

Message #78 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Rebellion Against God's Authority - Part 3”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to continue with the subject of God's authority, and the rebellion which is at work in God's people. This is the third message of a three-part message entitled, “Rebellion Against God's Authority.” If you missed the first two messages, please feel free to contact us for copies of them, as well as this message for today. Remember, our messages are free. There is no cost for our material.

Now, let's take a look at authority from yet another perspective. In part two of this three part message, I said that the hiding of your nakedness is at the center of true submission to God's authority. This is because the covering of your flesh is equivalent to admitting your unworthiness because of sin. When Adam and Eve attempted to hide their nakedness with fig leaves, it was a sign of their willingness to admit their fault, and to show God their intent to conform. On the other hand, as is done so openly in many instances in this latter day, nakedness is boldly displayed in complete defiance to God's standards of righteousness. When we clothe ourselves, we are acknowledging our sin. When we clothe ourselves, we are acknowledging God's authority. We are acknowledging God's right to establish what is right and what is wrong. To refuse to be covered is to blatantly defy the authority of God, in that we profess no shame for our disobedience to his word.

Now, we can quite easily understand the concept of covering our nakedness, and that by covering our bodies we cover our shame of sin. But, covering our naked bodies to take away the shame of sin is only one aspect of submission to God. Submission to God must encompass a true desire to

give glory and honor to Him. Glorifying God is at the very root of worship. Worshiping God is not just a form of religious ritual, but something by which we bring honor and glory to God. To worship God is to give him honor, and to magnify him. By doing so, we show our obedience to him. It is in our demonstration of respect for his greatness that we really do perform true worship. On the other hand, when we do not give glory to God, or when we exalt other forms instead of God, we cause the glory of God to become obscure, to become less recognizable, or less clear. When we allow other objects or persons to share in the glory, then God's portion of glory is less than what it should be. Let me explain this in another way by taking a look at what glorifying God really is.

To glorify a person or object is equal to shining light onto that person or thing. Picture yourself in an auditorium where there is a stage, and a person is on the stage. Imagine that the lights of the auditorium are turned down and that a spotlight comes on. This spotlight centers on the person who is standing in the middle of the stage. We have probably all seen this, and it doesn't take too much to recognize that the person is being illuminated. To glorify someone is to illuminate them. It is equivalent to shining a spotlight on someone, who then becomes the center of attention. This is done extensively on actors and actresses who perform on stage. This illumination of people focuses the attention of the whole audience toward the person on center stage, and is an attempt to bring honor to that person. All the people in the audience are focusing their attention on that person, and in a sense, are indicating that the person is so important that they all have nothing more important to do than to give their whole undivided attention to them. The person on stage is honored in the sense that all the people give up their own thoughts and their own time in order to allow the person on stage to dominate their lives for a short period of time.

This act of illuminating one person is equivalent to making a statement that says, "You are important to us. In fact, you are so important that we lay aside our own lives and our own thoughts and our own words in order that you might dominate this moment of time, for you are considered to be, in our eyes, worthy of our attention."

Now, think of this audience giving their time and attention from their own lives, but also applauding when the stage person is illuminated. This applause is considered approval, and also is considered as appreciation for the qualities of the individual, whether of talent, of appearance, or words. In short, the applause is honor given, and the whole presentation of illumination, attention, and applause, is an act of bringing glory and honor to that person at center stage.

This concept is the basis of worship. However, we do not generally consider worship to be worship unless we are giving praise and honor to God. But when we give praise and honor to another individual or to a physical thing or even an abstract concept, it is technically one and the same as worshiping. To worship God is to show appreciation for him in any form of praise, honor, and glory.

To glorify a person or object is to bring light to bear upon that person. To worship God is to bring light to bear on God in order to focus the attention on him. We don't generally think of applauding God, but in many ways we applaud him. Our applause to God is generally in the form of words or actions. It is by our words and actions which imitate God's righteousness that God is pleased, for he accepts our words and actions of righteousness as acknowledgment that we approve of Him.

When we give honor to other persons, we do not generally think of it as worship. We think of worship as only giving God the honor, praise, and glory. But whether our praise, honor, or glory is actually worship or not, has less to do with our words than it has to do with our hearts. When we worship God, it is the intent of our heart that is different. It is the heart which must be maintained in a proper attitude toward God, and not toward undue glorification of man or of earthly things. If our praise, honor, and glory of other people or other things become disproportionate, or if the praise, honor, and glory of other people or other things begins to detract from the supremacy of God, then we enter into the area of idol worship. This happens to Christians more than is generally realized. Many things, or even other people, can become idols to us if we're not careful. In fact, why do you think the terms, "Movie Idol, or Television Idol," were coined? When praise and honor is carried to a greater level than the object or person actually deserves, it becomes idol worship, and is no different than ancient people bowing down to stones or blocks of wood.

