

SCRIPTURE STUDY SERIES – LESSON #9
A STUDY IN THE ART OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

**Designed Especially For New Converts and Christians Desiring
Greater Fulfillment**

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SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

One of the most difficult subjects in Christianity today is submission to authority. God has made provision for His church to learn authority. Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus, said, “Therefore He . . . gave gifts to men . . . and He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:8, 11-12) The word “pastor” is another word for “shepherd.” Jesus is our perfect Shepherd, because He gave his life for his sheep and the authority of a pastor comes from Him. The successful pastor is known by his ability to feed the sheep. The sheep become the pastor’s life; and his highest calling is to love and care for His sheep. The sheep’s responsibility is to respect the authority of the pastor without questioning whether the authority is just. Submission to authority is a spirit that shines forth in our attitude. Obedience is not necessarily an indication of our submission, because we can obey without possessing the submissive spirit of Christ. In the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15), the eldest son obeyed his father’s wishes concerning welcoming the prodigal back, but his attitude was very poor. Submission always has to be offered of our free will. God never demands it and we cannot demand it of others; but God gives us every opportunity to offer it so that we may become overcomers in this area. There will be many Christians in heaven who have never relinquished their wills to Jesus Christ regarding submission. They knew Him as Savior, but never made Him their Lord. A husband cannot demand submission of a wife. He must love her as Christ loves the church; then it will be her part to submit to his leadership. A wife cannot help but submit to love, because love is the strongest force in the world. A pastor cannot demand submission from his congregation. His responsibility is to feed the sheep, protect them and warn them of imminent dangers, lead them in the paths of righteousness, and exhort them. He cannot coerce them. The responsibility of the flock (the pastor’s parishioners) is to submit, to eat and to stay under his umbrella of instruction for their protection. In so doing, they will mature into full-grown spiritual men and women in the Lord. The life of submission is a daily walk. Jesus said that if we want to follow Him, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him. I believe this cross involves a daily submission to the will of God. A pastor’s teaching must always include submission—children to fathers, wives to husbands, submission to those in authority (President, governors, leaders, policemen, etc.) and most important, to the unity of the church, members submitting one to another. Submission is not one of the attributes of a new-born child of God. Just as a baby born into a human family must be taught obedience or submission (“Honor thy father and mother”), even so the new-born child of God must learn submission. The Bible tells us that Jesus learned obedience by the things He

suffered. The biggest obstacle to God's will on earth is not Satan, as we are prone to think, but it is the disobedience of immature Christians who have not dedicated their wills to God. In order to have a perfectly structured local church, we must have God's authority in operation, because the source of all authority is God. When the pastor is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, he will be able to exhort as Paul exhorted Timothy, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (II Timothy 2:2) I believe this study of God's Word will cause you to desire to submit to God's authority, which is obeying those that have rule or authority over you.

Scriptures to study: Colossians 1:18, Colossians 2:19, Ecclesiastes 10:20, Acts 23:5, Romans 13:2, Jude 8

- A. Who is the head of the church? (Ephesians 1:22)

- B. Describe the responsibility of a pastor. (I Peter 5:1-4)

- C. I Peter 2:13-17 speaks of submission. Give the meaning of these verses in your own words.

- D. What was the commandment of Paul to the church at Rome? (Romans 13:1)

- E. God pronounces a judgment on rebellion and stubbornness in Deuteronomy 17:12. What is it?

- F. What was the role of holy women in olden days? (I Peter 3:5-6)

- G. According to I Samuel 15:22, there is something that God prefers over a sacrifice. What is it?

- H. Timothy comments on worthy pastors or elders in I Timothy 5:17. What does he say?

I. Describe in your own words the meaning of Titus 3:1.

J. What instruction is Peter giving in I Peter 5:5?

PLEASE FILL IN THE BLANKS:

K. “_____ those who _____ over you, and be _____, for they _____ out for your _____, as those who must _____ . Let them do so with _____ and not with _____, for that would be _____ for you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

L. “Therefore take heed to _____ and to all the _____, among which the _____ has made you _____, to _____ the _____ of _____ which He _____ with His own _____.” (Acts 20:28)

M. “And I will _____ you _____ according to My _____, who will _____ you with _____ and _____.” (Jeremiah 3:15)

N. “_____ the _____ of _____ which is among you, _____ as _____, not by _____ but _____, not for _____ but _____.” (I Peter 5:2)

O. “I will set up _____ over them who will _____ them; and they shall _____ no more, nor be _____, nor shall they be _____,” says the _____.” (Jeremiah 23:4)

P. “_____ to be _____ to their own _____, to be well _____ in all _____, not _____ back.” (Titus 2:9)

Q. “_____, be obedient to those who are your _____ according to the _____, with _____ and _____, in _____ of _____, as to Christ.” (Ephesians 6:5)

R. “_____, _____ in all _____ your _____ according to the _____, not with _____, as _____, but in _____ of _____, _____ God.” (Colossians 3:22)

S. The Lord has asked for submissiveness. What does this mean to you?
(Use opposite side of page if necessary.)
