

Title: How To Respond To Authority

Text: Ephesians 6:5-9

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be in submission. I remind you that in chapter 5 verse 15 this whole discussion began. Paul said to walk carefully. HOW DO I WALK CAREFULLY IN THIS SINFUL WORLD? And his answer to that question is found in Vs 18: TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. He then told us what it means to be filled with the Spirit. It means that we will speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We will sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord. We will give thanks to the Father for all things. And we will be subject to one another as unto the lord..Vs 21..

To show you that that is the main proof of the filling of the Holy Spirit, Paul then continues that discussion of submission all the way to chapter 6 Vs 9. In Vs 22 of chapter 5, he said, "Wives..to the husbands."

In Vs 25 he said "Husbands to the wives"

In Chapter 6 Vs 1, it is "children to parents"

In chapter 6 verse 4 it is "fathers to children"

In chapter 6 verse 5 it is "slaves to masters"

And in chapter 6 verse 9 it is "masters to slaves"

We are all to be submissive to one another. HOW TO RESPOND TO AUTHORITY IS A MAJOR ISSUE IN ALL OF OUR LIVES.

Let's look at chapter 6 beginning with Vs 5.....(READ Vs 5-9)

PRAYER

HOW TO RESPOND TO AUTHORITY. LET'S BEGIN WITH SLAVES...Very simple: you respond by being submissive to those who are over you.

Now, I know that slavery is not right in this or any generation. Nor, should it be approved or condoned.

But, I want you to know that the slavery we moderns talk about is not the slavery of the Roman empire. There were hundreds of thousands of slaves in Rome. And most of them were strangers and aliens. Some of them were conquered people as well.

But, the Romans, themselves, who were citizens were slaves to no one. But, these slaves they employed in their service. And thus, as modern Bible teachers rightly conclude, the slave-master relationship is the same.... in some degree...as that in our business world of employee to employer. They performed task that were necessary to accomplish certain things. The Romans owned the things and the slaves managed and worked them. And they were under the authority of the Romans.

By the way, there is no condemnation of slavery in the N.T. As strange as that may seem. But our attitudes in this day and age are not the same as those in Rome. I certainly believe that we who have become free in the Lord Jesus ought not to have any thing to do with slavery. But, I believe we need to understand that that relationship was a very vital and practical one to those who were coming to Christ in the first Century. They had to go to work the next day after they had gathered with the christians. And when the slave became a christian, and he learned about his freedom in the Lord Jesus Christ, he found it very difficult to apply that to his work. As a slave to some Roman master. And thus this instruction came. "Slaves be obedient."

That is the same word we find in Vs 1 where it says "Children obey your parents." And the word "obey" or "obedient" means to "listen under someone's authority." And harken to it.

It is in the "present tense". Slaves be continually listening under authority.

And when we look at the response that is required, there are three things that I would like you to face. The response that is required in order for us to be submissive to those who are in authority.

(1) And the first issue in Vs 5 deals with acceptance of authority.

And I believe the particular problem, here, is dealing with an unbeliever who is over you as your boss or your employer.

The statement is: "Slaves to obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh."

Now, the word "flesh" here is not simply talking about the physical body. He is not saying that there are some masters with physical bodies and some who don't have them. You see, that would be ridiculous.

I believe what this is talking about is an unbeliever. A master who is according to the flesh. Rather than according to the spirit. Because the problem was: once you became a christian, how do I relate to the man who is a non-christian who is over me.

The acceptance of authority is a big issue in submission. Because often we are in the problem of accepting someone who has treated us wrongly. Or, isn't worthy of respect from a human point of view. I am sure that many of you bosses that you have to go to work for that you have a difficult time responding to because of actions that they have towards you. Maybe they have not been the best and the sweetest to you...Right?.....And so, it is often difficult to respond to them.

But, I would like to give you a little help on this from I Timothy chapter 6..where Paul deals with this particular problem: Being obedient to your unbelieving bosses.

It is a sad thing that work, today, is no longer the joy and the main ^{Activity} ~~active~~ and meaning of the christian as it once was. Work, today, seems to be a necessary evil in order to get the money that we need to survive, or to enjoy pleasure. Some who are involved in studying work in businesses today call this attitude the "AGE OF PLEASURE". That work and money is only looked at in terms of what pleasures I can achieve through them. I want you to know that that was not the teaching of the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant work ethic was that work was good. And that man's work is the vehicle and framework through which he was going to share Christ to a lost and ~~is~~ dying world.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation they encouraged a very feudal society of the middle ages to wake up to their responsibility to God and to their employer. This idea is found throughout the teachings of the Reformers that we are to be careful how we work. That work is good. And that it ought to be a motivation of the believer to go to work.

