anyone if they respect authority, they will probably tell you that they do. They will probably tell you that respecting authority is the Christian thing to do. But, you know, most people don't really respect authority unless they like the person in the first place. But submission to authority has very little to do with whether or not you approve of their actions. This is probably a little bit confusing, but, I'm not talking about liking someone and therefore giving them respect. I'm talking about respecting authority just because God has given it to them, not just when you approve of how they are using it.

We're a people, we earthlings, who love to look at others and judge them before we respect them. Of course, this is not such a bad thing, that is, if we are concerned with whether we are approving of what they do or say. But when it comes to authority itself, most people have a hard time respecting the authority just because that person is the authority.

However, today I would like you to take a look at authority, just for the sake of authority itself. You know, of course, that God is the ultimate authority. God rules all things. The Bible says that God moves the hearts of kings like rivers of water. This means that those who have authority, whether they are kings, presidents, governors, mayors, or police officers, have authority, and that authority is controlled by God. God is in control. In fact the Bible also says in Romans 13:1 that there is no power but that which comes from God. No power but that

which God himself ordains. God is the ultimate power, and there is no one that exists that has any power, any authority, unless God himself controls it.

Some people think that Satan has a lot of power. And, of course he does. But have you ever thought about where he got his power? Satan thinks that his power comes from himself. He thinks he has power within himself that is separate from God. But Satan himself is deceived. Satan will find out one day that he himself is controlled completely by God, and that he has no ability or authority to do anything unless God permits it. The story of Job tells us this. When Satan desired to cause Job to turn away from God, God gave him permission to torment Job. However, Satan could not torment Job without that permission, and then he could only torment him to the extent that God permitted.

God is the all mighty God. He is not just partially powerful, and he is not fighting Satan for the power base. Actually, there is no fight to it. God is the power, period, and everyone else, including Satan, will realize it sooner or later. God doesn't have to worry that someone will take over his kingdom. God can say, with all confidence, what will take place in the future concerning all those who resist the power of God. That's because God knows he is the only power, and that all other powers are only powers that have been permitted by him. Power and authority belongs to God, and to whomsoever God gives it. Jesus said, in Matthew 28:18, that all power in heaven and earth had been given to him. Jesus, therefore is also all powerful. He is all mighty. In John, chapter 19, we read where Jesus was being questioned by Pilate, and Pilate said to him, "don't you know that I have the power to crucify you?" And Jesus replied, "you could have no power at all against me, except it were given you from above."

Jesus knew that he had total authority. Any authority that was exercised was just authority that had been given by God. You know, an interesting thing about authority is that it can only be given by someone who has it in the first place. Just imagine trying to give someone something that you don't have. You can't give someone authority if you haven't already been given the authority in the first place by someone higher than you. When it comes to authority, the person who is highest in authority is the one who decides who has what authority. Jesus could give authority to his disciples when he sent them out to preach the gospel because he had already received the authority from God the Father to do this. It's like anything else in life. You can't give anything to anyone unless you already have it to give.

Authority, therefore, comes from God. It is extended to God's Son, and from there it is extended even further. Jesus gave it to his disciples, and his disciples could therefore lay hands on other people and transfer some of the power to them. Laying on of hands is the outward demonstration of a spiritual transference of power. No one in the church of God could ever lay hands on another person and transfer anything if the power had not first been given to them by someone who already had power and authority. There is no power but that power which comes from God.

So, what's my point? It is this. When God gives power, then others can use that power. They can, of course, use this power for the glory of God, or they can even use that power for evil.

There's a curious scripture that makes a lot of sense from this angle. It is Romans 11:9, and it says, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." This means that whatever God gives, he does not take away. God does not repent, or turn back away, when he gives someone the power and they misuse it. Of course, if God gives power and authority to someone, he can certainly take that power away. However, if God promises something, he will not take that promise back unless the promise had certain stipulations in the first place that were not followed. Therefore, just because someone misuses the authority that God gives them, does not mean that God will take that authority away. There have been many Biblical accounts given where God has given authority to men who used it for evil purposes. But then, if God only allowed good to take place, and did not allow evil to take place, then we would have no earth as we know it. We would all be in heaven.