One of the earthly forms which we give excessive honor to is the human body. Of course, we probably don't realize the extent of this, but we certainly do it all the time. The concept of glorifying God can best be understood by the afore mentioned spotlight concept, which is a means of focusing attention on one person by some form of illumination, which of course indicates that darkness is shed on all other things outside of that spotlight. Without the spot light, light would be displayed upon all things instead of only one portion. It is the darkness outside of the illuminated area which brings the brilliancy of light. To glorify only a single person on center stage by illuminating a whole auditorium is ineffective. Glorification by illumination must be central, and must shed darkness on anything else might draw the attention away from that one person who is being honored. It is only by the outer darkness, which causes the other people to be less visible, that the person on center stage receives special honor.

This principle of giving honor to one individual is an important concept when we consider giving honor to God. No, every form of honor is not reserved just for God, for the Bible clearly tells us to give honor to whom honor is due, including kings, and governors, etc. But, when we should be giving honor, which is appropriate for God, yet we try to also illuminate other things as well as him, then we are not giving true honor and glory to God, for he alone is worthy of all honor and all glory. Let me give another example, which might bring this out more clearly.

Let's say that we want to properly give God honor and glory. And let's say we intend to do so by illuminating him with a spotlight on stage, so to speak. Imagine how praise and adoration of God would be hindered if we placed God on stage, but only placed him in the spotlight with several

other persons at the same time. Let's say that God was in a line of about 8 or 10 people who were all illuminated with spotlights. How do you think God would feel by being just one of those who were illuminated? How do you think God would feel if the applause included him, but also included the other people on stage as well? My assumption is that God would feel some honor, but would not truly be honored as the God of all gods, and as King of all kings. Instead of receiving honor and praise as the supreme God of heaven and earth, he would be required to share that honor. To give proper honor and glory to another person is Biblical, in the sense of Romans 13:7, which says, "Render therefore to all their due: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." However, if we cause the focus of attention to distract from the honor and glory due unto God, the worship of God will not be true worship, but shared worship. It is equivalent to lowering the throne of God until he is down to the level of all those around him. And as most anyone can comprehend, the throne of kings is raised above all others in order that the king might be properly honored. God does not appreciate having to share his glory with another. Isaiah 42:8 says, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to engraved images."

We humans have been made aware of our nakedness because of sin. When sin came into the world, mankind were revealed in their nakedness. The shame of nakedness must be removed, and until such time as Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven, we will continue to cover our bodies in order to hide our shame. As I mentioned in one of the prior messages, it is only those who are very wicked who refuse to cover the nakedness of their bodies. Those who are very wicked flaunt their nakedness. But, those who are not very wicked still maintain at least a semblance of appropriateness in their clothing. Yet, to be subject to God is to acknowledge the shame of the body. The clothing we put on should properly be an attempt to hide our nakedness, for if we do not hide our nakedness, it is a blatant form of rebellion against God's righteousness.

Now, Satan has no sense of submission to God's authority. Is it any wonder that nudity increases as humans become less respectful of God's righteousness? Is it any wonder that those who practice witchcraft do so in a state of undress? No, it may not be such a hard thing to recognize this wickedness, and neither is it very difficult to comprehend the rebellion against the righteousness of God when people frequent places where other forms of nudity are practiced. However, Christians still have a difficult time recognizing that the drawing of attention to the human body is also an act of rebellion against God. What I mean is, when we dress in a fashion which draws attention to our bodies, this is an act of displacing the righteousness of God by illuminating ourselves in the spotlight. If you dress for display rather than for appropriate covering, then you are inviting the spotlight to be shone on you. Now, this may be appropriate to some degree, or maybe not. And, there certainly is no law or dress code established in the Bible for this. However, if you desire to give God the honor and glory that he deserves, then why would you attempt to display yourself to others in a way that would draw their attention toward you?

1 Timothy 2:9-10, tells us that when women desire to profess godliness, that they should dress themselves modestly, and not adorn themselves with gold, silver, or costly array. This scripture

is blatantly ignored by most Christian women, who dress fashionably and adorn themselves with gold or silver, or at least that which looks like gold and silver. They ignore the scripture for themselves, giving the excuse that it doesn't apply in this current day and age. Yet these same Christian women can be heard complaining how the homosexuals ignore scripture so that they can do according to their own desire. The bottom line is that if we ignore the scripture, then how can we suggest someone else can't also ignore scripture?

The drawing attention to the body is contrary to scripture in that it decreases the glory and honor which God deserves. Have you ever wondered why men and women continue to become more and more consumed with interest in decorating the body? Why is it that men and women want to wear that which is flashy or expensive? If immodest or expensive apparel is worn, what is the purpose if it is not to enhance the appearance? Hmmm? Certainly, the reason for the expensive or immodest apparel is in not way an attempt to glorify God. The only thing immodest or expensive clothing glorifies is the human body.

