

AUTHORITY

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION AND GOD'S AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- In this series we will be discussing the uses and abuses of authority in the realms of government, church, family, and education. God has given his creation, since before the fall, various areas of authority. God is a God of order, not chaos. By design, there are authorities placed over every creature. From infants to kings, all people must understand godly living under authority. This course will not be based on political leanings, philosophy, or opinions, so please bring your Bibles. We want to understand God's Word on authority.
- Humanity understands chaos in these areas where God has given order. When there is no authority, abused authority, or insubordination in our world, we often find instability, chaos, and tragedy. Just ask a country in civil war, a child in a fatherless home, a parent of a stubborn child, or a middle manager with lazy workers AND a difficult supervisor.
- God perfectly planned these authority structures in our life, provided the instruction of how we should lead and follow, but also empowered us to faithfully do so.
- There should be a plethora of implications for life for everyone regarding children, parents, schools, government, workplace, governments, church, and even your HOA, but most of all, we should gain a larger view to the supremacy of God in every sphere of our life.
- **Class Schedule:**
 - **January 11:** **Introduction and God's Authority**
 - January 18: Authority and the Government
 - January 25: Authority and the Church
 - February 1: Authority and the Family
 - February 8: TBD (Possible Missionary Visit)
 - February 15: Authority and Education and the Workplace

INTRODUCTION

- How can we detect overreach, abuse, or neglect regarding those in authority?
- How do we discern when to continue to submit under EASY, DIFFICULT, and IMPOSSIBLE authority?
- In each realm of life, submission is healthy, necessary, and God-honoring.
- How must we think and talk about those in authority we do not agree with?
- What influence do we have to see healthy leadership in each realm?
- Ultimately, who gets the last word in our life? Reliable, trustworthy, and actionable truth is derived from someone or something.

- Kevin DeYoung: “Whether we realize it or not, we all give someone or something the last word—our parents, our culture, our community, our feelings, the government, peer-reviewed journals, opinion polls, impressions, or a holy book. We all have someone or something that we turn to as the final arbiter of truth claims. For Christians, this authority is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.”¹

GOD’S AUTHORITY STRUCTURES

God created and reigns over all things and has authority over all things.

Job 34:12-15 ~ ¹² “Surely, God will not act wickedly,
And the Almighty will not pervert justice.
¹³ **“Who gave Him authority over the earth?”**
And who has laid *on Him* the whole world?
¹⁴ “If He should determine to do so,
If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,
¹⁵ All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.

Psalms 24:1 ~ **The earth is the Lord’s**, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.

Psalms 145:13 ~ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and **Your dominion endures throughout all generations.**

Colossians 1:16 ~ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

**God’s Word stands above all other contrived sources of authority
(man, reason, intuition, experience, tradition, rationality).**

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ~ And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that **your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God**

1 Thessalonians 2:13 ~ For this reason we also constantly thank God that when **you received the word of God** which you heard from us, **you accepted it** not *as* the word of men, but **for what it really is, the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe.

God’s Word is authoritative because *ultimate authority* is God’s:

¹ Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word*, 78.

“the authority of Scripture is directly derived from the authority of God. Those who do not acknowledge God’s authority in Scripture are condemned (Jer. 8:8–9; Mark 7:1–13). On the other hand, those who rightfully honor and submit to God’s authority in Scripture are commended (Neh. 8:5–6; Rev. 3:8).”²

Submission does not mean lower value.

Jesus submitted to the Father’s will in Matthew 26:39 ~ “...yet not as I will, but as **You will.**” (cf. Phil 2:5ff)
Peter, after exhorting **wives** to submission, commanded **husbands** “**show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life**” (1 Pet 3:7).

Paul tells **masters** that they are to treat slaves without partiality as the Lord does (Eph 6:9).

Those in Christ have equal standing and promise, yet still live under the order of those relationships: “**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus**” (Gal 3:28)

Submission to God: Hearing and Obeying God

Exodus 10:3 ~ ‘**How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?**’

Psalms 81:11-13 ~ “**But My people did not listen to My voice, And Israel did not obey Me.**

12 “**So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in their own devices.**

13 “**Oh that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways!**

James 4:7 ~ **Submit therefore to God.**

Submission to human authorities: Abiding and Respecting Appointed Leaders³

- **Marriage:** But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in **everything** (Eph 5:24)
- **Family:** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right (Eph 6:1)
- **Church:** Obey your leaders and submit *to them* (Heb 13:17)
- **Work:** Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ (Eph 6:5)
- **Government:** Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution (1 Pet 2:13)

² John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 106.

