

Spiritual Authority

Notes by Franklin

I. Introduction

Philippians 2:5-11

(5) *Your **attitude** should be the same that Christ Jesus had.*

(6) *Though he was God, **He did not demand and cling to His rights** as God.*

We must learn to yield or give up our rights to the authorities over us. Is it His Kingdom . . . or ours?
Is He our Lord? Who is boss?

Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?
Luke 6:46

Deuteronomy 12:8-9 *You shall **NOT** do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing **whatever is right in his own eyes**; for you have not as yet come to the resting place and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you.*

Judges 17:6 *In those days there was no king in Israel; **every man did what was right in his own eyes.***

Proverb 12:15 ***The way of a fool** is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.*

(7) ***He made himself nothing**; he took the humble position of a **slave** and appeared in human form.*

John 5:19-20 *Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself**, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing*

John 5:30 *I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because **I do not seek My own will**, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

John 8:29 *I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.*

(8) *And in human form **He obediently humbled himself** even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.*

Matthew 26:39 *My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet **not as I will, but as You will.***

(9) ***Because of this, God raised him up** to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name*

When we learn to submit, yield, obey the authority over us is when we will earn trust and authority will be given to us.

(10) *so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father* NLT

Matthew 28:18 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "**All authority in heaven and on earth HAS BEEN GIVEN to me.***

The LORD GOD ALMIGHTY is "THE AUTHORITY."

Authority

1. The power to enforce laws, enforce obedience, give commands.
2. Power assigned (given) to another.

Luke 7:1-10 The Centurion

*For I also am a man placed **under authority**, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."*

You DO NOT have Authority unless you are UNDER Authority

True Authority has to be GIVEN by a higher authority. If the authority is **NOT** given but just taken, . . . **it is REBELLION.**

Romans 13:2 *Consequently, he who **rebels** against **the authority** is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring **judgment** on themselves.* NIV

Romans 13:2 *So those who **refuse to obey** the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and **punishment** will follow.* NLT

To **rebel** against what He has established or setup is **to rebel against the Lord** and PUNISHMENT WILL FOLLOW!

The **first rebellion** against the authority of the LORD GOD was by His created angel, Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-16; Ezekiel 28:12-19).

Lucifer tried to TAKE authority that was NOT GIVEN to him.

Lucifer's **punishment**: name change / lost his position / cast out of heaven to the earth; and ultimately to Sheol and the Lake of Fire.

Any rebellion against authority is a **satanic principal** and will result in punishment or discipline.

Example: Adam & Eve (Romans 6:16)

II. The Example of King Saul's Disobedience:

1 Samuel 15:10-11 *Then the LORD said to Samuel, "I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for **he has not been loyal to me** and has **again refused to obey me.**" Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the LORD all night. NLT*

Verse: 22-23 *Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in **obeying** the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed (to pay attention) than the fat of rams. For **rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.** Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, **He has also rejected you from being king.***

Saul's **DISOBEDIENCE** was because he was more concerned about what the people thought about him than what the Lord thought of him.

Verse 24 . . . *because I feared the people . . .*

You will obey whom you fear.

If **love** is not a sufficient **motivation** then **fear** must be.

(parents must both love and discipline (instill fear) in their children).

Saul's **DISOBEDIENCE** to the Word of God (Authority) **cost him**:

- a. His position!
- b. Many problems! Because "*rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*" Saul had stepped over into Satan's kingdom, he had not truly repented and confessed his sin, therefore:

1 Samuel 16:14 *Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.* NIV

This is the SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES, or RESULT, of NOT OBEYING the Authority over you.

How do we understand this passage, "*an evil spirit from the Lord?*"

Let us look at a similar experience in the New Testament:

Luke 22:31-34 *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me.* NASU

Satan could not touch Peter without Jesus' permission as Peter belonged to Jesus. But Satan had a **legal right** to make his demand as Peter had sinned - stepped into satan's kingdom of darkness!

Or, there was an **area of sin** in Peter's life that opened a door allowing satan **legal access** to that area.

How? Back up a few verses and read the context; verse 24 It does not tell us who won the argument. However, knowing Peter's temperament I would guess that Peter won when he reminded his fellow disciples of the time he walked on water. **Pride!** This was satan's sin that resulted in his rebellion.

