

Discipleship



Life Application: Accepting our God-given roles and submitting to the authority figures God has placed over us.

Key verse for meditation: Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. — 1 Peter 5:5

For personal study: Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-24

Food for thought: The world doesn't run without authority. Somebody has to tell us what to do. The question is not who he thinks he is but who he represents. A soldier salutes the uniform, not the man, for whether the man is his superior in other ways or not, in the army he represents a certain level of authority. He has been given rank. His rank does not prove that he is taller or nicer or stronger or more intelligent than the man who salutes him. He has in some way, however, earned his rank.



Those who call themselves Christians are people who have accepted authority . . . In order to be a disciple we must deny ourselves—this is to exercise authority over our own spirit. We must take up the cross—this is to submit to Christ's authority. And we must follow—this is continued obedience.

Acceptance of the divinely ordered hierarchy means acceptance of authority—first of all, God's authority, and then those lesser authorities that He has ordained. A husband and wife are both under God, but their positions are not the same. A wife is to submit herself to her husband. The husband's "rank" is given to him by God, as the angels' and animals' ranks are assigned, not chosen or earned . . .

Submission for the Lord's sake does not mean servility. It does not lead to self-destruction, the stifling of gifts, personhood, intelligence, and spirit. If obedience itself requires a suicide of the personality we would have to conclude that obedience to Christ demands this. But the promises He's given us hardly point to self-destruction: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

God is not asking anybody to become a zero. What was the design of the Creator in everything that He made? He wanted it to be good, that is, perfect, precisely what He meant, free in its being the thing He intended it to be. When He commanded Adam to “subdue” and “have dominion over” the earth, He was not commanding him to destroy its meaning or existence. He was, we may say, “orchestrating,” giving the lead to one, subduing another, to produce a full harmony for His glory.

Submission is the road not to confinement, to bondage, to a stunted or arrested development, but to total personal freedom. – From *Let Me Be a Woman* by Elisabeth Elliot

“Look upon every man, woman, or child who tries your patience . . . as a means of grace to humble you. Use every opportunity to humble yourself before others as a means of help, sent directly from God, to keep you living in peaceful submissiveness before Him.”
– Andrew Murray

Think about it . . .



1. Is submission an indication of weakness? Why or why not?
2. How will a submissive spirit be observable in a person's life?
3. Are we truly submitted to God if we are not submitted to others?
Explain your answer.

Challenge: Consider your opportunities for submission that occur . . .

- On the homefront
- On the job
- At church

In which area do you find it most challenging to consistently submit yourself? What can you do this week to help yourself submit in the future?

An Example of Submission:

Isobel Kuhn, missionary to the Lisu tribe of China, learned a priceless lesson about submission. Early in her preparation to become a missionary, someone else's example of a submissive spirit impacted the whole course of her life.

Marjorie Harrison, a talented young candidate for the mission field, had looked forward for years to going to China. She had saved her earnings to pay for her own passage, but when the time came, the mission board denied permission, feeling that her health was too delicate to withstand the rigors of life in the Far East. Marjorie took the blow like a true soldier, and quietly accepted the decision that spelled the end of her dreams. She went to her room and knelt beside her bed, praying, “Lord, this money I have saved—I cannot take it back. Will You help me to find someone to go to China in my place?” No one but the Lord knew of that offering or the cost of her submission. But that evening, a dinner guest at the table spoke of the financial need of another young woman who longed to go to China but could not afford it. Marjorie said nothing, but her heart leaped with joy at the answer to her prayer. A connection was made, and through Marjorie's gift, Isobel Kuhn went to China.