

# Respecting Authority – a Basic Principle

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In every system there is a basic nucleus that determines the spirit and operation of the whole. In God's plan for man, the basic principle is respect for and obedience to appropriate authority. Ours is a time in which authority is being repudiated and mocked at every level. A desperate need exists for re-emphasis on the respect for authority, lest civilization be reduced to complete chaos.

- **God's authority is ultimate.** He created the universe, sustains it by His power and will finally destroy it (Rev.4:11; Acts 17:28; 2 Pet. 3:10-11). God presently rules and reigns over all through Christ (Mat. 28:18; Acts 2:34-36; 1 Cor.15:24-26). From the beginning God has required man's obedience and has labeled anything short of obedience *sin* (1 John 3:4; 5:17). God exercises His authority over all men in this age through His inspired Word, the New Testament (John 12:48; 2 John 9).
- **God's authority must be respected in His church.** The New Testament is the written record of the oral teachings of the Lord Jesus and of the inspired apostles and preachers of the first century. The repeated warnings therein against departing from the sound doctrine (i.e., healthful teaching) of the Gospel are a clear call to keep the church as God made it by respecting His authority. He has delegated authority in the local church to elders who are shepherds and overseers of our souls to help us live within His authority (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17).
- **God teaches respect for civil authority.** Human government is ordained of God and must be obeyed (Mat. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-2; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-14). The one exception is where the laws of men conflict with the Law of God (Acts 5:29).
- **God teaches respect for authority in the home.** He made the husband the head of his wife (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-23; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6). Children must respect and obey their parents, "for this is right" (Eph. 6:1-2). Respect for authority should be learned during a child's formative years at home, or he/she will be severely handicapped for life.
- **God teaches respect for authority at work.** The servant (employee) must be obedient to his or her master (employer), not merely only when one's employer is present (Eph. 6:5-6; Col. 3:22-23), unless one's master makes demands of him that conflict with those of his Divine Master (Acts 5:29). Our world would be almost perfect if all men honored duly constituted authority.

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