Notice that Jesus did not say "No". Satan was allowed, 'legally,' to attack Peter because of sin, as was Saul's "evil spirit" was said to be "from the Lord." Both were allowed by the Lord because of sin.

James 4:7 ***SUBMIT** therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

This also explains: Matthew 18:21-35 ("tormentors" vs 34)

It is a question of: who do you OBEY? Who do you submit to?

**What happens to you, to a large degree, is determined by:
Who do you resist? And who do you obey?**

1 Peter 5:6-7 *Humble yourself . . . the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* (those with pride and who do not humble themselves.)

But, if we humble ourselves, obey authorities, 1 John 5:18 *We know that whoever is born of God **does not sin**; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and **the wicked one does not touch him.***

III. 4 Structures of Authority Ordained by the Lord

1. Family: JESUS > Father > Mother > Children

1 Corinthians 11:2-4 *But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.* NASU

Colossians 3:20 *Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.* NASU

Ephesians 6:1-3 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), (3) SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.* NASU

Proverb 6:20-21 *My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck.* NASU

Proverb 30:17 *The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.* NIV

Proverb 15:5 *Only a fool despises a parent's discipline; whoever learns from correction is wise.* NLT

The way a teen-ager responds to his parents' authority will soon be the way he responds to all authority.

2. Government: National Leaders > Local Leaders > Citizens

1 Peter 2:13-14 **Submit** yourselves for the Lord's sake to **every authority** instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, (14) or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. NIV

Romans 13:1-7 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. (2) Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. (3) For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; (4) for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. (5) Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. (6) For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. (7) Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. NASU

3. Church: JESUS > Church Leaders > Church Members

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 **But we request of you, brethren, that you honor those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.**

Hebrews 13:17 **Obey** your leaders and **submit** to their **authority**. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. NIV

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. NASU

1 Peter 5:1-3 I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. NASU

4. BUSINESS: JESUS > Employer > Employees

Colossians 3:22-25 Servants, **obey** in everything those who are your earthly **masters**, not only when their eyes are on you as pleasers of men, but in simplicity of purpose [with all your heart] because of your reverence for the Lord and as a sincere expression of your devotion to Him.

23 Whatever may be your task, **work** at it **heartily** as for the Lord and not for men,

24 Knowing that it is from the Lord [and not from men] that you will **receive** the inheritance which is your [real] **reward**. [The One Whom] you are actually serving [is] the Lord Christ (the Messiah).

25 For he who deals **wrongfully** will [reap the fruit of his folly and] be punished for his wrongdoing. And [with God] there is no partiality [no matter what a person's position may be, whether he is the slave or the master]. AMP

1 Peter 2:18 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**. NASU

1 Timothy 6:1-2 *Christians who are servants should give their masters **full respect** so that the name of God and his teaching will not be shamed. If your master is a Christian, that is no excuse for being disrespectful. You should **work** all the **harder** because you are helping another believer by your efforts.*

IV. God's Will For Our Life - His Guidance - is often revealed to us through the AUTHORITIES He has placed over us.

FOR THE ADULT:

God assures us that He can turn the heart of those over us:

Proverb 21:1 *The LORD controls the mind of a king as easily as he directs the course of a stream. TEV*

FOR THE YOUNG PERSON:

Proverb 22:15 *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.*

Proverb 6:20-22 *My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about, **they will guide you**; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you.*

Many youth today are drifting without clear direction and are continually making WRONG DECISIONS **because** they **reject** or **rebel** against the **authority** of their parents.

To escape the authority of their parents many young men **run** away and join the Army. Then learn Authority the hard way.

To escape the authority of their parents many girls **run away** and get married only to find that now her husband continues the chipping.

WHAT DOES THE LORD SAY ABOUT RUNNING FROM AUTHORITIES?

Genesis 16:9 Then the angel of the LORD said to her, "**Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.**"

(Hagar was running away from Sarai, Abraham's wife.)

To see that **our character** becomes like that of Jesus, the Lord will use whatever Authority is over us to 'chip away' at the rough edges of our character (like a jeweler cutting and shaping a diamond).