But, God does allow authority to be misused. I doubt there is a single person listening to me that cannot recall a particular instance of someone who has been given power and authority in some way and has misused it for evil purposes. Men can quickly come up with names of their employers or other bosses who have, in their opinion, used their power in an evil manner. You hear about it every day in factories and office buildings. Some people think that God should only give power and authority to men and women who use it correctly. They think that every boss should be a good boss, and they can't seem to understand how their boss ever got where they were. But then, God doesn't put people in authority just because they are righteous or intelligent. In fact, I dare say that there is not a woman alive on this earth who thinks their husband uses his authority perfectly all the time. In fact, most of the things you hear is that women despise the authority of the husband. And then the husband complains about the wives despising their husbandly authority, but at the same time, the husband despises the authority placed over him.

Now, I know that what I'm talking about today is not a popular subject. From our fleshly side, we really don't like authority. What we really like is to do our own thing. From our natural man point of view, we don't like anyone telling us what to do. However, if we rebel against authority, then we must accept the fact that we may also be in rebellion against God. Authority is not a man made thing. Man doesn't set himself in authority. Oh sure, there will always be men who think they are their own authority just as Satan thought he could be his own authority. However, every time we start to think that we can resist authority of any kind, we must also remember that scripture in Romans 13:1 which says that there is no authority except the authority which comes from God.

We also have another scripture which demonstrates this concept. In the book of Jude we see that Michael the Archangel was in dispute with the devil concerning the body of Moses. Verse 9 says, "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, in dispute concerning the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you." Notice that there was a dispute, but that Michael did not dare bring a railing accusation against Satan. This was not because Michael feared Satan in any way, but that Michael recognized that there is no power and no authority except that power and authority that God gives. Therefore, Michael was not afraid to fight with Satan, he was afraid to go against the authority that God had

given Satan. Satan only has authority to work his evil works in the earth because God has allowed it. Michael understood this. The archangel of God was not about to go against any authority unless God specifically directed him to. This is why Michael did not rebuke Satan himself. He said, "The Lord rebuke you." Michael knew that if he was to rebuke Satan himself, without the Lord specifically telling him to, he would not be going against Satan, but against the power of God himself.

In verse 8 of Jude, it warns us about wicked men who despise authority and speak evil of those who have been given the honor of authority. Also, in 2 Peter 2:10 we have the same statement concerning wicked men who speak evil of those in authority. Michael the archangel could well understand authority and could realize that all authority is from God, and is only given by God according to God's will. If Michael the archangel had gone against the devil with his own accusation, then it would be as if he had gone against God himself.

When we resist authority, we must remember that it is only God who has authority, and therefore it is only God who can give that authority. Therefore, if anyone has authority, then we cannot go against it unless God specifically gives us the authority to go against it. No, we don't have to submit to authority when someone in authority asks us to go against the will of God. We must remember that it is always God's will that comes first. However, when authority becomes corrupted, we still do not have the right to rail against it. We can refuse to participate in anything which we feel is wickedness, but we cannot rail against authority just because they are wicked. The authority belongs to God. If we come against authority in any way, we must carefully consider whether or not God is specifically giving us authority and the direction to do it. Otherwise, we may find ourselves in direct opposition to God himself.

Authority is a very difficult thing for many people, even including Christians. Our flesh wants to resist anything that does not line up with our own wishes. However, the bottom line is not whether we like or approve of authority, but whether we submit to it within the guidelines that God has given us in his word.

As I said, this is not a popular subject, even within the Christian church. In spite of being born again in spirit, we still find it difficult to resist the natural impulses of the flesh. We know that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God, but we find it very difficult to submit to authority which does not follow our own will and our own wisdom. We always submit to authority which we approve of, but we have a hard time accepting authority that does not line up with our own opinion.

