

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Submission?!

Ephesians 5:21

1998

Introduction

In chapter 5, Paul has been talking about a lot of fleshly characteristics -- sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, and other carnal characteristics of our lives prior to knowing Christ. Ultimately, these characteristics find their foundational existence in my refusal to submit to God's rule in my lives and my refusal to submit to others. I want my way, I want people to yield to my desires. I want people to play by my rules. I want them to yield to me. But here we are told that we are to submit one to another, yielding to each other.

Now as a culture, we hate the word, "Submission."

Citizens resist it

Wives hate it

Employees undermine it

Kids rebel against it

There is probably no other attitude that stands more in contrast with the world than this relational posture or mutual deference and submission

- a. The world is consumed with getting higher by climbing over and on the backs of others
- b. "Me first" has always been the MO (modus operandi) of the world, and always will be till Jesus comes

But according to Paul, submission to one another is one of the evidences of being filled by the Holy Spirit. This submission is based on our reverence for Jesus Christ, and has little to do with the one to whom we are in submission. Ultimately, it is an act of love and surrender to God's chain of command. In other words, we submit not because of the character, integrity, or love of the authority in charge, but because God has placed them over us.

I The Scope Of Our Submission

A. We are to submit to God

Job 22:21 "Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you."

2 Chron 30:8 "Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the LORD."

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Submitting to God is aligning your will to His will and obeying His Word. For God to work in your life, your will must be aligned with His.

B. We are to submit to governing authorities

Rom 13:1-2 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. 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."

Rom 13:5-7 "Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor."

1 Pet 2:13-14 "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."

C. We are to submit to spiritual leaders

Heb 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."

1 Cor 16:15-16 "You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it."

D. Wives are to submit to husbands

Eph 5:22 "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord."

Eph 5:24 "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

Col 3:18 "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

E. Children are to submit to parents

Eph 6:1-3 "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-- which is the first commandment with a promise--"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Exod 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

F. Young people are to submit to elders

1 Pet 5:5-6 "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

G. Employees are to submit to employers

Eph 6:5-8 "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."

1 Pet 2:18 "Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh."

H. We are all to submit to one another

Eph 5:21 "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

1 Pet 5:5-6 "Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

II The Fundamentals Of Submission

A. Recognition of its meaning

Sub-mission = Putting another's mission above my own or yielding and subordinating my mission or objectives in preference for another's mission

Hupotasso = (hupo, "under," tasso, "to arrange")

To subordinate; be in subjection to, to obey

A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".

Illustration:

The captain of the ship looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message "Alter

your course 10 degrees south."

Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north."

The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am the captain!"

Soon another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am seaman third class Jones."

Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: "Alter your course 10 degrees south--I am a battleship."

Then the reply came "Alter your course 10 degrees north--I am a lighthouse."

In the midst of our dark and foggy times, all sorts of voices are shouting orders into the night, telling us what to do, how to adjust our lives. Out of the darkness, one voice signals something quite opposite to the rest--something almost absurd. But the voice happens to be the Light of the World, and we ignore it at our peril.

<https://bible.org/illustration/lighthouse>

Illustration #2

Hanalei Bridge: Drivers from both directions are requested to give right of way. It is a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision. When the Bible commands Christians to "submit to one another" (Eph. 5:21) it is simply a reasonable and gracious command to let the other have the right of way and avoid interpersonal head-on collisions.

When we are *filled with the Spirit*, it will show by our mutual submission to each other; and the submission will be done *in the fear of God*, not the fear of man

Submission because of the fear of man is coercive; submission out of reverence for Christ is a beautiful act of love -- a sacrifice that is pleasing to God.

B. Recognition of God:

1. His character

- a. God is love -- His will is always right and good
- b. God is all-knowing -- His directions are always right
- c. God is all-powerful -- He can enable you to accomplish His will

The person who doesn't know by experience that God is loving, all-knowing and all-powerful is going to have a difficult time submitting because there is little if any confidence in God's intentions and protection.

2. His leadership

a. All authority is instituted by Him

Rom 13:1-2 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. 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."

C. Recognition of Christ's example *Read text from Phil 2:3-11*

1. Submission requires humility

2 Cor 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

a. The Spirit filled Christian ranks others higher than themselves

b. The Holy Spirit's active presence in our lives reorients our identity so that Christ rules over us rather than self

1. Therefore, we don't assert ourselves or attempt to dominate others
2. Instead, we defer to others and put them first

2. Submission requires a servant heart

Matt 20:25-28 "Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

a. Here is a beautiful truth when we have learned to submit our lives fully to Jesus Christ, it is no longer a matter of what I want, but what does He want.

3. Submission requires obedience

Heb 5:7-9 "During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ..."

This kind of lifestyle for the unbeliever is impossible!

Rom 8:6-8 "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to

God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

Rom 10:3 "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

III The Goal Of Submission

- A. Christ-likeness
- B. Unity in the church
- C. Expansion of the kingdom of God
- D. God's glory

Conclusion

And now, having considered a biblical view of submission, Paul launches into a long section explaining what this submission will look like in various relationships.