

**Series: EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH EMPOWERED**

**Title: AUTHORITY DYNAMICS**

**Text: Ephesians 6.1-9**

**Date: Nov 24, 2024**

### **Opening Line**

Did you ever have an incompetent boss who is negative, demeaning?

Have you ever been put down and treated poorly by someone you are supposed to respect?

Some here today were not raised in a loving home, but possibly a cruel home that showed little of God's love in it.

Some here have sworn that they will never again be controlled and thus have built walls of protection as well as a stance of hard disregard for others who may be in positions of authority.

It is tough to do your best work, to be your best you, when the other person is mean, cruel, belittling, and has not shown concern for you.

And yet, we are called to be gentle, patient, kind, gentle, and submit to authorities.

### **Transition**

Today we are looking at two stages of life where we must deal with being under authority and in authority

## **As a child and as an adult In the Home and in the Workplace**

### **Under Authority as a Child Obey and Honor**

#### **Eph. 6:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

- Obey
  - Submit, follow, comply, abide by

- In the Lord
  - RC Sproul:
  - The apostle addresses Christian children, his main audience consisting of kids who still live under their parents' roofs.
    - Adult children can certainly draw principles from Ephesians 6:1–3 for their relationship with their parents, but the primary instruction is for those who have yet to reach maturity.
  - Ancient Roman society, like most cultures throughout history, believed that children should listen to their parents and respect their elders. Indeed, no one can escape what the created order tells us about the propriety of kids obeying their mothers and fathers.
    - Yet Scripture uniquely addresses children directly, commanding them as individuals with a moral sense of what they should and should not do. This elevates children from the status of mere possessions to persons, conferring upon them a dignity and worth not always given to them in unbelieving societies. Kids are not chattel who can be treated any way their parents like.
  - Addressing children this way presupposes that regenerate young people, especially if they are nearing adulthood, have the duty and ability to obey their parents wisely.
  - No human authority, parents included, deserves absolute allegiance.
    - Abusive, neglectful, and impenitently foolish parents are not to be honored in the same way as good parents.
    - John Chrysostom, the ancient patriarch of Constantinople, addressed this issue, noting Paul's qualification that youths obey parents "in the Lord." Chrysostom says, **"They [parents] are to be obeyed in whatever way they are not offending against God" (ACCNT 8, p. 191).**
  - Obedience "in the Lord" qualifies the child-parent relationship, but it cannot excuse rebellious kids who disobey rules they do not like.
    - God gives us parents for our benefit, and obeying their wisdom, besides being right, brings us many benefits (Eph. 6:2–3).
    - In fact, children who impenitently disobey the godly instruction of their parents mark themselves off as unregenerate (Rom. 1:28–32; 2 Tim. 3:1–5).
    - Yet children who profess Christ and render respectful love to their parents demonstrate the reality of their salvation, enjoying many other blessings as well.
- Honor brings a promise
  - Show decency, respect, admiration, regard, and esteem for
  - Promise of a blessed life

## In Authority as a Parent: Calm in Correction and Instruction

### Eph. 6:4

*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

- **Provoke**
  - Aggravate, needle, goad, irritate, enflame
- Parents certainly have the opportunity to provoke their children to wrath, through an unkind, over-critical attitude that torments the child instead of training them.
- But Christian parents should never be like this.
  - “The gospel introduced a fresh element into parental responsibility by insisting that the feelings of the child must be taken into consideration. In a society where the father’s authority (*patria potestas*) was absolute, this represented a revolutionary concept.” (Wood)
- This harsh kind of parenting Paul speaks against gives an unnecessary justification to a child’s natural rebellion.
  - “When you are disciplining a child, you should have first controlled yourself... What right have you to say to your child that he needs discipline when you obviously need it yourself?” (Lloyd-Jones)
- **Bring them up**
  - This ancient Greek word was originally used of bodily nourishment as in Ephesians 5:29. But the word came to be used for the nurture of body, mind, and soul. The form here suggests “development by care and pains” or as Calvin translated, “Let them be fondly cherished.”
- **Training and admonition of the Lord**
  - **Discipline:** Correction, regulation, restraint
  - **Instruction:** Teaching, training, educating, direction
  - This is a responsibility for fathers. They must not neglect their responsibility to teach and be a spiritual example for their children. It is not a responsibility that should be left to the mother or the Sunday School.
  - Both training and admonition are used to describe the purpose of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 10:11). Parents are to raise their children on the Word of God.

## Under Authority as an Employee: Obey with Sincere heart as unto the Lord

### Eph. 6:5-8

<sup>5</sup> *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,* <sup>6</sup> *not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,* <sup>7</sup> *rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,* <sup>8</sup> *knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.*

- **Bondservant:** δούλος - DOO-los =
  - The term "*doulos*" in the New Testament is used to describe a person who is in a position of servitude or subjection.
  - It can refer to a literal slave, someone who is legally owned by another and whose entire livelihood and purpose are determined by their master.
  - However, it is also used metaphorically to describe a person who is devoted to another to the disregard of their own interests,
    - Often used to describe followers of Christ who are committed to serving God and His purposes.
  - In the Greco-Roman world, slavery was a common institution, and a "*doulos*" was typically someone who had no personal freedom and was under the complete authority of their master.
    - Slavery could result from various circumstances, including war, birth, or debt.
    - However, the New Testament redefines this concept by using "*doulos*" to describe the relationship between believers and Christ,
    - **Emphasizing voluntary servitude out of love and devotion rather than compulsion.**
- Serve with fear and trembling, as you would Christ.
- Show no people-pleasing, but do the will of God.
- Do good service.
- Have good will.
- Doing the will of God from the heart.
  - Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,
  - In Greek culture manual work was despised and the goal of being successful was getting to the point where you never had to do any work. This isn't how it is in God's kingdom, where hard work and manual labor are honorable.
    - It should be said of every Christian that he is a hard worker and gives his employer a full day's work for his pay; to do anything less is to steal from your employer.

- God will reward you
  - ... *knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, ... (v.8)*

**In Authority as an Employer**  
**Kind and Impartial with a sincere heart as unto the Lord**

**Eph. 6:7 -9**

*...<sup>7</sup> rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,<sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.<sup>9</sup> Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.*

- Do the same to them.
- **Doing the will of God from the heart ...**
  - ... rendering service ...
  - ... with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ...
  - ... knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, ...
- Even as servants are to work hard and honestly for their masters, so masters are to do the same on behalf of those who work for them.
  - “So the Gospel leaves its message of absolutely equal obligation, in Jesus Christ, upon the slave and upon the slave owner. The principle will do its work. There is no word of Revolution.” (Moule)
- No threatening
  - Employers are also to give up threatening and other forms of harsh treatment.
  - They do this knowing that they are employees of their Master in heaven, and He judges without regard to wealth or position.
- No partiality
- You are seen the same in the eyes of the Lord and will be judged impartially.
  - Your position gives you no excuse.

Do the will of God from the heart, with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord.

**Bottom Line:** God has determined the way to be under authority and in authority and we are called to be obedient to His way.