



## Week 6

# Understanding authority – The Place of Obedience

***Figure out what will please Christ and then do it.***

*Ephesians 5:10 (The Msg)*

***Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.***

*Ephesians 5:17 (The Msg)*

### 1. Introduction

What are we trying to do or to achieve?

We hope that we will become mature. A significant part of this involves becoming a church who lives in baptismal faith – that is a community living in repentance and growing in freedom.

Recognising spiritual reality and living in fully in it.

Re-embracing spiritual authority in and through Christ. We were made and remade to make a difference. We were made to take ground, to live deliberately.

Resisting the resistances that set themselves up against God's purposes in and through us.

Refreshing our understanding of the effects of sin, the world, and in particular the devil.

Realising how patterns of resistance, strongholds, can become embedded in our lives thus subduing us.

Restoring repentance to a central place as the key to growth in the kingdom.

Recovering the prophetic as a consequence of intimacy and as a call to obedience.

### 2. Authority and Obedience

*'But the truth about obedience in the kingdom of Jesus....is that it really is abundance. Kingdom obedience is kingdom abundance. They are not two separate things'.  
Dallas Willard.*

Obedience to God borne out of submission to his authority leads to the release of power and authority in our lives. This a basic kingdom principle.

The principle is played out in the life of Jesus.

*I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19*

*By myself I can do nothing: I judge only as I hear, and my judgement is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. John 5:30.*

*For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. John 12:49,50*

The principle is played out in the life of followers of Jesus.

*'Why do you ask me about what is good?' Jesus replied. 'There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.' Matthew 18:22*

*Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10*

*...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:20*

*Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.' John 14:23-24*

*We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him. Acts 5:32*

### **God is looking for obedience that is:**

1. Immediate: *At once they left their nets and followed him .Mark 1:18*
2. Complete: *'My food,' said Jesus, 'is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.' John 4:34*
3. Willing: *I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:35*
4. Joyful: *If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. John 15v10-11*

### **3. Rebellion and the failure to live in submission**

*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently whoever rebels against the authorities is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves. Romans 13:1,2.*

*Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king. 1 Samuel 15:23.*

Submission is to God. Submission's opposite is sin.

The essence of sin is rebellion. Living in the spirit of submission does not come naturally to us.

Satan's kingdom is based on rebellion, independence and insubordination.

Fruit of rebellion is death and chaos.

One diagnostic tool of lingering attitude of rebellion is how we respond to the authorities God has raised up. The state, the pastor, the institution of marriage, the institution of parent/child etc.

Note the theme of 'grumbling.'

Numbers 14 and 16

*All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron...Numbers 14:2*

*Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did....and do not grumble as some of them did – and were killed by the destroying angel. 1 Corinthians 10:10*

### **4. Rebellion as the way of obedience?**

*Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, 'judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.' Acts 4:18,19*

Is it possible to have a submissive attitude but refuse to obey? Might Martin Luther King and the Civic Rights movement associated with him demonstrate this?

## 5. Further thoughts

- 1) Is there anything in our culture which undermines respect of authority and what influence might these factors (if any) have on you.
- 2) How do you feel about Paul's command to submit to governing authorities in the knowledge that they have been established by God (Romans 13:1ff)?
- 3) Peter says 'Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men' (1 Peter 2:13ff). How do you practice obeying this command?
- 4) What circumstances can you imagine where it might be appropriate for a Christian to 'rebel' against God instituted authority? Can you think of any biblical examples?
- 5) Is there any area of your life where you think you may be in rebellion? Consider family, relations, your work place even your church.
- 6) What do you think motivates us to live in obedience to God?