

UNDER COVER

LOF 5 (KINGDOM OBEDIENCE & SUBMISSION)

Today we want to talk about **ONE FOUNDATIONAL VALUE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. How many of you know that the way Kingdom of God operates is totally opposite with how it works in our earthly world?

Some people don't live in the full blessings of the Kingdom because they don't understand God's design and purpose for Authority.

We don't realise that God uses leaders and authorities --- both good and bad ones --- to bring out the BEST in us.

When we discover how God created us to live in relation to Authority..... We position ourselves to know **PEACE, PROTECTION and PROVISION**..... Regardless of what our leaders are OR are not doing.

We're gonna talk about what the Bible taught us about **LIVING UNDER COVER**..... AND **REVEAL WHY OUR RESPONSE TO LEADERSHIP WILL DETERMINE OUR FUTURE**.

LIVING UNDER COVER refers to KINGDOM OBEDIENCE AND SUBMISSION.

When Moses was leading the exodus from Egypt, God called the children of Israel: *stiff-necked, stubborn and rebellious people*..... (Exodus 32:9)

Things have not changed much as well.

- We live in a world of rebellious nature.
- We often find it hard to bow to someone's wishes, ways, and rules set for us.
- We don't want anyone to tell us what to do.
- We just want to do it our own way.
- It's just in our sinful nature, that's why we need to be renewed and transformed daily from the inside out by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- *When the speed limit says 60 - we drive 70, if it says 80 we go 85, so we can get there faster.*
- *Are you one of these drivers?*

- *When Mom says you can only eat 3 piece of chocolate, they will push for 5!*
- *When Mom says its 9 pm bed time, they will argue and push for 9.30pm!*

These just illustrate how easy it was for us to break the law or pushing against the rules / instructions set for us.

- We refused to let authority tell us how fast to drive.
- We refused to be told what to do - *"You can't tell me what to do!"*
- In other words, it's in our nature to refuse to submit to the law governing our actions.

We see Christians struggle with submitting to Authority: including bosses, teachers, leaders, government officials --- that reflects **OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD'S LAWS and HIS KINGDOM.**

But Peter says that **SUBMISSION IS A PART OF CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.**
AND GIVES US THE **ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF SUBMISSION - JESUS.**

- Jesus lived in PERFECT SUBMISSION to the Father.
- That He chose to enter the sinful world in the form of flesh, lay his life down on the cross so that God could save the world through him.
- He chose to place himself under the authority of the Father, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and submit to His will all the way to the death.

SUBMISSION IS THE ACTION OF ACCEPTING OR YIELDING TO A SUPERIOR FORCE, OR TO THE WILL / AUTHORITY OF ANOTHER PERSON.

The Bible clearly teaches us a Kingdom perspective on submission unto Authority.....

JAMES 4:7

Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil, and he will free from you.

SUBMISSION TO GOVERNING AUTHORITY

ROMANS 13 - Respect for Authority

13 Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.

² So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

³ For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you.

⁴ The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong.

⁵ So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.

- *THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN PLACE THERE BY GOD.*
- *THE AUTHORITIES ARE SENT FOR OUR GOOD.*
- *THEY SET LAW AS BOUNDARIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING US, NOT TO PURELY PUNISH OR RESTRAIN US.*

TITUS 3:1 (NLT)

Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good.

SUBMISSION TO LEADER / AUTHORITY IN OUR VOCATION.

Colossians 3:22-24 (NLT)

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord.

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ

- *OBEY THEM, SERVE THEM SINCERELY.....BECAUSE OF YOUR REVERENT FEAR OF THE LORD.*
- *WORK WILLINGLY AT WHATEVER YOU DO.....AS THOUGH YOU WERE WORKING FOR THE LORD, NOT FOR PEOPLE.*
- *CHRIST IS THE ULTIMATE MASTER THAT WE SERVE.*
- *AND YOU WILL HAVE THE REWARD FROM GOD, NOT FROM MEN ALONE.*

SUBMISSION TO THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS GOD TRUSTED UPON US.

Hebrew 13:17 (NKJV)

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be **submissive**, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

1 Peter 5:5 (NLT)

In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- *Submission means humbling & putting others before yourself; it means not always doing what you want to do.*
- *It means putting God's desires above your desires.*

SUBMISSION when it comes to MARRIAGE / Husband-Wife relationship

EPHESIANS 5:21-23, 25-26 Spirit-Guided Relationships: Wives and Husbands

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church.