³ In the following weeks we will talk about when and how not to obey.

God's Authority is Perfect, Human Authority is Flawed, yet God-appointed.

- Romans 13:1-2 ~ 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...
- Tim Challies: "We must see and understand that it is not the skill of the leaders that gives them the right to call us to follow them. It's not their ability. Not their track record. **It's their position.** Their authority is intrinsic to their position. And where there is authority, there is to be submission; **where there is leadership, there is to be "followership."** Why? Because this is how God orders his world. God rules his world through the rule of others; he exercises his authority through the authority he delegates to human beings."⁴

The Fear of God

Deuteronomy 6:1-2 ~ "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

What follows Fear of God and keeping His Statutes is blessing and God's Faithfulness, then the Shema to teach all the people to love the Lord your God and teach diligently the next generation:

Deuteronomy 6:3 ~ "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Psalms 111:10 ~ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

Proverbs 9:10 ~ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

- Fear of the LORD:
 - **Awe** for the Lord overflowing in **praise**
 - **Reverence** for the Lord shown by **obedience**

Is there a purpose to all of the wisdom of life in an ordered world??

Ecclesiastes 12:13 ~ The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person.

⁴ Tim Challies, "On Following Mediocre Leaders," <https://www.challies.com/articles/on-following-mediocre-leaders/>

Obedience is Better than Sacrifice

- God is in authority, so our response ought to be awe in our heart and praise on our lips and obedience in our life.
- We cannot put our *perception* above what God says.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 ~ 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 than the fat of rams. 23 “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from *being* king.”⁵

- God always requires obedience to His Word.⁶
- Alternatives yield idolatry and placing oneself above God just as Satan did.
 - Saul feared the people rather than fearing God.
 - Saul offered sacrifices rather than wait for the priest.
 - Saul rebelled, namely putting himself in the place of divinity. Submitted to self rather than God. His sin was placing himself as the god in authority.
 - He rejected God’s authority, so God rejected his delegated authority as anointed King as his long-term plan.
- Samuel knows what happened to Eli and his sons because of their sacrifices without a changed heart.

Right Worship

- God does not desire cowering fearful people,
 - but reverent, honoring children who love their Father out of his pure and majestic glory!
- Right worship begins with a right view of who God is and who we are.
 - **Isaiah** (6:1-5) saw the Lord of Hosts and feared for his life in light of his sin and the holiness of God. Isaiah also experienced the Lord’s atonement and forgiveness of sin (6:6-7).
 - Both **Paul** (Acts 9:5) and **John** (Rev 1:17) were fearful when they encountered the Lord.

⁵ [*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Sa 15:22–23.

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THE UNBELIEVER'S VIEW OF AUTHORITY AND DIFFICULT POSITION

Autonomy

George Zemek: "Being sold out to self, sin and Satan, the unsaved person is not objective nor open-minded when exposed to the issues of eternity. He has a vested interest in protecting his alleged autonomy; therefore, he will resist spiritual things with every ounce of his rebellious being. Smooth talk and 'brilliant arguments' on our part will, at best, be ineffectual and, at worst, prove tragically counterproductive. Often such methods pour gasoline on his flames of burning rejection."⁷

Psalms 14:1 ~ The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God"

Romans 1:22 ~ ...men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness

2 Corinthians 4:4 ~ the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Romans 3 and the Indictments on Mankind's Rebellion:⁸

1) mankind's character ,	vv. 10–12;	Psalms 14:1-3	Not seeking God
2) mankind's communications ,	vv. 13–14;	Psalms 5:9; 140:3; 10:7	Cursing speech
3) mankind's conduct ,	vv. 15–17; and	Isaiah 59:7 (Col 1:21)	Paths of hostility
4) mankind's contempt ,	v. 18.	Psalms 36:1	No fear of God

- We know the conclusion of Romans 3 and later in chapter 5 that God provides the remedy.
- God takes the initiative.
 - God reconciles *while we were helpless... while we were yet sinners... while we were enemies*
 - God demonstrates his love (8), Christ died (8), God justifies (9),
 - With a result that we receive peace (1), we exult in the hope of the glory of God (2),

Colossians 1:21-23 ~ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. ⁹

Conclusion:

- Unbelievers need to **hear** God's Authoritative Word
- by which God's Powerful Spirit **regenerates** a person,
- that they might **submit** to God's Authority.

⁷ George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 119.

⁸ George J. Zemek, *Doing God's Business God's Way: A Biblical Theology of Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 27.

⁹ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Col 1:21–23.