And to work for the glory of God. And his work would adorn the doctrine of God. And jwould provide the base for witnessing. The Reformers taught that if we do not work as God wanted us to work, our testimony to the unbeliever was worthless. And that's the way the Bible upholds that and sustains that as we will see ~~in~~ a moment.

I Timothy 6:1 says "Let all who are under theyoke as slavess regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, ^{why?} so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against."

One of the main areas in which the non-believer critizes and accuses and slanders the christian is in the area ~~of~~ ^{and} sphere of business and work.

Vs 2.. "And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these princples..."

Now it is easy for a christian to witness and respond to an unbeliever. But when ;you have a believing master, a believing employer, sometimes the christian assumes that he has an inside track. He takes privilages. He shows disrespect. He takes advantage because they are ~~not~~ brothers in Christ.

I would urge you to face this problem in your own life. If you work for a person who is a christian, make sure you still recognize the chain of command and respons to authority. And God says that you should work all the harder. So that no unbeliever ~~would~~ ever accuse you, as a believer, of working less because your boss is a believer. You ought to work all the more just to prove that ø your commitment is truely to the Lord. And knowing that it is the Lord that you serve.

Acceptance of authority is an important issue according to Vs 3, "If any one advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness";
NOW WATCH THIS.....

Vs 4.."he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

As though some how because you have a christian employer, you will some how gain through it. You have an inside track that the unbeliever doesn't have. The Bible is warning us about this. And, how this is violated among christians. It is a very important issue. Our response to authority. The acceptance of the authority of even an unbeliever.

Back to Ephesians chapter 6.

(2) The second issue involved in the response that is required deals with our accountability before God..Vs 5 says that "slaves are to be obedient". And the last phrase says "as to Christ."

We are accountable to the Lord. And we are to serve and work as though we are responding to the Lord and accountable to him. And there are two phrases that describe that in terms of attitude.

(1) One, is with fear and trembling. Now, what does that mean?

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Cor. chapter 2. Let me just show you a couple usages of that phrase: WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

I Cor. 2 verse 3....Do we really understand ~~are~~ our accountability to Christ? What is our attitude as we work? Is there the fear and trembling? Does that mean that you are scared of people?...NO!!!...The fear of man is a trap, says the scripture. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. This is fear and trembling as to your relationship to the Lord.

I Cor. 2:3 says .."And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

I would just like you to notice that Paul was not a self-confident person. He was not overly confident. His confidence and dependence was in the Lord. And in His power.

He said, "I was in weakness. And with fear and trembling I preached." I suggest to you that that attitude, as we work, knowing our accountability is to God, is sensing our dependency upon Him because we are weak and we do need his help. And the possibility of failing our Lord in our work is Great. ~~For~~ it is with fear and trembling before God that I work.

This is speaking, I believe, of an attitude that is humble. And senses its dependency upon God.

Turn, please, to 2 Cor. chapter 7 verse 15.....This is an interesting verse as it applies to the situation behind the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Let me just explain that for a moment. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 there is a brother who is guilty of incest. The church was overlooking that sin and not dealing with it. Paul sent his first letter to rebuke them for it. And to cause them to deal with that situation. And to put that man out of their midst.

Well, in the time between 1 Corinthians and the writing of 2 Corinthians the man had repented and had turned to the Lord. Now, the church had a second problem. They were not receiving the brother back with open arms and forgiveness. And Paul wrote to rebuke them for this attitude. Paul sent Titus with this instruction. Time had past and Paul had not heard from the church and thus he was making plans to go to the church, himself. And it is interesting what Paul said when Titus came with the report that God had done a wonderful thing and the people had responded.

Look at Vs 15. Speaking of Titus, Paul said, "And his affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling."

~~/o/~~ You see, once again, that characterizes the attitude of someone. Here in obedience they ~~re/c/e~~ received the word with a fear and trembling. Knowing that they were accountable to God. And they were not acting correctly. And they needed a change in their conduct. And so they received the brother back and forgave him. Paul was excited to hear that report.

The interesting thing to me is that Titus's own love for them grew. I am not going to say this is a dogmatic principle. But I gained something from that, personal, that I want to share with you. You know, I believe one of the reasons why folks don't receive the love and response that they are looking for is because they are not submissive to authority.

You see, according to the Bible Titus's affection was abounding all the more when he experienced how those folks in Corinth received the Word with fear and trembling. And I got to thinking about that in personal application. You know, the more submissive we are to authority, it seems to me the greater will be peoples response to us. INTERESTING, ISN'T IT?

