

AUTHORITY

WEEK 4: AUTHORITY AND THE FAMILY

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. There is instability, chaos, and lost blessing when there is no authority, abused authority, or insubordination in our world. 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 Government, Part 2
 - **February 1: Authority and the Family**
 - February 8: Authority and the Church
 - February 15: Authority and Education and the Workplace

FURTHER DISCUSSION FROM LAST WEEK

INTRODUCTION

- Among other foundational characteristics, the family is a hierarchy.
 - There is a God-given hierarchy of experience, intelligence, wisdom, and maturity in the family, and parents should be the ones who model it. While I have encountered children and youth who showed greater wisdom than their parents, these are exceptions, not the norm. Parents, are you intentionally pursuing greater wisdom in God's ways for family life?
 - There is a hierarchy in terms of who are the receivers and who are the givers. We hear of stories where the children had to go out into the world to find ways to earn for the family, but again this should be an exception not a rule. Maybe that is not an issue at all in our church, but it certainly is still a reality in our culture. Fathers—do you realize just how much God expects of you in this matter? Mothers, whether stay-at-home or working, do you recognize that God has specific expectations for you in terms of nurturing and giving to you children? We could continue on a good many other foundational issues, but we must move on.
 - The family's hierarchies demonstrate that God has given structured, real-world shape to His authority in human life—particularly among those seeking to worship and obey Him. While lost families may reflect this design through God's providence and common grace, Christian families must actively pursue and embody God's intentional pattern for authority, never treating it as accidental or incidental.
 - That is what this series means to show—God's wisdom in delegating authority in this world. Let's examine some matters in how that should work with the family.

1. THE FAMILY IS AN INVENTION OF GOD, PRE-FALL.

Genesis 1:26-28 ~ ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:23-25 ~ ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- Notice the theme of authority, order and hierarchy—"rule", "subdue", "leave"

2. GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

- a. "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth" has within it an expectation that marriage and the family are God's intentional plan for mankind to flourish in the world. This idea is repeated in the post-Fall world when humanity has been reduced to eight individuals:

Genesis 9:1 ~ **And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."**

- a. This pattern has been repeated throughout the world, even where the people are not followers of God.
b. We distort it as Lamech did with multiple wives, but the essential structure is still there:

Genesis 4:23 ~ Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me;

- b. But, families do not start properly without a marriage, and that is where we turn next. What are the essentials of how God's authority & sense of hierarchy work in marriage?

3. HEADSHIP

- c. Before getting to the human participants in marriage, we need to address the Divine.
d. In a Christian marriage, Christ is the head.

1 Corinthians 11:3 ~ **³ 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**

- a. Notice the chain: God→Christ→Husband→Wife
b. The hierarchy is simply stated. Even Christ—God the Son has a place of economic submission to God the Father.
i. "Economic" means that Christ has a stewardship role to play—to obey the Father even though in Essence and Being he is equal to the Father.
ii. Later we will see that such an idea works into the purpose of Marriage and Family.
c. Notice in Ephesians 1, 4 and 5, even as the Holy Spirit spells out the headship of a husband in a marriage, it is still done under the umbrella of Christ's authority over the husband **and** the wife—because they are both a part of his body.

Ephesians 1:22-23 ~ **²² And He [the Father] put all things in subjection under His [Christ the Son's] feet, and gave Him [Christ] as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

Ephesians 4:15-16 ~ **¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him **who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.****

Colossians 1:18 ~ **¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the**

dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Ephesians 5:21-30, 33 ~ ²¹ and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. ²² Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body.... ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

- i. The language is powerful and intentional: “be subject to one another”; “husband is head of the wife”, etc.
- ii. These speak of intentional effort by the husband and by the wife.
 1. She is to in some fashion treat her husband in the same fashion as the Church is to respond to Christ. Submit, follow and respect/honor.
 2. The husband is to love his wife in a self-sacrificing way—leading and feeding in such a fashion as to build her up spiritually, guide her in wise & moral directions, and lovingly serve and lead her even if it costs him—reputation, weakness, time, enjoyment, etc., with Christ as his example!
 3. It is not that “I would die for my wife”—men, we all would! It means that we are willing to die daily in the work of being a loving, sacrificing man for her.
 4. It is not that a wife always has to hold the right romantic feelings about her husband, but that in the face of all of his sinfulness, frailties, etc. she will “respect” him!
- iii. When people balk at this somehow making it into marriage vows or marital counseling, I think that many of them do not fully count the cost of what “loving your wife” or “respecting/obeying your husband” truly requires! The obligation is great for both the man and the woman, when properly understood.
- iv. What can we notice then in Ephesians 5 with the comparison between husband & wife||Christ & Church? That Christian marriage and family are not only to be Good News centered, but they also are to serve as models for what the Good New is and does.

Voddie Baucham writes in relation to this: “Our goal is the gospel. The approach to family shepherding in this book, and the things we do in our church are not predicated on statistics about church dropouts (though that is important). Nor is it our belief that all the church’s problems stem from a low view of the family (though that issue is significant.) What we do, and what I am writing about here, starts with a belief that the gospel is our only hope. The family is not the gospel; nor is the family as important as the gospel. The family is [simply] a delivery mechanism for the gospel”¹

- v. This leaves husbands and wives to work together how best to model the Christ/Church relation.

4. GOD’S AUTHORITY IN THE FAMILY AND WITH CHILDREN

- What about how God’s authority works out in the family and with children?

