

I. Authority in the Beginning

A. God created man for four basic purposes (Gen. 1:26-28), which are continuously seen throughout Scripture:

1. Relationship – to know and relate to God, as the Godhead has relationship (v.26)
2. Character – to reflect the nature and character of God (v.26,27)
3. Function – to work with Him (vv.26,28)
4. Reproduce – to impart life to others (v.28)

B. As stated in Genesis 1, the Function purpose involves man being the agent through whom the rule and reign of God is expressed and realized on earth.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”...²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen. 1:26,28)¹

C. All four of these purposes flow out of the first one: we only reflect the nature and character of God when we remain in relationship with Him (see Jn. 15:1-5; Gal. 5:22-23). We only impart the life of God to others – reproduce – when we remain personally connected to His life. In the same way, we only properly express the rule and reign of God on the earth – function – if we remain in relationship with Him.

1. When Adam and Eve walked in right relationship with God, they flourished in their work. God created a fruitful garden, then tasked them with maintaining that garden.

⁹And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food...¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (Gen. 2:9,15)

2. When Adam & Eve’s relationship with God was damaged by their sin, they lost a measure of their expression of that authority.

¹⁷And to Adam he said, “Because you have...eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground...” (Gen. 3:17-19)

¹ All Scripture references taken from the ESV

D. God created us for the sake of relationship with us, and *through that relationship* to have us partner with Him in His work of ruling and reigning on the earth. A key to that relationship is to be continually mindful that He is God and remain submitted to Him.

1. What damages the relationship is the alluring idea that we can “be like God” (Gen. 3:5). In other words, when we presume to take the lead and call the shots ourselves. We only fulfill the purpose of Function when we walk in right (humble, submitted) relationship with Him.

II. Jesus, Our Example

- A. Part of Jesus’ purpose in coming as a man was to succeed where Adam fell short. In this, Jesus became both the example and the empowerment for man to walk in the purposes he was created for (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22,45).
- B. When it comes to demonstrating the power and authority of God, Jesus consistently did this from a posture of *submission*. The gospel of John makes clear that all of Jesus’ ministry was simply an expression of the Father’s will.

*¹⁷But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working...²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing...³⁶For **the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing**, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.” (Jn. 5:17,20,36; see also Jn. 4:34; 9:4; 10:25-38; 14:10-12; 15:24; 17:4)*

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know...” (Acts 2:22)

1. Jesus’ first miracle was performed as an act of submission...to His earthly mother.

³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” ⁴And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” (Jn. 2:3-5)

2. His greatest demonstration of authority – resurrection, disarming sin and death, and atoning for the sins of all who would believe – happened through submission.

³⁹My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will...⁴²My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” (Mt. 26:39,42)

3. Even when it comes to passing judgment, Jesus pointed to a clear and deliberate partnership between Him and the Father.

²²For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son...²⁷And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man...³⁰I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. (Jn. 5:22,27,30)

¹⁵You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me...²⁶I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him. (Jn. 8:15-16,26)

- C. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness to derail Him from His purpose. One of his attempts was to offer Jesus a lesser version of His rightful reward, at a fraction of the cost. The crux of the matter was *who Jesus would be submitted to*.

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship [‘bow as an act of allegiance or regard’] me.” (Mt. 4:8-9)

- D. So even Jesus the Christ, the second person of the Godhead, only exercised authority under submission to the Father. Every demonstration of power was a response to the leading of the Father, not an act of His own will. Authority is only given where there is submission.

III. Jesus and the Centurion

- A. Authority’s link to submission is not just a spiritual principle but a universal truth. A gentile Roman Centurion understood it better than the religious leaders in Israel.

*⁸But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I too am a man **under authority, with soldiers under me**. And I say to one, ‘Go’, and he goes, and to another, ‘Come’, and he comes...”¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith...”* (Mt. 8:8-10)

1. Note the connection the centurion made: Jesus had authority because He was *under authority*. Authority is given, not taken.
- B. When we submit under authority, we will be entrusted with authority (in time). When we receive authority we remain under the covering of a greater authority, which gives us room to grow into the role and for our sphere to flourish. But when we seize authority, it leads to conflict (war) and destruction, which makes it difficult to flourish.

- C. The different approaches and their fruits are clearly seen in the Old Testament histories of Judah and the Northern Kingdom.
1. Judah – kings came from the Davidic line, which generally meant peaceful transitions of power and consistency for the kingdom. 20 kings over approximately 350 years.
 2. Northern Israel – multiple assassinations and multiple dynasties. 19 kings over approximately 210 years.

IV. Pattern for the Church – Submission and Order

- A. Submission to authorities is connected to edification and flourishing. Where there is submission to leaders, there is order and edification. Where there is a power struggle, there is chaos.

