



Practical Christian Living

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you". Matthew 6:33
Course 4 Lesson 11

GOD'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY



KEY VERSE:

*"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but the God: the powers that be are ordained of God."
Romans 13:1*

In our last lesson we learned that authority means the right to rule. All authority belongs to God because He is the Creator of all things. We saw that the basic principle of the world is rebellion; whereas, the basic principle of God's children is obedience. We are here to obey God and uphold His authority.

In this lesson we are going to learn a very important truth: **We must obey God's delegated authorities in order to be fully obedient to God.**

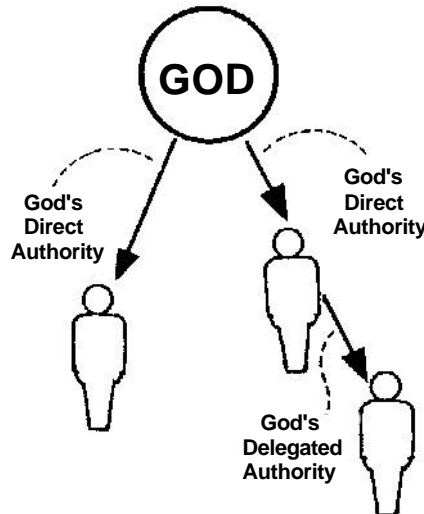
WHAT IS A DELEGATED AUTHORITY?

A delegated authority is someone who represents God's authority. All authority belongs to God, but God has two ways in which He exercises His authority:

1. Direct authority. This means that God tells us directly

through His Word or through His Spirit what He wants us to do.

2. Delegated authority. This means that God designates certain people to represent Him and to exercise His authority.



God exercises His authority by (1) Direct authority and by (2) Delegated authority.

God not only directs us personally, but He also directs us through His delegated authorities. Some examples of people who are delegated authorities are: Parents, school teachers, police officers, governmental officials.

Since a delegated authority is a person who represents God's authority, he must be obeyed.

To be disrespectful or disobedient to God's delegated authority is like being disrespectful or disobedient to God Himself.

THE FOUR BASIC STRUCTURES OF AUTHORITY

In this world in which we live, God has established four basic structures of authority:

1. Family
2. Government
3. Church
4. Business

Let us consider each of these four structures of authority.

□ THE FAMILY

God's arrangement for the family is that the father be the head of the house under God. The wife is to be subject to her husband, and the children subject to their parents. The Bible says,

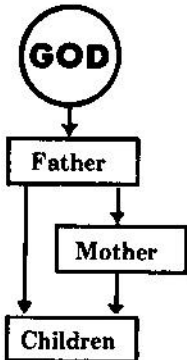
*"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."
Ephesians 5:22*

*"Children, obey your parents in all things"
Colossians 3:20*

In the family, God has placed His authority in the parents.

Since the parents represent God's authority in the home, it is right that they should be obeyed. The Bible says,

*"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."
Ephesians 6:1*



God's authority in the family.

Many times young people would like to change God's Word to suit themselves. For example:

- "Obey your parents ...
- If they are right ...
- If you think they are right ...
- If it does not interfere with what you want to do ...
- If they ask you nicely in a way that satisfies you ...

But the young person who wants to please God will not consider these variations. Instead, he will choose to obey his parents because it is right to do so.

The father is the God-appointed head of the family, but he is not to be a dictator. He is to love his wife and children and be an example to them. He is also responsible before God to bring up his children in the ways of the Lord. The Bible says,

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it."
Ephesians 5:25*

"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and

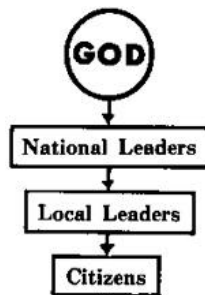
*admonition of the Lord."
Ephesians 6:4*

□ GOVERNMENT

Due to the sinful and rebellious nature of men, God established laws and set up human government. God gave men the authorities to enforce His laws. He did this for our protection and for our good. Civil authorities are God's provision for the restraint of evil in order that we might live "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."¹

Schoolteachers, police officers, local officials, judges, state and federal officials are all God's delegated authorities. Since they represent God's authority, we must obey them. The Bible says,

*"Let every should be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."
Romans 13:1*



God's authority in the nation.