Let me give another example of drawing the attention to self. Some ministers have a tendency to wear white suits. White suits may be appropriate in very hot and humid climates, but not in air-conditioned auditoriums or churches. When a preacher dresses flamboyantly, the people who sit in the audience should have enough spiritual awareness to be able to discern what spirits are at work. If you, yourself, cannot discern the evil spirit that is at work in this situation, then I truly believe you should re-evaluate your relationship with Jesus Christ. If you can't recognize evil any better than that, you are in a lot of spiritual trouble.

We were not meant to bring attention to our bodies, but to cover them. It is not our bodies which should be openly displayed, but it is God who should be openly displayed. Little by little the world has convinced Christians that covering of the body can be accomplished with the merest minimum of cloth, and with the flashiest decorations available. If you dress for church in a manner which will bring attention to you instead of bringing attention to God, you are in rebellion against the righteousness of God, for you are trying to compete with him for praise. Satan competes with God for praise. God's children should not be in league with Satan. It is my opinion that many people who call themselves Christians are far from being saved, but on the contrary have accepted a form of display in direct opposition to recognizing their shame. The body needs a covering in order to cover the shame of our human sinfulness. To display the human body in an attempt to draw attention to it is outright defiance of God's declaration of our unworthiness. Satan has convinced mankind and womankind that the body is to be glorified. And, it is those people who love the flesh more than they love God who still continue to give glory and honor to the body while at the same time pretending that they only love God and hate this body of flesh.

Romans 7:18 tells us that there is no good thing in our flesh. If the scripture tells us this, then why do we continue to attempt to glorify the flesh by adorning it in jewels, or silks? Christians must recognize their alignment with Satan's rebellious nature before it is too late. Christians

must realize that they are trying to shine the spotlight on themselves at the same time as they are shining the spotlight on Christ. God is not mocked. He knows what you are doing.

But Satan is strong in tempting us, and he wants us to erode the praise and honor of God. If the devil can't get us to uncover our bodies, then he will attempt to get us to honor our flesh by decorating it. To cover the body with cloth is only to cover our physical nakedness. But to adorn the body with flashy attire, gold, silver, or costly array is to uncover our bodies in a spiritual sense. Humans can't seem to get past the physical. They seem to think they can worship God in form and that God will be pleased. But God calls his people to worship him not only in truth, but also in Spirit. We are called to recognize the shame of our bodies, and not to bring honor to them. Flesh and blood will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. And if flesh has no part in heaven, then who do you think is encouraging humans to flaunt the body? No, maybe Christians are covering themselves physically, but many Christians are trying to draw the attention of others to a focus on the flesh. Their attitude is not one of recognizing the shame of sinful flesh, but is actually blatant rebellion against God. It is a refusal to demonstrate what we speak. We say that in our flesh is no good thing, but then turn right around and do everything we can to draw attention to it. This is exactly what Satan wants, for by drawing attention to our flesh, we are actually testifying that our flesh has no shame, and that the body of flesh is wonderful to behold.

Rebellion against God is not only by refusing to worship him, but rebellion is also evident when we make him become just a part of our worship. When we give glory to the flesh, we detract from God's glory. When we illuminate other things around us, we are causing the contrast of the spotlight to be decreased. Just imagine how God feels when he is forced to stand alongside a preacher in a white suit? Can you imagine how God feels when he is praised by a woman who is dressed expensively, or in an extremely stylish manner. Who gets the glory? Sure, God may get some, but he certainly does not get all the glory. And Satan is laughing at Christians all the time, for he knows that they don't truly mean the words which they speak. Christians are pretty good at speaking great swelling words of praise, but not very good at demonstrating it. They can be heard praising God in the sanctuary and saying, "Oh, God, I love you with all my heart. No one else deserves the glory and the honor." But when they are saying this, and they are dressed to kill, then their words never even reach the ceiling, let alone heaven.

It is time for Christians to be real Christians, not false disciples of Christ who have left integrity behind. A real Christian is ready and willing to be crucified daily instead of trying to live high on the hog. This life on earth and this fleshly body are only a passing shadow. It is not something to be held on to. We are called to be sojourners, strangers in a strange land. We are supposed to be just passing through on our way to heaven. Many Christians have made the mistake of trying to settle in for the long haul instead of traveling light. Rebellion against the honor and glory of God is rife within the church, for we have forgotten what it means to humble ourselves. And, think about this one thing. If you're not humbling yourself in the sight of God, then you are actually standing up shoulder to shoulder with Satan. He doesn't bow down and humble himself before God either. But, just do this one thing, yes, just do this one thing. The next time you look in the mirror when you're putting on your fancy clothes, just take a quick look over your shoulder. You just might see someone else standing there with you. If you do, then look real close. Maybe, you will be able to see his horns.