*²⁹Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³²and **the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets**. ³³For God is not a God of confusion but of peace... ³⁷If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. ³⁸**If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized...** ⁴⁰But all things should be done decently and in order. (1 Cor. 14:29-40)*

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. (Jas. 3:16)

- B. The Church is to be an example of order, in healthy leadership and healthy submission. It takes longer and requires patience, but bears more fruit in the long run (1 Pet. 5:1-7).

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (1 Pet. 5:5)

V. The Church, Government, and Authority

- A. As we read last week, the Church is to acknowledge the government's authority as God-given, and to relate to the government with obedience, respect, and honour (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).
1. As we remain in a posture of humility before governing officials and show honour, doors open for the Church to have influence and the gospel to enter (Acts 16:25-33; 26:28-29; Phil. 4:22).
 2. The pathway to greater influence and "welfare" (Jer. 29:7) in life is to remain submitted to the God-given authorities in our lives, even if they're not Christians.

VI. Submission with Honour

A. Praying for Leaders and Government

1. Importance of Prayer for Leaders:

- We need to actively carry our leaders in prayer.
- When righteousness is absent in legislation or decisions coming from Parliament Hill, we should:
 - Use the tools and resources God has given us.
 - Avoid responding in anger or frustration.

2. Attitude Toward Leadership:

- It's crucial to have an attitude of submission to our leaders, allowing them to speak into our lives.
- Our posture should reflect respect, honour, and humility.

B. Daniel as a Model of Godly Leadership Posture:

1. Daniel's Relationship with God:

- In Daniel 2:20-23, he blesses God for revealing the vision to him.
- He demonstrates gratitude and reliance on God for wisdom and direction.

2. Mercy and Justice:

- In Daniel 2:24, Daniel intercedes for the wise men, asking for their lives to be spared.
- Instead of allowing their destruction (which could elevate his own position), he shows a merciful heart.

C. Humility and Generosity:

- In Daniel 6:48-49, the king promotes Daniel, gives him gifts, and grants his request to appoint Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego to leadership positions.
- Daniel demonstrates selflessness by sharing his influence and advocating for his Kingdom friends.

D. Influence Through Honour:

- Daniel's honour and humility result in his promotion and influence with

the king.

- His actions show that maintaining a godly posture leads to opportunities to impact government and leadership for God's purposes.

E. Key Lessons from Daniel:

- Pray faithfully for revelation and wisdom.
- Respond to challenges with mercy rather than seeking personal gain.
- Maintain a posture of honour and humility toward authority.
- Build Kingdom relationships and use influence to elevate others.

F. Daniel's Reputation and Posture:

1. Daniel 6:21-22:

- Daniel serves under a different king, yet his reputation for honour, wisdom, and godly power remains intact.
- His consistent character and reliance on God ensure his influence transcends political changes.

2. Unfair Treatment and Violation of Rights:

- Daniel faces unjust treatment, including being thrown into the lion's den.
- His rights are clearly violated, yet he maintains a posture of honour and trust in God.
- Despite severe trials, Daniel exemplifies a steadfast faith and a commitment to godly principles.

3. Modern Parallels:

- The underground churches in places like China, Iran, and Afghanistan thrive amidst great persecution.
- Like Daniel, their posture of faith, prayer, and honour enables them to flourish despite oppressive circumstances.
- The question arises:
 - How would we react if placed in Daniel's situation?
 - When our rights are violated, are we able to maintain a heart of honour and humility?

G. Paul's Influence and Honour:

1. Philippians 4:22:

- Paul's ministry impacts even the household of Caesar, where believers arise.
- This demonstrates that honour and godly love can influence even the most unlikely places of authority.

2. Roman Context:

- Historical accounts note that Emperor Tiberius was amazed at how Christians loved Romans more than Romans loved themselves.
- This extraordinary love and honour stem from a posture of prayer and deep faith.

H. Key Lessons on Honour and Prayer:

1. Engagement with Authority:

- We are called to interact with leaders and those in authority with a heart of honour, both in:
 - Prayer: Praying consistently for our government leaders.
 - Relationships: Maintaining respect and humility in our dealings with them.

2. The Role of Prayer:

- Honour and love are cultivated through a life of prayer.
- Prayer aligns our hearts with God's, enabling us to respond with grace and wisdom, even in difficult circumstances.

I. Reflection Points:

1. Are we able to maintain a posture of honour and love when facing injustice?
2. How do our actions and prayers reflect the call to influence government and authority with godly wisdom?
3. Like Daniel and Paul, are we leaving a legacy of faith, prayer, and love in our spheres of influence?