Christians are to be law-abiding citizens. The student in school honors God when he obeys the rules of the school and shows respect to his teachers. He dishonors God when he does not do this. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are to live our lives by the principle of obedience. The Bible says,

*"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man FOR THE LORD'S SAKE"
1 Peter 2:13*

Our Lord was never a party to any rebellion. He taught peo-

ple to obey governmental authorities. When the Pharisees asked Jesus whether they should pay taxes to Caesar, the Lord replied,

*"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."
Matthew 22:21*

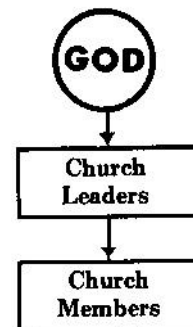


Jesus taught us to obey governmental authorities.

□ CHURCH

God's plan is that Christ be the Head of every church. Under Christ are God-appointed leaders such as elders, pastors, deacons, and teachers. We are to be subject to God's delegated authorities in the church. The Bible says,

*"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for you souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief"
Hebrews 13:17*



God's authority in the church.

Those who are in authority in the church are not to lord it over God's people but rather to serve them and to be examples

to them. Concerning elders, The Bible says,

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre (money), but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:2,3

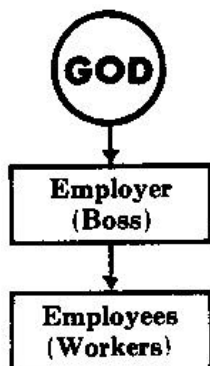
❑ BUSINESS

Our employer or "boss" represents God's delegated authority at work. We honor God in our work when we do our best for Jesus' sake. God is not pleased when we do our work in a careless and half-hearted way. He wants us to put our heart into our work. The Bible says,

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God." Colossians 3:22

The word "servant" here simply means an employee - one who is employed by another. The Bible tells us that employees are to be subject to their bosses, not only to those who are kind and gentle, but also to those who are hard to get along with. The Bible says,

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward (those who are hard to get along with.)" 1 Peter 2:18



God's authority in business.

Concerning our jobs, God wants every believer to work as though he were working for the Lord Jesus. A young man was having trouble holding his job. His attitude was not good and the quality of his work was such that his boss was displeased with him.

One day his youth leader asked him this question, "Suppose Jesus Christ Himself was the manager of that store? Would that make a difference in the quality of your work?"

He replied, "It sure would! I'd do my best all the time."

The youth leader explained, "Do you know that God expects you to consider that you are actually working for the Lord Jesus on your job?"² Then they looked at this verse:

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, AS TO THE LORD, and not unto men, Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: FOR YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST." Colossians 3:23,24

The Bible says that bosses have a responsibility too. They are to be considerate of those who work for them, recognizing that they have a Master in heaven. The Bible says,

"And, ye masters, do the same things unto them (be kind and considerate), forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him." Ephesians 6:9

QUESTIONS CONCERNING AUTHORITY

You may have questions regarding authority. We will try to answer some of them.

- **"Suppose that I think my parents are wrong about some-thing. Do I still have to obey them?"**

The relationship between children and their parents is so important in God's sight that He made it the subject of one of the Ten Commandments. The Bible says,

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD the God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12

The word "honor" means to respect and to obey. Even though you may disagree with your parents, do not be disobedient or rebellious. The person who does not honor his parents is not only breaking God's commandment, but he is also stepping out from under God's authority. The result of this is that his life may be cut short.

We can think of God's authority as an "umbrella" to protect us from Satan's attacks. Satan hates the people of God and wants to destroy them. But, so long as we are under God's "umbrella," Satan cannot touch us without God's consent.



When we are under God's authority, we are protected from Satan's attacks.