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.

Kingdom Submission in Marriage here is NOT Oppressive.

- It's not absolute power to the point of mistreatment or abuse.
- Submission is NOT following them into sin.
- Submission is yielding to the authority that God has put into our house / family, and allowing him to lead as he put himself under the submission to God.

According to Paul,

A FAITHFUL HUSBAND IS WILLING TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS WIFE.

- He is not a tyrant who forces her to submit to his sinful human desires but abandon his will for her sake.
- Paul says a husband to love his wife as he loves his own body, the way Christ love His church.
- A loving husband submits his will to Christ, and imitates God's love in the marriage relationship.
- In this context, the wife willingly surrenders to her husband just as her husband chooses to surrender his will to Christ.
This submission based on love brings peace and harmony to the family.

Before we go any further.....

Let me dissect the **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBEDIENCE AND SUBMISSION.**

Difference between Submission and Obedience is important to know as we live in society where Obedience & Submission to POWER AND AUTHORITY are not a usual practice / occurrence these days.

Most of us consider them the same --- simply complying with orders and instructions.

However, there exists a difference between these two terms.

- **OBEDIENCE DEALS WITH OUR RESPONSIVE ACTION TOWARD AUTHORITY**
- **SUBMISSION DEALS WITH YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY**

The outcome might look alike.....but difference stem from the sentiment of the individual who follows the orders

- **OBEDIENCE IS FOLLOWING ORDERS, COMMANDS OR INSTRUCTIONS.**
- **SUBMISSION IS YIELDING TO POWER OR AUTHORITY.**
- **OBEDIENCE DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PERSON'S WILLINGNESS TO COMPLY WITH ORDERS**

▪ **SUBMISSION IMPLICATES A PERSON HAS RESPECT AND LOVE FOR THOSE IN POWER.**

- Obedience is a REACTION to a command where the individual has little choice or reject or oppose the authority.
- They do things just because they succumb to power.

Students, children, employees, officers and many groups of people go through this. Simply it is doing what is told.

When a person obeys a rule, it is not because the individual wills it but because the person has little choice to do otherwise.

For example, a worker who has been ordered to do extra longer hours during festive or peak season, the person would complete the work and obey order of superior. This act of obeying is NOT quite the genuine desire of the person, but more of a result where if they don't comply with instructions, he may risk his job or position.

Hebrew 13:17 (NKJV)

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be **submissive**, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

We are asked to do two things in this Scripture:
To OBEY and Be SUBMISSIVE to those who rule over us.

SUBMISSION DEALS WITH YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY, WHILE OBEDIENCE DEALS WITH YOUR ACTIONS.

We can obey and NOT necessarily be submissive.

Take another illustration.

A boy is marking around in the class and making a scene, the teacher is angry and told him *"JOHNNY, SIT DOWN AND SIT STILL!....otherwise you're going to detention!"* So the boy ended up sitting down, but he made a comment, *"Miss Johnson, I might be sitting down, but inside here I'm standing up."*

We can OBEY as reaction to a demand or instructions....

In this boy's case.....simply to avoid or get away from further punishment,
But when the attitude inside our heart is rebelling / not wilfully doing it.....that is not SUBMISSION.

- In submission, the person's reaction is guided by GENUINE DESIRE to follow instructions.
- When we give into authority or greater power.
- Unlike obedience, this is willfull and out of respect for the person in power and authority.
- Because we respect and willingly comply with instructions.

Especially when we speak of God, we are called for submission, not just obedience. Because there is love and respect for God's Power and Authority that comes from within.

OBEDIENCE DEALS WITH OUR RESPONSIVE ACTION TOWARD AUTHORITY WHILE SUBMISSION DEALS WITH YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD AUTHORITY.

Isaiah 1:19

If you are **willing** and **obedient**,
You shall eat the good of the land;

An unwilling attitude will always bring you to a place of not receiving from God. It will bring you to a place of lack.

YOUR ATTITUDE WILL ALWAYS DETERMINE YOUR ALTITUDE IN LIFE.

GOD WANTS US TO FREELY ENJOY AND BENEFIT FROM THE BANQUETING TABLE HE PREPARED FOR US THROUGH THOSE HE PROVIDED FOR US.

GOD LOOKS AT THE OUTWARD ACTION AS WELL AS THE HIDDEN ATTITUDE OF THE HEART.