The Authorities God has placed over us are
the tools He uses to Perfect the multitude of
Character Deficiencies in our lives.

Example: Joseph – His **pride** had to be 'chipped' and 'chiseled' away.

Proverb 8:13 *"Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate."*

V. CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING AUTHORITY

If we continue to **reject** the reproofs of authority and **do what seems right to us**, or do what we want to do and disobey our authority, there could be **IRREPARABLE DAMAGE** to the **POTENTIAL** of our lives.

Proverb 29:1 *The man who is often reproved but refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be broken and never have another chance.* TLB

THREE PHASES OF LOSS IN REBELLION

On three occasions King Saul rebelled against the word of the Lord, and there was a specific consequence of each.

1. HIS CHILDREN LOST THE HERITAGE THEY COULD HAVE HAD !

1 Sam 13:13-14 *Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, **because** you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."*

2. HIS OWN MINISTRY WOULD SUFFER

1 Samuel 15:28 *So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you."*

The very lack of character and wisdom which we have, **due to rejecting authority**, will greatly diminish the potential which our own ministry could have had.

3. HIS PHYSICAL LIFE WOULD BE SHORTENED

1 Samuel 28:19 *Moreover the LORD will also give over Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, therefore tomorrow you and your sons will be with me."*

There is a direct correlation between obedience to God and a long and healthy life:

Ephesians 6:1-3 *Children, **obey** your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. Honor your father and mother. This is the first of the Ten Commandments that ends with a promise. And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, **you will live a long life, full of blessing.***

Proverb 3:7-8 *Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the LORD and turn your back on evil. Then you will gain renewed health and vitality.*

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 *So if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily, that person is guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking from the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup unworthily, not honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. **That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.** But if we examine ourselves, we will not be examined by God and judged in this way. But when we are judged and disciplined by the Lord, we will not be condemned with the world.* NLT

VI. Four Causes of Disobedience:

- **Stubbornness**

1 Samuel 15:23 For **rebellion** is as the sin of witchcraft, and **stubbornness** is as iniquity and idolatry. NKJV

Romans 2:5 *But because of your **stubbornness** and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,* NASU

Jeremiah 7:24 *Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in **their own counsel** and in the **stubbornness** of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.* NASU

Jeremiah 18:12 *But they will say, 'It's hopeless! For we are going to **follow our own plans**, and each of us will act according to the **stubbornness** of his evil heart.'* NASU

- **Rationalism**

1. Reliance on reason as the best guide for belief and action.
2. The theory that the exercise of reason, rather than the acceptance of authority or spiritual revelation, provides a good or the best basis for action or belief.
3. To devise self-satisfying but incorrect reasons for one's behavior.

Reason, motivated by his **fear** of man, rather than the acceptance of God's authority caused Abraham to lie.

Genesis 20:11 *Abraham said, "Because **I thought**, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.*

Fear of man produced Jacob's **rationalization** and he deceived Laban.

Genesis 31:31 *Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because **I was afraid**, for **I thought** that you would take your daughters from me by force.*

- **Love** for the Lord or respect for the person (the authority) is weak.

"Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me.."

John 14:21 NLT

"All those who love me will do what I say. John 14:23 NLT

Anyone who doesn't love me will not do what I say. John 14:24

- **Fear** of the Lord or the person is weak.

Therefore we depend more on . . . our **self!** Our **Rationalism!**

VII. Responding To Authorities

Illustration 1

A twenty-one-year-old girl who is supporting herself and living away from home firmly believes that it is God's will to marry a certain young man. They are both believers. The girl's parents strongly oppose this marriage stating only that they do not think he is the right one for their daughter, and, therefore, that the marriage will not work out.

What would you advise?

Illustration 2

An 18-year-old boy plans to go into the ministry. He wants to go to a Bible college. His parents fail to comprehend the importance of either the ministry or the Bible education, and they threaten to withhold all college funds unless he attends a near-by university. Their counsel to him is that if he learns another profession first, he can always have something to fall back on if he fails in the ministry. The son's points are that he doesn't plan to fail in the ministry, and that he needs the Bible training.

What would you advise?

