

A Biblical View Of Authority Part 1



1. How God's Word defines "authority" = any person or organization who legitimately possesses the right to govern others through giving orders, making decisions, changing plans, establishing rules, enforcing their will.

2. Why it is crucial that we be completely teachable to what God has to say about authority:

2.1. Because it is impossible to be a Christian and continually fail in the way that God commands us to respond to the those His Word identifies as legitimate authority (tbd).

2.2. Because it is impossible to be a Christian and continually fail in the way that God commands us to carry out our responsibilities when we are someone His Word identifies as a legitimate authority (tbd).

2.3. Because this is what Satan and his fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, false teachers and atheism have in common as their most telling trait: a distrust or outright rejection of what God says regarding authority (Satan/fallen angels – Isa 14:13-14; S&G – Gen 19:9; false teachers – 2Pe 2:1-11, 18-20 w/Jud 1:4-9, 11, 16; atheism – No God = No legitimate authority/All authority is pragmatic or preferential and therefore sb condemned if authoritative in their rule – e.g. President Trump, NE Pats coaching, churches that practice discipline, police that enforce the law. Such distrust and outright rejection of authority is also the reason for child emancipation laws and the rise of those being diagnosed w/Oppositional Defiant Disorder, increase of 43% from 2004-2013, over 200k/year – mostly children).

2.4. Because a low/wrong view of authority is the number one reason for failed marriages and dysfunctional homes (tbd).

3. What God's Word teaches us about authority:

3.1. Since God is the Creator and therefore Owner of all that exists, He likewise is their absolute Authority or rightful Ruler (i.e. ownership est's absolute authority; e.g. your car/house) (Psa 135:5-6; Psa 103:19; Hence why – 20-22 w/Psa 2:10-12; Job 38-41 w/41:11; Psa 24:1, 50:11-12; Jer 33:13; Dan 4:35; Isa 29:16, 45:9, 64:8; Jer 18:6; Rom 9:18-21).

"The very word authority has within it the word author. An author is someone who creates and possesses (or owns) a particular work. Insofar as God is the foundation of all authority, He exercises that foundation because He is the author and the owner of His creation. He is the foundation upon which all other authority stands or falls." ~ R.C. Sproul.

3.2. God's governance, orders, decisions, plans, rules and will is made known through His Word. Refusing therefore to carefully listen and respectfully submit¹ to all of God's Word is equally refusing to acknowledge His authority – or more accurately, to claim for yourself an authority equal to, or above His. Hence the reason all sin is considered serious and an act of high treason (Gen 3:5-6; 1Sa 15:1-23; regarding carefully listening as important – e.g. Num 20:4-12 w/27:12-14).

3.3. If there is legitimate human authority, it is only because they have been called (divinely appointed/"anointed") by God the absolute Authority. IOW: Only God the owner can appoint others as authorities over His possessions. In respect then to those God has appointed, any refusal to carefully listen and respectfully submit to them (when what they demand does not violate God's Law), is the same as refusing God (e.g. Luk 10:16). Those human authorities appointed by God and existing today are:

3.3.1. kings and governments (Dan 4:17, 25, 32, 5:21; Jer 27:1-12; Neh 2:1-5; Dan 2:4, 6:21; Joh 19:10-11; Rom 13:1-5; Tit 3:1-2; 1Pe 2:13-17)

3.3.2. masters (employers, managers, etc) (Eph 6:5-7; 1Ti 6:1-2; Tit 2:9-10)

3.3.3. God's spiritual leaders: pastors/elders (Deu 17:9-13; Joh 20:21-23; 2Co 7:15; 1Th 5:12-13; Tit 2:15; Heb 13:17; e.g. Act 23:1-5)

¹ Respectful submission = obedience that does not possess: **anger** (expressing irritation), **malice** (desiring to do their harm), **contempt** (despising their authority), **cynicism** (distrusting their motives), **skepticism** (distrusting their competency), **captiousness** (looking for fault, to be critical or petty), **contentiousness** (looking to fight), **dismissiveness** (acting as though they are unworthy), **condescension** (acting as though they are inferior to you) **or self-pity** (acting like a martyr or whining).

“Christ has not only ordained that there shall be such officers in his Church – but he calls those thus qualified and by that call gives them their official authority.” ~ Charles Hodge

3.3.4. husbands and parents (Tit 2:4-5; Eph 5:22-24, 6:1-3).

4. Our careful listening and respectful submission to God’s human authorities is not based or dependent upon, their character or competency, but rather their appointment by God. Hence the reason we are called to carefully listen and respectfully submit to them even if they are unrighteous or incompetent (1Pe 2:18-21, 3:1-6; e.g. Act 23:1-5; 1Sa 24:1-10, 26:1-25).

5. Listening and submitting to God’s human authorities is not only crucial to avoiding serious sin, but also our personal well-being in this life and the life to come (e.g. Psa 2:1-12; Heb 13:17; 1Pe 3:6 = Abe/Sarah proverbial parents of the saved – Heb 2:16; 1Ti 2:15 = salvation thru fulfillment of ordained role; Eph 6:1-3).

6. Those God calls to be His authorities *MUST* be wise and righteous if they are:

6.1. to persevere/flourish (Pro 28:2): **The results of a legitimate authority** [“rulers...a man”] **not acknowledging/properly acknowledging** [“transgresses” v. “understanding and knowledge”] **God’s authority in the way they rule = high turnover v. stability** [“many rulers” = high turnover v. “stability”] (see also Psa 72:1-3)

6.2. to avoid receiving the sentence of eternal damnation on Judgment Day (Mat 18:1-10; Jam 3:1-6).

What (then) does it look like to be the wise and righteous authority God expects?

NEXT WEEK (Part 2) will answer this question through a focused examination of the role of the husband in relation to his wife and children. At this time, the role of the wife will also be expanded on.