And when there is even a spirit covered in spiritual language, or whatever, of bitterness or resentment or whatever, it causes people not to respond in love towards us. Interesting little insight to the whole problem of submission.

Even in Philippians 2:12 Paul said to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Because it is God who works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure.

So, our attitude needs to be right.

(2) The second part of that attitude, Paul says in Vs 5, "the sincerity of your heart." We are accountable to God. And we need to work with fear and trembling. An attitude of humility and dependency upon God. Knowing that we are accountable to Him. And also in the sincerity of our hearts.

Now, what does that mean?....The Greek word is simple the word "single" in contrast to "double." For example in Romans 12:8 as it relates to giving. It says we are to give with liberality. That is the same word translated "sincerity." It means to give "with a single motive." To have no secondary motives in our giving.

So, the same thing is true in Ephesians 6. When I work it is to be with a singleness of heart. And I believe the "singleness" of heart that Paul is talking about is serving the Lord Jesus and furthering His great commission through the avenue of my work. That I see my work as a key base for my witnessing for the Lord.....

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As Titus tells us when Paul wrote about bond slaves, he said: "They could adone the doctrine of God by the very way they worked."

It becomes an avenue to share your faith and your jcommitment to Christ. This avenue is seen through following ~~for~~ what the Lord has to say about working and not the way the rest of the folks are doing it. Sincerity..... Singleness.....WHAT IS OUR MOTIVE?.....DO WE WORK ONLY TO GET PAID?...That is the motive taught in Scripture. Our motive ought to be to further the great commision of Christ and jto spread his love even through my work style. The way I live and work. This is very important.

I think to often we down play our work and our life style. But according to the Bible this is fundamental to our words that we share about Jesus. And how affective that is upon the people that we are witnessing to. Sincerity in our hearts.

We need to accept their authority. We need to understand our accountabiit accountability towards God.

(3) But there is a third thing. Our attitudes. And there are three problem areas, indicated in Vs 6 and 7. Three problem areas.

(1) Number one, this is a common one. We are face it. The desire for recognition. Vs 6 says "Not by way of eyeservice."

Don't wait until someone see jyou and then going all out. Just pleasing your boss because he is watching you.

It is the desire that is in the heart of every one of us to be seen, to be recognize, to be appricated, to be promoted. DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE THIS PROBLEM?.....If you don't think you have this problem, then you have another problem. Everyone of us desire ~~for~~ recognition. You do something and then you want someone to appreciate it. And if we have really done it well, then, we want them to say: "THANK YOU! I AM SURE GLAD YOU DID IT, AND SO FORTH." In our hearts we have this great desire of recognition. And our whole system of life is controlled by this. You must get promoted....You must get ahead... It is all related to this. WE all feed upon our basic desire to receive recognition.

I don't know if you have ever studied economic or not. But if you have I am sure you remember reading about the American capitalist system is based upon a Protestant reformation view that man is depraved. DID YOU KNOW THAT? Man is depraved. He has a sin nature. And the whole American Capitalist system was built of that. And so what they did was to take advantage of man's depravity. The idea is that knowing what man is like we adapt ourselves to it....Interesting.....

Man does have a sin nature. There is no question about that. And man has a desire to be recognized for his work.

I would like you to turn over to the book of Proverbs. This book has something very interesting to say about all of this. The ~~desire~~ desire for recognition...eyeservice...men pleasers. Turn to Proverbs chapter 25... Proverbs chapter 25 and look at verses 6 and 7.....

Do you remember the hurt you felt when you did something good and no one said THANK YOU? Do you remember that?...Do you remember the bitterness you felt in your heart when no one appreciated your great deeds?

Hay! let me tell you something. That is the environment for deep resentment and bitterness, if you foster that in your life. And instead of looking at the problem in peoples' lives who didn't give you appreciation and thanksgiving, we had better do what the Bible says and look at deeper roots. THE DESIRE FOR RECOGNITION. It is very powerful in everyone of us.

Proverbs 25 verse 6..."Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men; For it is better that it be said to you, "COME UP HERE," than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, whom your eyes have seen."

Do you claim honor?.....Now, there are two ways of doing this, of course. One is...you say to your employer, "Ah, boss, I just want to tell you that I have done a pretty tremendous job for you.".....That is one way to do it...

There is another way to do it. It is a little game of comparison. And it works like this:..."Hay, boss, I just want you to know that I have done this job a lot better than John would have done it.".....

Claiming honor....Do you know what one of the greatest discisions that we all could make this morrowing? I don't know if you have ever made this commitment. To make a decision, right now, to never again take credit for anything.....