- **"Suppose the one in authority makes a wrong decision. Will I be held responsible?"**

The one who makes the decision is the one who is respon-

sible for the results. If you are merely obeying the authority over you, God will not hold you responsible. Instead, He will hold the one in authority responsible for the mistake.

- **"Suppose the one in authority has a bad personality and I don't like him. Do I still have to obey him?"**

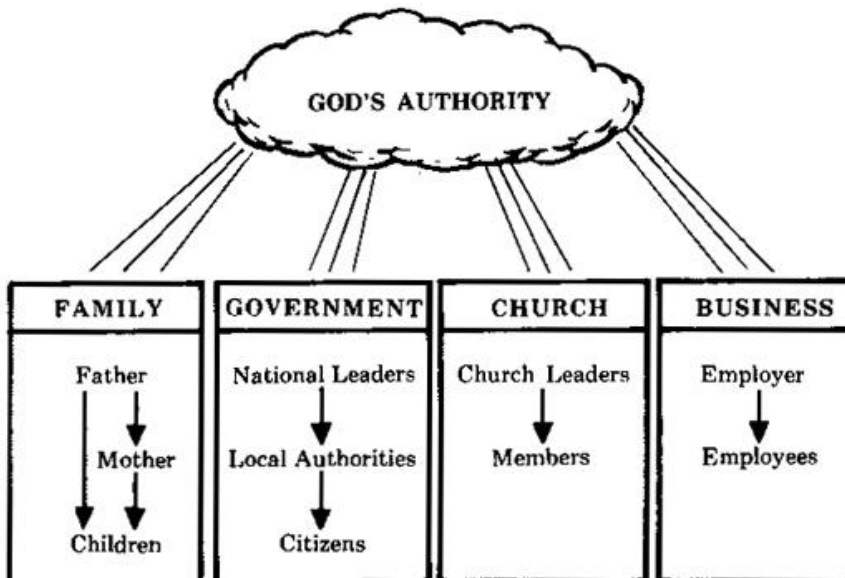
Yes, you must be subject to him if he is in a position of authority over you. We must distinguish between a person's **position** and his **personality**.

For example, a police officer is in a position of authority. He represents God's authority in upholding the law. He may not have a pleasing personality, but that does not excuse you from obeying his authority. If you received a ticket for speeding, you could not disregard it and say, "I got a ticket yesterday for speeding, but I tore it up because I didn't like that officer."

- **"What if someone in authority commands me to do something which is contrary to what God has commanded?"**

This is a situation in which you are not to obey the one in authority. There is an illustration of this in the New Testament. Jesus had commanded His followers to preach the gospel to everyone. Later, the religious leaders commanded Peter and the other disciples not to preach or teach anymore in Jesus' name. Peter could not comply with this command because it was contrary to the Lord's command. Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."³

Anytime that man's command conflicts with God's command, you must obey God. For example, suppose your boss



God's authority covers every area of our life.

tells you to do something dishonor to lie about something. To do this would be to disobey God's commands; therefore, you cannot obey. Even in an instance like this, you should be respectful. You should have a spirit of submission, even though you cannot obey. You should say quietly, "I'm sorry, but I cannot do that."

In some instances, refusing to obey your boss when he tells you to do something wrong may mean that you lose your job. If that happens, accept it from the Lord, knowing that He is pleased with your actions. The Bible says,

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Peter 2:19

ALL AUTHORITIES ARE ORDAINED OF GOD

God wants us to see that all authorities are ordained by Him. Since all delegated authorities are ordained by God, they must be obeyed. We have no choice in the matter. We must obey those in authority over us. The Bible says,

"... the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power (God's delegated authorities), resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (judgment). Romans 13:1,2

Who of us would dare to disobey a direct command from the Lord? But do we realize that resisting God's delegated authority is disobeying God's command? To obey God's command, we must be subject to His delegated authorities.

The Lord Jesus Himself is our example of what it means to be subject to authority. He was subject, not only to God's direct authority, but also to His delegated authorities. He was subject to His parents, He was subject to governmental authorities, He paid taxes, He was obedient to the laws of the land. Throughout His entire life, the Lord Jesus was subject to authority. He was never rebellious on any occasion. He truly lived His life by the principle of obedience.

