

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Living Under Authority

Ephesians 6:1-9

1 To have order and discipline in any society you must have recognized authority and responsibility.

Christians are commanded to respect authority. 2 In Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 7 it says, Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

It is God's design for everyone to be in subjection to somebody. 3 First Peter, chapter 2, verses 13 and 14 explain, Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 4 Again, in James, chapter 4, verse 7, Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 5

Our scripture today, from Ephesians, chapter 6, verses 1 through 9, gives examples of God given authority for us to obey. 6

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” — which is the first commandment with a promise — “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.¹ 7

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.² 8

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both

¹ Ephesians 6, 1-4.

² Ephesians 6:5-8.

their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. ³ ₉

The first example of God given authority for us . . .

I. In Family Relationships - v1-4

In family relationships. ¹⁰

How are children to relate to their parents? ¹¹

In verse 1, the word **obey**, ⁴ in the original language, means to listen or attend to; so obey. This attitude pleases the Lord. ⁵

Parents have lived longer, experienced life more, have more education and more wisdom. Besides that, they love you! ¹²

In verses 2 and 3 we have the word **honor**. ⁶ It means to fix value, set a price or never cause pain. So, here it means to honor or respect. ¹³

³ Ephesians 6:9.

⁴ ὑπακούω.

⁵ Colossians 3:20 - Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

The fifth of the ten commandments is to **honor your father & your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.** ⁷ The Law of Moses stipulated that if children disrespected their parents they could be executed. So, this is heavy stuff with God! ¹⁴

Now, how are parents to related to their children? ¹⁵

They are to exercise authority over their children. One of the church requirements for an overseer, or elder, in the church was **He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.** ⁸

Sometimes that might mean corporal discipline. A note from a mom to a teacher once read, “Please excuse Mark from being late. This morning he was demoted from chief to Indian. The ceremony took a bit longer than we anticipated.” ¹⁶

⁶ τιμάω.

⁷ Exodus 20:12.

⁸ I Timothy 3:4.

How is this authority demonstrated? ¹⁷ Verse 4 says parents are not to **exasperate** ⁹ your children. That means to provoke to anger. This word can be a word picture. Picture standing close to your child, “getting in his face”, and expressing your anger by yelling. That is the sense of this word.

God says to not do it that way! But so often, as parents, we are tempted to do it that way aren't we? ¹⁸

Instead, parents are to **bring them up**, ¹⁰ meaning to nourish them to maturity (literally “provide food for”), **in the training and instruction of the Lord**. ¹⁹

There are at least three ways you can do injustice to your children! ²⁰

1. **Forget that culture changes from generation to generation**. Sometimes we expect our cultural environment to remain the same as it was in the “good ole days”. When you worship on Sunday

⁹ παροργίζω.

¹⁰ ἐκτρέφω.

mornings, do you long for singing the old hymns and gospel songs you sang when you were younger? ¹¹

Good character doesn't change. Mold that into your youngsters. But don't expect the nonfamily influences around them to remain what they were in your youth. Respect that! ²¹

2. **Don't trust them increasingly as they get older.** If you get rebellion because they claim you are treating them as though they were much younger than they are; maybe they are right! Loosen up to see circumstances through their eyes. ²²

3. **Don't encourage them when you honestly can.** We all thrive on the encouragement and support from the ones we respect and love. It's a need we all have. Give it liberally to your kids and watch them blossom! ²³

The second example of God given authority for us is

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¹¹ Incidentally, pay attention to the the messages found in most of the modern hymns and gospel songs written today. Most of them are just as spiritually powerful as the old ones. You just don't find them on page 322 in the old hymnbook!

II. In Employment Relationships - v5-9

In employment relationships. ²⁴

Much like the ancient master/slave relationships, employers are to have authority over employees.

Fairness dictates that an owner ought to have control over what he owns! If he hires others to help him succeed in the business he runs, he has the right to control those he hires. The common axiom of an organized society is to allow enough authority to carry out a responsibility. ²⁵

How are employees to relate to their employer? Verses 5 through 8 tell us **The Basic Christian Principles of Honest Labor**. ²⁶

Verse 5 tells us to obey your employer as you would the Lord by presenting your labor as a living sacrifice.

¹² Romans, chapter 12, verse 1, **Therefore, I urge you** .

¹² Ephesians 6:5 - Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.

. . . to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God . . . 27

Now, notice verse 6, **Obey them** not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, **doing the will of God from your heart**. Do a quality job even when the boss isn't looking. This attitude breeds trust! 28

Now, verse 7; **Serve wholeheartedly**, as if you were **serv**ing the Lord, not men . . . **Serve wholeheartedly!** Your job is your service to God. It is your contribution to the society God placed you in! 29

Verse 8 continues . . . **because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.** God will reward honesty and integrity even if your earthly boss might not! 30

Now, let's look at verse 9. How are employers to relate to their employees? **And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know**

that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. ³¹

Superiors and subordinates are for this life only! They are not important to God. ³²

So, do not threaten. ³³

So, do not show favoritism. If God doesn't, you better not either! ³⁴

Provide periods of rest! That's one of the ten commandments! . . . the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹³ ³⁵

Pay wages promptly! The Law of Moses said, Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight. ¹⁴ ³⁶

Both the Old Testament of our Bible and the New Testament talk about this. Jeremiah, chapter 22, verse

¹³ Exodus 20:10.

¹⁴ Leviticus 19:13.

13, Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor. ³⁷

Again, Malachi, chapter 3, verse 5, So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

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Then the Lord added, . . . for the worker is worth his keep. ¹⁵ ₃₉

The employer must always remember that he has a Lord too! ₄₀

God is displeased with pride and rebellion.

Being humble and submissive to proper authority is God’s design for you!

¹⁵ Matthew 10:10.

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