1 Chronicles 28:9 (NLT)

And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors immediately. Worship and serve him with **your whole heart** and **a willing mind**. For the Lord sees every heart and knows every plan and thought.

WORSHIP AND SERVE GOD WITH WHOLE HEART AND WILLING MIND.
IN OBEDIENCE AND WILLING SUBMISSION TO GOD.

- Not just simply obeying so that we don't suffer the consequences of sin,
- Not simply obeying because we want to make sure we receive the blessings from God
- But willingly, wholeheartedly, with a "made-up mind" we choose to submit under God's word and His will.

John 13:20

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

WHEN WE SUBMIT TO THE ONE GOD CHOSE AND SENT, WE'RE SUBMITTING TO GOD HIMSELF AND HE WILL REWARD US.

Matthew 13:57-58

So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and his own house."

Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

BECAUSE THEY DID NOT HONOUR HIM AS GOD SENT, THEY REFUSE THE BLESSINGS FROM GOD.

- They expected him to come different, they wanted to submit on their terms not God's terms.
- Many times, God will send us what we need in a package we don't want to test our submission.
- Whatever you honour..... you will receive from.

AS CHRISTIANS, HOW SO HOW WE LIVE IN SUBMISSION TO GOD AND THE AUTHORITIES?

We live in a world of rebellious nature --- driven by our sinful nature that seeks to argue, justify or reason of God's order of creation.

- These days we see so many opinions, so many beliefs, so many opinions that are against Godly values, anti-God..... anti-government.....anti-authority.....
- Everything in us says *"That's Not Fair"*
- You'd hear this phrase a lot if you have kids around you.
- *"That's Not Fair"* usually followed by a temper tantrum.
- No more playing, time to sleep....
- No more chocolate, you've had enough....
- You would think things would change as we get older we get mature, but sadly that does not seem to be the case.
- We have become a generation, a society that screams *"It's Not Fair"*
- If things don't go our way, we don't like the rules, we think we have been mistreated or disadvantaged.....we cry *"NOT FAIR"*

But Peter points out that **the OBJECTION OF OUR SUBMISSION IS GOD --- not the figure authority before us.**

He says that **Jesus submitted "Himself to the One who judges justly" --- that is GOD.**

Before we complain crying to God "ITS NOT FAIR" next time we try to reason or rebel against submitting into authority that God has put before us.....

Let's also remember that it's not fair for Jesus to die for my sins, either.

Let that sink into us.

When there are things we don't like / don't happen according to our ways, we cried "NOT FAIR"

But we never said "NOT FAIR" when we got what we did not deserve.

**MERCY IS NOT GETTING WHAT YOU DESERVE,
GRACE IS GETTING WHAT YOU DO NOT DESERVE.
AND BOTH ARE NOT FAIR.**

BUT WE NEVER COMPLAIN WHEN WE RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE OR MERCY.

So if you remember about how Jesus died unfairly for our sins....

Remember that it's not about fairness, it's about Gratitude.

FAIRNESS IS ABOUT OURSELVES, AND GRATITUDE IS ABOUT SUBMISSION.

IT WAS JESUS'S SUBMISSION THAT PURCHASED OUR SALVATION.

SO HOW DO WE LIVE IN SUBMISSION TO GOD AND THE AUTHORITIES?

OUT OF OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST AND OUR GRATITUDE FOR HIS SALVATION that we choose to submit our way, will, thoughts, desires and understanding to God.

Submission is **NOT** to others, but it is to God so that He can use our lives to touch the lives of others.

- Because Jesus submitted, you and I have salvation.
- If you and I submit, God can work through us to change our world, our homes, our community, government, workplaces, and churches. Amen?!

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE

God has designed His children to live **UNDER COVER (under Kingdom Obedience & Submission)**, just like Jesus who is the ultimate example of submission.

As we choose to yield / put ourselves under submission to authorities that God has placed upon us, the true object of our submission is **GOD** - not the figure authorities before us.

- **OBEDIENCE DEALS WITH OUR RESPONSIVE ACTION TOWARD AUTHORITY.**
- **It is simply following orders, commands, instructions without necessarily willing to comply with it.**
- **SUBMISSION DEALS WITH YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY**
- **It is a decision to yield to power / authority, out of respect, honour and love.**
- Evaluate our approach towards God and figure of authorities in life,
- Do we simply respond with obedience, or act with a wilful submission knowing that God is our ultimate master that we serve?
- In which aspect do we need to need to change our perspective / attitude in living under cover i.e. submit under authority?