The most important thing we can do to please God is to obey Him. To be fully obedient to the Lord, we must obey His delegated authorities. The Apostle Paul said,

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates"
Titus 3:1



Discovered Gem

We must obey God's delegated authorities to be fully obedient to God.

1. 1 Timothy 2:2
2. Bill Gothard
3. Acts 5:29

MEDITATION GUIDE

(TO STUDY AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEXT LESSON)

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages there is a Meditation Guide for each of the three lessons in this booklet. Each Guide has a key verse, comments, and questions that will help you to see from the Bible the main message of the lesson.

AFTER YOU FINISH the Question Pages, and have sent them in, we suggest that you work on the meditations. Do NOT send in your meditations. They are for you to personally use and keep.

THE PURPOSE of the Meditation Guide is to help you learn how to study the Bible on your own. It will help you to think (meditate) about a portion of Scripture in order to understand it. It will help you learn how to get in touch with God through His Word and through prayer.

MEDITATION. What does "meditation" mean? It does not mean to let your mind go blank. Quite the contrary, meditation means that you get hold of your thoughts and bring them all

together to concentrate on a portion of God's Word. As you do this, it gives the Lord an opportunity to make Himself known to you.

PAUSE TO PRAY. Before beginning each meditation, pause to pray, quieting your heart before the Lord so that you will be ready to hear what He has to say to you from the Bible.

If there are any words you do not understand, be sure to look them up in a dictionary.

MEMORY VERSE. You may wish to memorize the Key Verses, or other verses found in these Meditation Guides. Memorizing Scripture is one of the best means to meditate on God's Word. It would also be very helpful in keeping before you the main truth of each lesson.

NOTE: The King James Bible was used in preparing these Meditation Guides.

KEEP THIS GUIDE - DO NOT SEND IT IN

Lesson 11: GOD'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Key Verse:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1

Lesson 10 sets forth two principles by which people respond to God's authority. Everyone responds one of two ways: By rebellion, a principle established by _____; or by obedience, a principle established by _____, God's Son.

All authority come from _____. (Romans 13:1)

In order for mankind to live together peacefully, God delegates His authority to others. Look up the following verses and name those to whom God has delegated His authority.

Ephesians 6:1 _____

Colossians 3:22 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:12,13 _____

1 Peter 2:13,14 _____

What should our response be to those to whom God has delegated His authority? _____

In all of these earthly relationships we demonstrate our response to God's authority over us. Do we submit and obey those over us? If we do, then we know that we have a heart that is submissive and obedient to God. Do we disobey those over us? If we do, then we know that we are living our lives by the principle of rebellion, the principle established by Satan.

By which principle are you living your life? Check one

- () I am living my life by the principle of rebellion.
- () I am living my life by the principle of obedience.

In prayer, thank your heavenly Father for His Son, Jesus Christ, who makes it possible for you to be an obedient child of God.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Turn to the Question Page as you finish each lesson. Fill in the answers for that lesson before going on to the next lesson.
- 2. When you have studied all the lessons and have completed the Question Pages, prepare for mailing. Don't forget to write in your name and return address. Send in your ANSWER SHEET ONLY!

EXAM

Lesson 11

1. A delegated authority is _____
 _____ List some examples of people who are **delegated** authorities: _____

2. Since a delegated authority is a person who represents God's authority, he must be _____. To be disrespectful or disobedient to God's delegated authority is like being disrespectful or disobedient to _____.
3. God's arrangement for the family is that the father be _____
 _____. The wife is to be _____ and the children _____
4. We honor God in our work when _____
 _____ God wants every believer to work as though _____
5. The most important thing we can do to please God is to _____. To be fully obedient to the Lord, we must _____
- What is the most important thing you have learned in this lesson? _____

Send your exam to the following address:
Latin Evangelical Outreach
 P.O. Box 549
 Irvington, New Jersey 07111-0549

Your Name and Address.....Please Print

Complete Name _____ Age _____

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