



AUTHORITY IN A FALLEN WORLD

FFC WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES
TAKE YOU TO GOD'S WORD FOR ANSWERS.

THIS STUDY INCLUDES MATERIAL ADAPTED FROM
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Authority in a Fallen World

We can live victoriously under imperfect authority, but not if we do it our way. That's when we get ourselves into trouble, and cause problems for others. So, let's consider how to respond as disciples of Christ, according to Scripture.

All of us are under imperfect authority. First our parents and teachers failed us. Now our husband, our boss, or our pastor fails us. In all these situations, disciples of Jesus Christ can be empowered by the Holy Spirit to act in ways that glorify God. There's a great need for us to be women who show the next generation how followers of Christ act under authority in our fallen world.

Directions for Study

- Read the passages, answer the questions, then review your answers as a discipleship team. Before you begin, pray for conviction of your sin, and the power of the Holy Spirit to submit to God.

1. God's view of authority and how He commands us to respond to it

The Bible lists many authorities, and commands our response to them. List the commands below:

- **Ephesians 6:1-3**—Children to parents: _____
- **Ephesians 5:22 & 1 Peter 3:1**—Wives to husbands: _____

- **Hebrews 13:17 & 1 Corinthians 16:15-16**—Church members to pastors: _____

- **Ephesians 6:5 & Colossians 3:22 & 1 Peter 2:18**—Employees to employers: _____

- **Romans 13:1-5 & 1 Peter 2:13-14**—All people to government: _____

- **Ephesians 5:21 & 1 Peter 5:5**—All believers to each other: _____

- **James 4:7 & Romans 6:13**—All believers to God: _____

Note: Submission means to voluntarily subordinate or subject myself under the authority, as a military soldier would submit to an officer, or a patient to a surgeon's knife.

2. God requires submission even to authority that fails

1 Peter 3:1, 1 Peter 2:18, Romans 13:1-2.

- List the ways in which the authority being spoken of fails: _____

- List God's requirement of Christians in the face of their authorities failure: _____

No human authority is given God's authority. If your authority asks you to sin, you must respectfully refuse to submit.

3. Change the way you think about leadership that fails

Proverbs 21:1

- How does this passage show us to think about a leadership decision that we believe to be poor: _____

Romans 8:28-19, Genesis 50:20

- How is God using whatever has happened? _____

1 Corinthians 10:13

- Even when authority fails, God never allows more than you can handle. How could he be using it to change you if you bear up under it? _____

Ephesians 5:20

- Thankfulness for the gift from God that this authority is for you helps you have the right attitude toward it. Have you thanked God for your authority? _____

2 Corinthians 9:8

- What must you depend on to help? _____

Our post-modern, relativistic culture is characterized by suspicion and cynicism toward authority, and critical thinking about authority has infiltrated the church. This means we are all tempted by it! But the Bible teaches us to be suspicious of people who rebel against and criticize authority. We must train our minds with absolute truth instead of cultural thinking.

4. Changed thinking results in actions that glorify God

1 Timothy 2:1-2

How can you pray for the authority over you? If they are not saved, pray for their salvation. Pray that you will respond to the authority as God desires. Have you prayed this way? _____ 1

John 13:15, 1 Peter 2:21

- Jesus set the example of an attitude of obedience. If you do not follow his example, you have no message of hope. In what ways do you need to set an example of submission? _____

*The wife who doesn't respond in a godly fashion to the failures of her husband will have no ministry to her children who live under her failing leadership. Also, the deacon or elder who resists the decisions of the church loses his ministry. When he resists decisions made by the church, crusades for his position, or quietly foments opposition, he negates his ministry.**

1 Peter 2:17, 1 Timothy 6:1-2

- How does God command you to treat your authority? _____
Especially in the church, it is important to honor and respect those in authority because of their position, so that the name of God is not discredited by those watching the church. Within the church, if you dishonor your leadership, there is the added danger of causing the weak or naïve to sin.

Matthew 7:3-5, Romans 2:1

- Look to your own responsibility, remembering that you also sin. Write out your responsibility in thoughts and actions: _____

*It is true that your authorities are accountable for their leadership, but if the accountability of those in leadership over you is your main emphasis, you are violating Matthew 7:3-5. You are concentrating more on your authorities relationship to God than on your relationship to God and the leaders He has placed over you. You must change. You must focus more on your accountability than on changing your authority.**

Psalms 1:1, Romans 16:17-18

- We must not walk or stand with ungodly sinners. And, we must not sit with people (scoffers) who cause division. If we do, we will be blown around like dust, instead of planted firmly like a tree. Are there people who influence you to think critically about the authorities in your life? _____
These are people whom God's Word warns us to watch out for and avoid. If you obey, you will be blessed.

1 Peter 2:21-23

- You only please God when you respond biblically. Even when you are convinced the authority is wrong, you must still respond by becoming more like the One you are a disciple of. How does it look for you to respond to imperfect authority with the obedience and grace of Jesus? _____

Romans 12:21, 1 Peter 3:9-12

- It is the Holy Spirit's work to convict people of their sin, not ours. It is our job to return good for evil. This will require planning ahead. First, pray. Then, work on ways to help instead of criticize. When you respond to authority by helping instead of criticizing, bitterness will be prevented. In what ways can you serve to return good for evil? _____