

Embracing Authority-Part 2

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INTRODUCTION

What IS authority?

The power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge.
(The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition)

What is God's purpose for authority?

1. God's purpose from the beginning has always to been to co-rule the earth with mankind.

God's purpose for mankind has always been that they would co-rule the earth with Him as His image bearers. To that end, God has established institutions and positions of authority over mankind and over creation itself.

2. Now, because of sin, God's redemptive purpose for authority is to hold back wickedness by punishing the wrongdoer (Romans 13:4).

⁴For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Romans 13:1-7

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except that which God has established.

- "everyone"—no exceptions.
- "be subject"—hupertasso. To be arranged under in rank or authority.
- "governing"—huperecho—To be arranged over in rank or authority
- "authorities"—power to act, often conferred authority

The authorities that exist have been established by God. ²Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

³For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

1 Peter 2:13-17

³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

1 Peter 2:18-23

¹⁸ Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹ For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

- If you CAN escape, do it (1 Corinthians 7:21-22)
- If you CAN'T escape, endure it.

Christ, Our Example (vs. 21-23; Hebrews 5:8)

When Authority is Commanding Us to Violate God's Law

Principles:

1. It is sometimes OK to disobey laws.
2. We must obey God rather than man.
3. It is never wrong to do good.
4. We must count the cost when disobeying.

If the delegated authority is telling us to do something that is against God's law, then we obey the direct authority of God (Acts 5:29). Sometimes we do this overtly (Acts 5:42). Other times we may do this covertly (Exodus 1:17; 20-21; Hebrews 11:23). It is never wrong to do good. However, we must be willing to accept the punishment against us, no matter how unjust it may be in the eyes of God.

When Authority Oversteps its God-given Boundaries

1. State
2. Church
3. Home
4. Self

When an institution steps outside of the boundaries that is given by God, it may be disobeyed. But once again, we must count the cost of disobeying. For example:

- The State cannot stop you from spanking your child. Similarly, the Church cannot demand that you spank your child. Nor can it forbid it. This would violate the governance of the home. That stated, the State can ensure that you are not beating your child, etc.
- A husband cannot make his wife go on a diet as this would violate self-governance. This would constitute as abuse.

Questions for Personal Reflection/Group Discussion

1. How is authority a reflection of God's image? How is this to be reflected in the earth?
2. Generally speaking, why is rebellion against human authority seen as rebellion against God?
3. When is it ok to disobey human authority?
4. Describe your relationship to God's authority right now.