You say, "Hay, I didn't come to church to make that decision, today." (h But you know, we could just turn our world upside down, if we would make that decision. We just make the commitment in our heart. "Dear Lord, just help me to never take credit again." Just stop it. Call a halt to it...Period.. Don't promote yourself in front of anyone. Don't ever brag about yourself. Don't boast about your acomplishments. Let's be done with that.

Instead...let's do what the Bible says; Let's boast in the Lord.....

Now, let's look at Vs 27 and 28, same chapter..."It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glory to search out one's own glory. Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit."

WOW!!! Who is the man who cannot control his own spirit? He is the one who is constantly searching out his own glory.

Look at Proverbs 27 verse 2.."Let another praise you, and not your own mouth.".....Interesting....

But here is one text that maybe some of you will see in a new light. Turn to Luke 17. This particular text really cause one to set back and take a second look about the desire for recognition. Look at Luke 17 verses 7 to 10. Jesus taught us this. He said....(READ VS 7 to 10)

WOW!!!! You talk about the problem and desire for recognition. Jesus said that if you have done everything that has ever been commanded of you, don't go around saying, "Hay! I have done everything that has been commanded of me."...NO! Instead say, "I am an unworthy slave."

You know, it is amazing how this text affects your christian life. You just take ^{it} and you ask God to speak to your heart this week concerning the desire for recognition.

And if you get awholed of this in your life you will enjoy watching people. But, if you haven't conquered this, then you will be part of that mess. Fighteing and struggleing for position and recognition....

And I like what one fellow said: "the shortest coffee breaks in the world, are when the boss gets a cup."

Eye-servers....men- pleasers....You know, the boss is here, let's get back to work. And as soon as he leaves....back to the coffee pot.... Men-servers....eye pleasers.....

That is not what God says should characterize the christian in his work. (2) The second problem in Ephesians 6 is that of laziness....Any of you have that problem: lazyness....

God says that we are slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the what?..."THE HEART"....

You know, have you ever heard the phrase: "YOUR HEART IS NOT IN IT." Many use that phrase. And it is good to apply that right here in Ephesians. Paul calls this "THE WILL OF GOD". Working....The will of God. And he says we should do it from our hearts. And that particular phrase is used in contrast to one who is lazy. Who does not work from his heart. His heart is not in it at all.

⊗ And the lazyness in spirit will eventually result in a laziness in action and deed.

Let's turn back to Proverbs again and take a look at a couple of verses. Proverbs chapter 6.....IS OUR HEART REALLY IN OUR WORK? OUR WE REALLY COMMITTED? OR, ARE WE LAZY IN SPIRIT? Inside where it really counts. Is there something wrong? Or, are you totally dedicated within .

Proverbs 6 verse 6 says...."God to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food,"

Now, a lot of us have to have the boss come around and remind us what we are suppose to do. And to tell us again what to do. And according to the Bible there is a spirit of laziness behind that. Because the ant doesn't have a ruler, an officer, or a chief. But goes ahead and does it.

And God is saying that it is the characteric of a sluggard that has to have someone ording and telling him what to do all of the time. Once you know and have your job discription, you ought to be motivated as a christian to do the very best job and go beyond the call of duty.....WHY?.....

So that no one will every question your Lord. No one ever cast doubt on your commitment.

Turn over to chapter 10 verse 4 and 5....We read: "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who ~~act~~ acts shamefully."

Again, negligent hand Verses the hand of the diligent which makes rich.

There is much more we could say on this subject from the book of Proverbs. But, you know, I don't know of anyone who died from hard work. I have read articules on being a work-a-holic. And I believe there are some dangers there. But, you know, I don't think anyone has ever died of hard work. And I believe one of the problems in our society, right donw, is that a lot of us have lost the zeal and the joy of work. We have lost it. We go to work ~~xx~~ with bad attitudes. And instead of thinking what we can contribute to our work, all we think about is what we can receive. And as one writer on this subject said: "THIS AGE IS TOTALLY DOMINATED BY THE "SELF." And ~~that~~ certainly is the truth.

Friends, as christians let us change so that we might glorify Jesus and seek to win others to him. Be dedicated without any question to Jesus. Because there is another problem that can happen. ⁽³⁾ And that is a critical spirit. A critical spirit. The desire for recognition....Laziness...And a critacal spirit.

² PAUL said in Ephesiand 6 verse 7.."With good will"...not bad will...But with good will render service, as to the Lord, and ot to men."

The ~~o~~ opposite is a critical spirit. The Bible has so much to say on ~~hhis~~. The book of Proverbs tells us that our attatudes towards other people will come back to us. It will acturally roll back on us. You be critical towards some other person and you are asking for a critical spirit towards yourself. You are asking for it.