Illustration 3

A teen-ager has been slipping out of her house every Sunday evening to attend a nearby church youth meeting. She knows her mother would be angry if she found out that her daughter was going to this church, so she has had to do it secretly. The services at this church are a great help to this teen-ager.

What would you advise?

No matter how inconsistent or unfair those in authority may be, we are responsible for our responses to them.

God can use those who are hardest to get along with to motivate us to develop MATURE ATTITUDES.

God is not nearly as concerned with what we go through as He is with our RESPONSE to what we go through. In all that He designs or allows us to experience, His chief concern is that our ATTITUDES become consistent with those of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus was subject to the authority of His parents as He was growing up.

Hebrews 5:8 *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.*

Speaking of the LORD JESUS submitted to His Father.

Learning to **understand** what those in authority are **really trying to achieve IS IMPORTANT.**

- Listen carefully
- Try to see through their eyes

Especially when we are commanded to do something which violates Scripture or moral convictions.

Example:

Daniel was captured by a godless foreign government, taken away from family, home and country and commanded to do things that were against Scripture.

Daniel 1:8 *But Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself*

Daniel also displayed **mature attitudes** to those in authority over him. His attitude brought him into "loving favor" with the official over him.

When told to eat and drink that which violated Scripture, Daniel discerned that the basic intention was not to violate his convictions but to make him healthy and wise. He suggested an alternative which would not violate his moral convictions and would also allow those in authority to achieve their objectives.

Notice the **respect, creativity** and **careful choice of words** in his request:

Daniel 1:12-14 *Test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's rich food. Then you can decide whether or not to let us continue eating our diet. So the attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.*

When our attitude is right and we have politely and carefully made our request we must then stop and wait for their decision.

We must give the LORD time to “change their heart.”

Proverb 16:7 *When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

Proverb 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.*

Even though Pharaoh continued to harden his heart the LORD increased the pressure until he agreed to let Israel go. Meanwhile, Israel became strong as they obeyed those who were ruling them:

“There was not one feeble person among their tribes.” Psalm 105:37

The LORD “works all things for our good” when we obey the authorities over us, endure patiently problems and sufferings and REFUSE to rebel.

VIII. 7 Steps of Action when asked to do something you think is wrong.

1. CHECK OUR ATTITUDES

- An independent spirit is the basis of disloyalty
- A condemning spirit is the basis of self-righteousness
- An ungrateful spirit is the basis of pride
- A lazy spirit is the basis of dishonesty and poverty
- A bitter spirit is the basis of selfishness
- An impure spirit is the basis of self-indulgence

2. CLEAR OUR CONSCIENCE

- Correct those attitudes which have offended
- Fulfill the wishes and unfinished directions of those in authority
- Acknowledge that we were wrong and ask forgiveness
- Make any corrections necessary to restore a right relationship
- Learn to limit your freedom to avoid offending another

3. DISCERN BASIC INTENTIONS

- Ask the person what their goals are wishes are
- Try to understand why they are making this command
- Ask them to help you understand

4. DESIGN CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES

- Remove any resistant spirit in order to be creative
- Use difficult situations to expand your frame of reference
- Gain insights for difficult situations from Proverbs
- Design an alternative which he will see can reach his goals

5. APPEAL TO OUR AUTHORITY

- Have the spirit of a learner and a servant
- Explain personal convictions without a spirit of condemnation
- Present the creative alternative
- Explain how it will reach his goal
- Leave the final decision up to him

6. GIVE GOD TIME TO CHANGE THEIR MIND

- Expect God to bring outside pressure on the authority
- Expect him to place extra pressure on you
- Realize that God will use His pressure for our ultimate benefit
- Build right responses which will be a basis for his changed decision

7. SUFFER FOR NOT DOING WHAT IS WRONG

- Disciples were to be willing to be rejected by family rather than to deny the Lord Jesus (Matthew 10:32-39)
- Disciples were to proclaim the Gospel even when forbidden by government officials and religious leaders (Acts 4:19)
- Daniel was willing to be killed rather than cease his worship of God to worship the king (Daniel 6:12-16)

Reference:

Research in Principles of Life – Basic Seminar Textbook
Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Inc.