A SUBMISSIVE HEART (JAMES 4:7-10)¹⁰

James 4:7-10 ~ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Ten Conditions for Receiving Divine Blessing:

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| 1. Submit to God (7) | -voluntary, compliance to God's Word |
| 2. Resist the Devil (7) | -forsaking evil, saying no to temptation, and standing strong (Eph 6:11) |
| 3. Draw near to God (8) | -inward motion toward God for fellowship, communion (Ps 73:28) |
| 4. Cleanse your hands (8) | -call for repentance in order to stand before God |
| 5. Purify your hearts (8) | -also cleansing from guilt. A complete heart-renewal |
| 6. Lament (9) | -heartache over sin. Humility over our offense against God |
| 7. Mourn (9) | -pain and anguish. Responsibility for guilt |
| 8. Weep (9) | -physical response to the true spiritual meekness |
| 9. Get Serious (9) | -attitude of repentance in the face of sin. |
| 10. Humble yourselves (10) | -genuine repentance through all of the above. |

WHY DOES GOD PUT PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY OVER US IF HE IS ULTIMATELY IN AUTHORITY?¹¹

Larry Kreider: "The Lord uses His delegated authorities to teach us, mold us, and build the character of Christ in our lives. We then can be His loving authorities to others whom He places in our lives."

- Human beings are not going to be perfect, yet they are divinely appointed to various levels of authority.
- We do not submit to them because of their perfection or our preference, but because God placed them there.
- We are not in control of many leaders placed over us, but we are responsible for our response and attitude.
- God grants blessings and promises for obedience, not for selective obedience.
- We submit to authority out of responsibility, not because of the thanks or benefits we will receive.

Luke 17:7-10 ~ "Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? 8 "But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and *properly* clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? 9 "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? 10 "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'"

- In the home, workplace, church, and community, Christians are to willingly and respectfully submit to those in positions of authority.

¹⁰ Outline from John MacArthur, *Can God Bless America*, 10-27.

¹¹ Larry Kreider, *Authority and Accountability: How to respond to leadership and fellow believers God places in our lives*, 14.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF AUTHORITY¹²

1. God has authority over the earth (Job 34:12-15)
2. Man does not have authority as God does (Ecc 8:8)
3. Man can abuse his authority and hurt others (Ecc 8:9)
4. Sometimes God wields His authority in judgement against wicked nations (Isaiah 30:30-31)
5. Sometimes God wields His authority against His own people when they turn from Him (Jer 5:20-22, 29)
6. Some Priests in the Old Testament abused their authority (Jer 5:30-31)
7. Men are sometimes given authority to rule over others (Daniel 5:16; Mt 8:9)
8. The Lord Jesus amazed the people as He taught with authority (Mt 7:29)
9. The Lord Jesus has authority to forgive sins (Mt 9:6)
10. The Lord Jesus gave His Apostles authority over unclean spirits and to heal disease (Mt 10:1)
11. The Lord Jesus has authority over all other authorities (Mt 28:18; Eph 1:2; Col 2:10)
12. Instead of fearing man, we should fear God who has authority to cast people into hell (Lk 12:5)
13. Kings and Rulers have authority given to them by God (John 19:11)
14. No one has authority over others unless God gives it to them (Romans 13:1)
15. We are to obey the authorities God gives us (Rom 13:2; 1 Peter 2:13-15)
16. Concerning sexual intimacy, husbands and wives have authority over their spouse's body (1 Cor 7:4)
17. In the church in Corinth, a head covering for the woman was a symbol of her being under authority (11:10)
18. In the end, God will abolish all earthy rule and authorities (1 Cor 15:23-24)
19. In the context of the church, women are not to exercise authority over the men (1 Tim 2:12)
20. Unrighteous people are described, in part, as despising authority (2 Pet 2:10)
21. In addition to Kings and Governors, certain people are given authority:
 - a. Parents over children: Ephesians 6:1
 - b. Masters over slaves: 1 Peter 2:18
 - c. Husbands over wives: Ephesians 5:23
22. Warnings to be careful with the authority God gives you.
 - a. Fathers: Ephesians 6:4
 - b. Masters: Ephesians 6:9
 - c. Husbands: 1 Peter 3:7
23. God gives authority to man. Man's authority over others is not absolute. God is the higher authority. No man has absolute authority over another. If man's authority would cause the person under his authority to sin, then the person that was asked to sin must respectfully refuse even if it means they suffer consequences. That is the only view that is (1) consistent with the holiness of God and the Scriptural teaching that (2) each person is accountable to God for their sin (1 Peter 1:14-16; Ez 18:20; Deut 24:16).

¹² Martha Peace, *The Excellent Wife*, Addendum D