

Child Training II

Part 3: Principles of Authority

Authority! Here is a word that all fools and rebels hate. Authority is a concept that causes a negative response in those who do not understand its proper meaning and use. Today's generation almost react as if they had been programmed against even the legitimate use of authority. A general attitude exists today of distrust and disrespect for all positions of rulership.

The misunderstanding of God's principles for authority, added to experience with rulers who have misused their power, has caused many to reject authority altogether. Many parents have abdicated their rule and have withdrawn from even the proper use of authority to govern their children and have left them to the wind. We need to study the principles of authority so that we will not be deceived into a programmed response against the very thing God has established for our freedom.

First we must look at the definition of the word *authority*. From that definition we will study some characteristics of God's authority and determine the principles for human authority.

Authority means the right to rule, the power to act, decide, command, and judge. It is the right to set policy, the rulership to command subordinates, and the power to administer judgment to those who disobey the commands or to reward those who obey and conform to the good.

At first it may seem that authority is unbridled power that can be used to oppress those who are subject to it. Although it is true that there are and always have been and always will be (in this age) those who have and do and will abuse the power of authority, these exceptions do not change the principle. The power of authority is not without control or limits. God has established rules and boundaries to govern the use of all authority, for God is authority and all authority is from God (Dan 4:17;37).

The Most High

Ps 47:2; 83:18 — The "most high" is always God Himself; it is never given to man in his role as ruler. It is a title to describe God's absolute position of authority. He is the *Most High*; there is none above Him with any right to rule. Dan 4:34 — this passage recognizes the extent of

God's rule. There is no end to the extent of His reign (Rev 22:5; Isa 9:6,7). He gives His authority to whom He chooses (Dan 4:25). The Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He wills or chooses.

Since ultimate authority belongs to God, any legitimate right to rule must be delegated by Him. Rom 13:1-5 is the authority *all* who belong to Him in the Holy Nation are under, as verses 6-7 speak of the authority in the world. They are due respect.

But what about the governing authority in the Edah, the Body of Messiah, the Holy Nation, the Twelve Tribes of Israel — when the worldly authorities command us to take the mark of the Beast, are we to obey? Are we to flee?

How to Conduct Oneself in the Body of Messiah (Romans 12 and 13)

If one is truly immersed into the Body of Messiah by the one Spirit (1 Cor 12:13), then God commands every member of His Body to place himself willingly under His headship, under the positions of His delegated authority and positions of rulership that exist above him. In Rom 13 we see the authority that exists in the Edah, but Paul did not write in *chapters*. Chapter 13 is the on-going direction of how to conduct oneself in the Body of Messiah, those who are a living sacrifice and have come out of the world and conformity to its ways (Rom 12:1-2 and 3-21). Chapter 13 continues what Paul is commanding the saints (Rom 1:5).

Paul did not arbitrarily, in one sentence, begin to speak of worldly authority in Rom 13:1, but this is the authority we all have willingly submitted to in baptism. We can submit to these authorities in the Edah if we have been granted the Holy Spirit in our total immersion into His life on Earth. Every position of authority is under His control (Rom 13:1).

Ordained means to place, station, appoint someone into an official position over others. God has instituted all existing positions of rulership over His people in the Edah to carry out His will and to administer justice under their rule.

No authority exists except as appointed by God. God is the ultimate authority. He rules His creation according to His will. He possesses the absolute power to administer justice to all His creatures. God has established in the heart of man institutions such as government, marriage,

and family for the orderly administration of His plan, as Gen 3:16-19 and 9:1-7, which is the natural law (Rom 2:14-15). All mankind is directly accountable to God.

The Institutions of Authority

Each institution that God has established – such as government, family, marriage, the right to work for a living — is for the orderly administration of His plan. And each institution is ordained by God and has been arranged with definite rank or authority for the orderly function of that institution. God is not a God of confusion, but of order and care, government and authority (1 Cor 14:33). Each institution is accountable to God. Government is not higher than marriage and family and working for a living. Government cannot override conscience. Every man is accountable to God for how he functions within each institution. The head of a family answers to God, as does a government leader. Both the king of a nation and the head of a family are equally and independently responsible to God. No king can command a person to go against his rights and responsibility of conscience.

The one who is in the position of authority of an institution has the right of rulership over the subjects of that institution. Their right to rule may be exercised only over those within an individual entity of that institution. If you are a father, you are the person in the position of authority over your own family. You have no authority over any other family, and no other father has any authority over your family. Each entity of a particular institution is independent of any other entity. Every person is subject to one or more of these institutions at all times. For example, every individual is subject to the government, and a wife is subject to the husband in the family.

God's word gives specific boundaries for the power of each institution. Each position of rulership has defined limits in the extent of its authority. The boundaries include those who are subject to the authority as well as the extent to which they must submit. For example, government has the right to rule only within individual national boundaries. Government has no right to administer justice to other nations except in self-defense, or to exercise authority over other independent institutions like a family or marriage. For another example, a father has the

right to rule over his own family, but even his authority has certain limitations as established by God. A father does not have the right to make his son steal.

The various institutions provide a diversification of power that restrains any evil leader from possessing absolute control. Historically, all evil leaders have always attempted to destroy the separate institutions and establish themselves as the absolute authority in place of God.¹ Only God is capable of ruling through the multiple institutions because of His all power, all presence and all knowledge.

Any problems concerning authority are not the fault of God's principles, but are due to man's failure to function properly according to God's will. You need to understand thoroughly the issue of authority because as a parent, you answer directly to God. You need to know the areas of your accountability, the boundaries of your rulership, and how to handle properly your responsibilities.

¹ A classic example is seen in the consolidation of Roman law and governmental into essentially one man: "With the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire during the reign of Augustus (31 B.C. – 14 A.D.), an enormous number of powers came into the hands of the emperor, and the structure of the Republic was transformed... Gradually the sources of law were narrowed down to one – the edict of the emperor." Edward Peters, The Inquisition, pages 14-15 (The Free Press, New York, 1988)