- a. A significant passage:

Colossians 3:17-21 ~ ¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. ¹⁸ **Wives**, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ **Husbands**, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. ²⁰ **Children**, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ **Fathers**, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

- i. A home centered around gratitude: “giving thanks...”
- ii. A home where each is working to act in such a way that reflects well upon Christ and the Good News: “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
- iii. Husband and wives relating to each other as described earlier: “subject” and “love” without being “embittered” toward wives.
- iv. A home where children are taught that obeying Mom and Dad needs to be done because it pleases God.
 - 1. Good: “you need to behave, after all do you want your Mom or Dad to know what you’ve done””
 - 2. Best: “you need to behave because doing so pleases the God who made you (and if regenerate) and Christ who saved you.”
- v. A home where Fathers exert their authority but in consistent ways, with a readiness to admit when they are wrong, while still upholding God’s ways: “do not exasperate.”
- vi. A home where children can gain a firm footing in what God’s rule looks like because Dad (while leading Mom in this) sets a tone for consistency. This gives the child an understanding that God is consistent also.
- vii. Consistency in leadership helps those being led to more rely on their leader. This obviously reflects well/poorly on the Father in the eyes of the child. But in a Christian home, consistency will then help the child to see God and his ways as worth following.

¹ Voddie Baucham, *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes*: 13

- b. But what if parents work hard at these matters of love, consistency and leadership and the child is still rebellious or similar?
- Be certain that you understand exactly what your child is doing or thinking.
 - Ask questions about his or her behavior? What did you do? What did she mean to accomplish? Does he understand that his behavior has been done/is being done in the presence of God, not just parents, teachers, friends, etc?
 - Remember that we do what we do,
we say what we say
and we feel what we feel
because we think what we think.

Parenting Progress

- Work toward these goals over time:
 1. Make sure that you and your child are focusing on the spiritual nature of the rebellion:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 ~ ¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is ^cbeing renewed day by day. ¹⁷For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Ephesians 6:11-12 ~ ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Hebrews 4:11-13 ~ ¹¹Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have

- a. Help him/her to develop a heartfelt, internalized fear/reverence for God.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 ~ ⁵"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- b. Help your children to grow a deep respect for God’s authority structures in the world—including parents.
 - c. Help your children to hate wickedness and to not seek friends who are consistently disobedient/rebellious. Do not place them in the circumstance where they are the good kid who will help the rebellious kid. This obviously takes tact and wisdom, but in their developing years God has not designed them to be the teachers per se, but the learners.
 - d. You cannot hope to teach your children the fear of God if you do not understand Christian theology in some depth. Not just information and knowledge but how those doctrines apply to the reality of salvation and how they speak to holy living.
 - e. Teach your child to see themselves less in comparison to others and more in comparison to Christ and his perfections. In other words, to see themselves as humble and needing God’s strength and wisdom. Show them how many times Christ himself, in his perfect faith, quoted Scripture to withstand temptation, prayed to his Father (note especially his prayer in Gethsemane!), and spoke of “obeying his Father.”
2. Teach your children what they specifically should be convinced and convicted about regarding Christian teaching and living.
- a. Make sure that you do not call an application of biblical truth (how you work it out in the real world) as a specific law of God. In other words, may of God’s commands/principles can work out differently for different Christians. [Example: 3 Seminary students driving home end up choosing a different way.]
 - b. Make sure that what you see as a conviction is not actually simply a preference. [Not investing in a company because they sell alcohol or support pornography or similar, but at the same time buying internet usage from a ISP that also offers pornography and uses commercials to sell alcohol].
 - c. Teach them by example to be consistent with godly behavior. E.g. demanding that your child be kind and considerate of others while at the same time berating, belittling and throwing a fit of anger at a Customer Service agent. Father.”
3. Specifically develop their hearts to understand clear boundary issues.
- a. A biblical conviction is always based on the study of, submission to, and proper application of Scripture
 - b. A biblical conviction is always predetermined: God has stated them, and we can only stand by them if we know them.
 - c. A biblical conviction will not change with circumstances.

- d. A biblical conviction is inflexible. In reality, there are no grey/gray(?) areas with God and his universe. There certainly are wisdom decisions, but in a certain sense, there is always an alternative to sinning. We only think there is not because we are unwilling to trust God by choosing rightly.
 - e. True biblical conviction is bold. God has authority in his creatures' lives, and especially in his bought-by-Christ children's lives. Do not let your children think that their lives can be compartmentalized—God's authority is universal. When they live according to that authority it will be seen as bold by those who would love rebellion.
 - f. Just like true compassion is lived out, true biblical conviction is only that which is acted upon.
 - i. People may feel pity for others in their difficulty, but feeling is not love/compassion. Rather, if they act to aid others in their difficulty, then they are being loving/compassionate.
 - ii. Similarly, biblical convictions must be acted upon in order to show that you are truly convinced that God's way is best.²
4. Pray and work for the salvation and good of that child! God's authority in this world extends to both his sovereign salvation of young people, and to his Spirit's active work in aiding a believing child to obey!

Ephesians 2:4-10 ~ ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead ¹in our transgressions, made us alive together ²with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

5. TRUST IN THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF GOD IN THE MIDST OF YOUR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY!

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, and may He change us with this message today!

² Some of this last section is direct quotation or a summary of Paul David Tripp, "*Age of Opportunity*" Chapter 7

Other books: Tedd Trip "Shepherding a Child's Heart"; Bret Laird "Family, Government and Church"; Larry Kreider "Authority and Accountability"