Turn to I Thessaionians chapter 5. Paul writes on how to respond to authority in this regard when he says in chapter 5 verse 12 says ~~that we~~

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another."

Vs 15..."See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men."

Don't you ever try to get back at someone. No matter what is said or done. Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord. Be very careful. Make ^{sure} it is with good will. Godd will..not a critical spirit.

Come back to Ephesians 6, please...Paul says with "good will". A good attitude. Not a critical attitude. "render service as to the Lord, and not to men."

What is the reason for submission? Vs 8 tells us..."Knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free."

Turn over to Colossians chapter 3...Col. 3:23 to 25....Same idea as to the reason for submission. Col. 3:23....(Read 23-25)

So, there are two reasons. One, the promise of reward. And I happen to believe that this reward is not only in the future, but also in this life. Because the negative aspect of Vs 25, receiving wrong done, I know that in the future the believers are not under condemnation. There is no condemnation in heaven to the believers. So, therefore the ~~wor~~ wrong that I receive because I did wrong has to be in this life. So, again it may be in the positive aspect the same thing may be true. The reward is in this life for the way that I work. Not counting what is coming in the future which we know the Lord has taught us. It is two fold. It is not just future. It is also now. And the prospect of punishment is another reason why I should work hardly as unto the Lord.

God says in Col 3:25 that if you do wrong. That is being unsubmitive, being a man-pleaser, eyeservice.."He who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he ~~is~~ done, and that without partiality."

God is no respecter of persons.

Well, enough talk about employees. How many of you are employees. You have someone over you by way of authority? Let me see your hands... How many of you have unbelievers as bosses....Let me see your hands....

(2) Number two, let's talk about the empoloyers

O.K. the employee..how is he to respond to authority? By submitting.

Well, how does the one who is in a position of authority respond to authority? That has always been an interesting problem. People often say, "Well I am my own boss, who do I respond to?" Well, the Lord. But what about down here. If everybody is to be under authority, how does that happen?

We have learned that the wife is to submit to the leadership of her husband as head of the wife. And we have learned that the husband is to submit to his wife by loving her and cherishing her as his own body.

A child is to submit to his parents. But how does the Father submit to the child. By meeting the need of the child and giving discipline and instruction as needed. You are submitting when you consider the need of the child above your own.

In the work area, how does that happen. Well, we know what the employee is to do. He is to submit to his bosses' authority. But, how does the employer submit?...ANSWER..By serving the employee...

Jesus said in Mark 10:42 to 45 that the Gentile Lords out in the world of unbelievers, they lord it over people. But Jesus said that it should not be so among you. Whoever wants to be first of all, he said, must be a slave of all. If you want to have authority in your life, mister employer, you want to have great influence over those who are under you, then learn to serve them...And there are ^{two} ~~three~~ things that he says in Ephesians 6:9

(1) One, we need to respond to them as we want from them. Ephesians 6:9 says, "Masters do the same things to them".

You want submission from your employees, then you must learn to submit to them. That takes us back to Ephesians 5:21. We are to be filled with the Spirit. And that means to be subject to one another.

And employer can be subject to his employees by serving them. By having the same attitude that he wants from his employees.

Boy this is just a partical, simple lesson isn't it? If you have rebellion in your heart, employer, you have bad attitudes to those under you, guess how they are going to respond to you? You will receive that in return. If you want to see them be responsive, then you be responsive to their needs. Your message ought to be to your employees, HOW CAN I HELP YOU! That is why I am here as a leader to help you."

That ought to be the characteristic and quality of the leaders heart and life.

(2)Secondly, refuse to threaten them

Vs 9 says, "Give up threatening." Give it up. Stopp it. Get it out of your life. Make a commitment right now before God that you will never again, no matter what the circumstances, ever threaten anyone.

You say, "Well, I am the boss." Is there anyone greater than the Lord? He is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord. And I want you to know that Peter tells us that He never once every threaten anyone.....

Give it up...Stop it...You as an employer will have a greater ministry and produce greater effectiveness in the people under you, if you stop threatening them. You are to be a servant. Your job ought to be to help your employees to grow and to help them develop their skills.

And how can a person who claims to be a chrisitan employer mininster effectively when he is always threatening those under him?....He cannot not...

I ask you employer: what is your witness like? What is the power and effectiveness of your life with those who work with you and under you? This is so important. Because you see, you are accountable to God. You must realize your accountability. God says, "knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him." God is no respecter of persons.

----- Shall we close in prayer