Probably the easiest thing to recognize is how we complain about our political leaders. Maybe just a much, we complain about those who supervise us at the workplace. But one of the most difficult places of submission is for wives to submit to their husbands. Now, I fully realize that this is a touchy subject. However, the reason this is a touchy subject is that there has been such a strong push in the world today, including religious circles, for the woman to reject the authority of the husband. However, this is just a prelude to husbands rejecting the authority of Jesus

Christ. Whether it is woman rejecting the authority of their husband, or the man rejecting the authority of Christ, it is still a case of rebellion, and it stems directly from the initial rebellion of Satan. And, whether you think this is right or wrong is your business, but I think that when we take a close look at the scriptures we see this very clearly.

Now, there is a very good reason why wives do not want to submit to their husbands. And the answer is that husbands, for the most part, are terrible examples of authority. I'm a husband myself, and I must admit that I feel sorry for my wife. I really don't like being the authority of the home. It carries too much responsibility. And just like being a boss at work, you can never do it right. No matter how hard you try, you will offend your employees somehow. Husbands are no different. We husbands always offend.

However, the point I am trying to make is that whether or not a person does a good or bad job of acting in authority does not give us the right to resist that authority. The only right we have to resist any authority is when God shows us that it is contrary to his will. It is only when authority goes against the will of God that we can resist it. And no, don't make the mistake of thinking that evilness implies no authority from God. God gives authority to many people who are evil at heart. If you don't believe me, just look in the Bible and read about all the kings of the 10 tribe northern kingdom of Israel. Every one of those kings was wicked. However, God gave every one of them authority to be king. Some of them were kings for a very long time. When God gives authority, he does not always make his rulers to be good people. And actually, most people in authority are probably not very righteous. As the old saying goes, "power corrupts. And, absolute power absolutely corrupts."

In the case of husbands, they are human. Therefore, they will automatically be corrupted. But God himself is perfect. So, if a woman has a difficult time submitting to the authority of her husband, we understand to a certain extent. However, when it comes to God, God is not corrupted in any way. Therefore, for a man to reject the absolute authority of God can not so easily be overlooked. In fact, in scripture the Bible tells women that they should give honor to their husbands, but then gives them a sort of loophole by saying that submission is required of women unless they are living in fear. If they are afraid of their husband, then they are not required to remain in the marriage situation. However, with God, the problem is never that God is unreasonable. God is always right. Therefore, if a man refuses to be obedient to the will of God, this is unacceptable.

Authority is a difficult subject to face. However, let's take a quick look at 1 Corinthians 11. It says that the head of the woman is the man. And, it says that the head of the man is Christ. And, it says that the head of Christ is God. Now, we know that Christ submitted himself fully and completely to God. This is also what is required of the man. The concept of having Christ be your head means that Christ is the part of you that directs you. The head always directs the body. The body never directs the head. This is why the woman has the man as her head. Her husband is the one who is responsible to direct the family. And women, try not to make excuses for not

submitting to the authority of your husbands. If you do, you just give your husbands the right to make excuses for not submitting to the authority of Christ. Wives, whether you realize it or not, your submission to your husbands is God's way of showing your husbands how it is to be done. This is what Jesus did while on earth. He demonstrated how to submit totally and completely to your head. God the Father is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of the man. The man is the head of the woman. And, for that matter, it can be easily seen that children should also look to the parents as their head, and not try to be their own authority.

Now, if you think about this concept of Christ being the head of the man, you might be able to see how the concept of being beheaded for Christ fits in here. To be beheaded for Christ implies that you have replaced your own head with the head of Christ, because it is the head of the body which directs the body. We should all be beheaded. That is the ultimate faith in God who should be the ultimate authority in all things. And because there is no authority unless God gives it, then by submitting to the authority that God has placed over us, we ultimately have submitted to God himself. 1 Corinthians 15:28 says, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

You see, we all must submit ourselves to those whom God has set over us. If we don't, then we will actually find ourselves resisting God himself. Romans 13:2 says, "Whoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." You know, it is much better to submit to those in authority over us. In this way we become obedient to the will of God. If it is God's will to set someone in authority, then why would we want to go against it? The only reason to resist authority is when the authority is outside of the will of God. God does not want you to sin just because your husband or the governor or the king asks you to. But to resist the authority for any other reason is to resist God himself.