

Demolishing Strongholds Video Series

God's Way to Spiritual Freedom

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Chapter 1. Creation: God Created Us
With Seven Needs (Part 2 of 5)

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"



Freedom In Jesus Series

(Part 2)

Chapter 1; Creation: God Created Us With Seven Needs (Part 2)

God Created Us with a Need for Authority

The next of the seven needs God has instilled in us is for authority.

“And let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Genesis 1:26).

Many people, including Christians, have a negative reaction when hear the word “authority”. It connotes impinging on their personal freedom. But, it’s vital as a follower of Jesus that you understand GOD’S PURPOSE for authority. The most important reason is because it can save you from having trouble with Him!

Let’s look at a biblical definition of authority. Authority is the **power of position**. It represents the **biblical responsibility to include or exclude, and to commend or correct**. God tells us through His servant Paul that it’s HE Who places people in authority:

“The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, **he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted**, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves” (Romans 13:1,2).

Satan loves to use your misunderstanding of the biblical importance of authority in your life to make trouble for you. He knows that **if you have trouble with authority, you have trouble with God**.

To get a clear picture of God’s view of human authority, you need to separate a person’s authority **POSITION**, such as father or boss, from their **PERSONALITY** in that position.

When you submit to authority, you’re giving **DEFERENCE**. You’re respectfully yielding to the position of your authority person.

For instance, in the military a junior person in rank always salutes the senior first. It doesn’t matter what the junior feels about the senior. He owes them deference to their position of authority, so he salutes first.

Some of you older people watching this video can remember when deference was part of your upbringing. Younger people rose when older people came into the room. How many of you realize that this kind of deference is commanded by God?

“Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:32).

Deference to the authorities God places over you means you **MUST** intentionally limit your choices of action or decisions so you don’t provoke or disobey that person. In other words, deference keeps you from causing unnecessary apprehension for those in authority.

As an example of how far deference must be carried, we can learn a lesson from David. You may remember from your Bible reading, David showed deference to King Saul even though Saul tried repeatedly to kill him.

Jesus submitted completely to His Father's will. He, as do all people who understand the importance of deference to authority, could recognize deference when He saw it.

All of Israel was judged by the deference of a single Roman Centurion. Jesus saw in that centurion such deference to authority that He could say about him, "I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith."

For we who follow Jesus, deference to authority and trust in God are inseparable. Authorities are often God's chisel in our character development to remove self-will, and develop Christ-like humility. And I think we all recognize that rebellion surfaces more in response to authority figures than anyone else.

Rebellion against authority can have far-reaching consequences. Remember, you reap what you sow. I'd like to share with you an observation from our years at the retreat center: Fathers would occasionally bring up difficulties they were having with "rebellious" children. When we asked these fathers if they themselves had slandered or gossiped about their bosses at work, many confessed they had.

We explained to them that bad-mouthing was rebellious and insubordinate against those God had placed over them. As a result, these men were reaping the consequences of the **SPIRIT OF REBELLION** in their own homes.

When the men who had slandered later asked forgiveness from their bosses for their attitudes and actions, much of the rebellion on the homefront often ceased as well.

(**Explore:** Newsletter 2003-03/04, "*Men Standing in the Gap*")

If you are in a position of authority, it's critical that you don't ever blame others, OR give excuses for failing in your responsibilities. To their own detriment, we hear too many parents blaming society, the school system, whatever, for failures in their children.

We want to emphasize a crucial point for you if you ARE in authority: God will NOT ACCEPT EXCUSES from those in positions of authority who fail to fulfill their responsibilities. And He will not allow those who exercise authority to BLAME the ones in their care when they themselves have failed.

We were taught in officer candidate school that when confronted by a senior officer, the only acceptable response is, "No excuse, sir!" After several years in the Navy, I began to read the Bible for the first time. One of the things that I noticed immediately was that God didn't accept excuses either.

Moses tried to use his speech impediment as an excuse to stay out of Egypt. When he pushed his point we're told, "the Lord's anger burned against Moses." Not a good situation!

When the Lord undertook to recruit Gideon to fight the Midianites, the fearful man offered an excuse: "My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (Judges 6:15). Yet armed with God's assurance, he ended up leading his troops.

If you have any doubts that God DOESN'T accept your excuses or your

blame of others, here are a few more examples in the Bible: When confronted about eating the forbidden fruit, Adam could have sought God's forgiveness. Instead, he blamed his wife, and they were cast from the Garden of Eden. Through blaming her rather than humbly taking responsibility, Adam got tossed out of the Garden of Eden.

King Saul was confronted by the prophet Samuel for failing to completely destroy the Amalekites, as he'd been commanded. The monarch blamed his fear of the people for his act of disobedience. And for blaming others rather than humbly asking forgiveness, Saul lost his kingdom.

However, when confronted by the prophet Nathan, King David REPENTED for his adultery with Bathsheba, and for murdering her husband. By taking full responsibility through repentance and by NOT giving any excuses, David KEPT his kingdom and was honored with an everlasting dynasty.

And listen closely: When parents today habitually blame their children or society for the sorry condition of their own homes, they are excusing themselves for not having fulfilled all their parental responsibilities.

When you don't carry out your God-given authority, you are abdicating your parental position. Cults today are filled with the children of Christian parents who forfeited their authority through excuses or blame.

Authority in Faith Communities

Now think about how all this ties in with God's view of spiritual authority in our

faith communities. We are commanded in Hebrews 13:17,

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your lives, as people who will have to render an account. So make it a task of joy for them, not one of groaning; for that is of no advantage to you."

This verse encompasses two areas of responsibility. First, the Lord commands all his people to submit to the spiritual authorities who render account to Him for their souls. These are biblical elders, the older men of wisdom whom our Father raises up to represent His fatherly care for His children.

(**Explore:** See *Pastoring By Elders*, chapters 4-6)

God tests the humility and submission of His children in a specific way: Those under spiritual authority MUST make it a joy for those who render account to God for them. As we mentioned earlier concerning deference, they must limit themselves to not create undue apprehension.

Second, our Lord expects that those in authority, the older men who are WILLING to render account to Him, never give Him any excuses for not knowing the condition of each person under their care. Did you notice that a man in authority is not called to render account for a GROUP of people, but for each one individually?

Abba, our compassionate Father, wants those who represent His care for His children to know each one personally. The principle for an elder to care as a shepherd is found in Proverbs 27:23: "Be sure

you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds." Having raised sheep, our intimate understanding of each animal helped us fulfill our responsibilities for their care.

dance with our government's laws unless those laws force us to violate our Highest Authority, God.

In a democracy, people commonly bad mouth with impunity those whom God has placed in positions of authority. But that only gets God's children into deep trouble with Him. Our Father's Word commands us, "Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people" (Exodus 22:28).

Because of this command, Peter could write to the followers of Jesus scattered throughout the tyrannical Roman Empire:

"Submit yourselves **FOR THE LORD'S SAKE** to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to **punish** those who do wrong and to **commend** those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13,14).

During His temptation by Satan, Jesus recognized the devil's claim that he had authority over the governments of the earth. (See Matthew 4:8-10.) And while we followers of Jesus ARE to submit to the authorities, we're also mindful that we have a higher Authority in heaven to Whom we must render account.

We men and women who follow Jesus are to be spiritual revolutionaries. We're to be the physical representatives of Jesus to an unbelieving world that hates us because of Him.

At the same time, we followers are to be models of obedience, walking in accor-