



## FOUNDATIONS 1

Notes

### LESSON 3

## GOD'S STRUCTURE OF AUTHORITY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

(By Pastor John Capetto)

#### Main Text

**1 Timothy 3:15** - *But if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

**Hebrews 13:17** - *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

**James 4:7** - *Submit yourselves unto God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

## Main Point

It is only as we SUBMIT OURSELVES to God, which includes submitting to God appointed leaders that we, as believers, can experience successful Christian living and the fullness of the abundant life Jesus came to give us all.

## Submission Defined

The word “submission” has gotten a bad name because of much abuse relating to how some have tried to push their authority on their followers. Bible submission is not something to be forced by leaders. Notice the way the Bible words it; SUBMIT YOURSELVES. **Submission is up to the follower to see that it takes place, not the leader trying to force people to follow.** Godly leaders never try to force anyone to submit. Jesus never manipulated or forced anyone to follow Him.

The Greek definitions for the word submit is: To yield. To arrange under.

The very word denotes that not all of us have the same responsibilities and authority in the work of God. Unlike the rights and privileges we have as children of God, which are equal, when it comes to the work of the ministry the Bible teaches not all have the same place or authority.

## What submission is not

Submission is more than agreement. Many feel that they are submitted and committed to certain ministries and churches, but in reality they are only in agreement. This is usually the case when a person first gets hooked up with their local church and the emotion is high and things are new and exciting. Though submission and commitment may, in fact, be in

them, it's when the newness begins to wear off and the so-called "honeymoon stage" is over that true submission surfaces or not. The more a person gets to know their leaders in the natural, beyond ministry, the more they begin to see flaws and imperfections and this makes it more necessary to be strong in the Lord and mature enough to still see God at work in the church and not just man.

Some who think they are submitted and committed find out when things get tough that they were only in agreement.

Like love, submission is not even noticed until pressure to not be submitted or committed shows up. It is very important to realize that submission is not agreement. You can disagree with your leader and still remain in submission if you will keep a right heart and not slack off in your work for God.

Many people miss great rewards by not remaining submitted and faithful to what God called them to. God, at times, leads us into places He knows will bring severe testing, but it is only after testing that He has a right to promote us to higher ground. He needs a reason to promote us and once we pass certain tests He can. So many believers don't realize this. So many run away from hard spots when they should do what Paul said, "Endure hardness as a good soldier..." 2 Timothy 2: 3

Submission to a church or any ministry will be challenged. When the tests begin, the way to pass is to constantly remind oneself that you are there for the Lord first and foremost. When opportunity to do more elsewhere arises, or when things don't go the way we thought, or when the romance wears off and new and exciting things appear to be happening elsewhere, this is when true submission shines and this is where God begins to promote the faithful.

## God works through delegation

**Colossians 2** – *And not holding the Head, (Jesus), from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.*

If we are not in our proper place in the Body of Christ, functioning as it pleases God, we will not only hinder the work of God in the earth, but we will also miss out on much of the nourishment we need to live a successful Christian life. Notice in the above Scripture, that nourishment comes from the Head, (Jesus), but it goes through joints and bands (other members in the church) before it gets to the individual parts. In the human body, if the hand is not in place it hinders the body from functioning properly and the hand itself also begins to dry up and die if it's not connected to where it's supposed to be. Many believers are dry and somewhat dead today because of not receiving the nourishment they need to live in victory. Some look at submitting to their leaders and being connected and committed to the local church as a bondage thing when according to the Bible it is a nourishing thing. Anything God tells us to do in His Word will bring us the greatest freedom and satisfaction available to man.

## Submitting to God includes submitting to our leaders.

**Hebrews 13:17** - *Submit YOURSELVES...* WE must choose to submit because a godly leader will not force this to happen.

Some believers simply do not want to submit to a Pastor or any other leader. They just want to live any way they want and take orders from no one. These people will not grow spiritually and if they remain in a state having no one over them in the Lord, they will also become more and

more deceived and eventually shipwrecked in their faith. We must need leaders who watch over our souls or why would God say we did.

Hebrews 13 tells us ALL to obey them who have the rule over us and to SUBMIT OURSELVES to such. This excludes no one. The sad part about this is, not only are some not submitting to anyone over them in the Lord so many haven't even identified who is over them in the Lord. Before you can yield to someone over you, you have to identify him or her. It's not a matter of, "Do I have any leaders over me?" God said we all have leaders over us in the Lord and identifying them is the first step in submitting to them.

### Benefits of submitting

**James 4:7** - *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

When we are in submission to God then our resisting the devil is effective. Some believers wonder why they are having so much trouble with the devil and just not seeing much relief. They pray and pray, but still remain in all kinds of trouble and adversity. This verse says we are to do something about the devil, but in order to resist him successfully and have him flee from us we must be submitted to God, which includes submission to His Word, which says to obey them that have the rule over you.

The devil is the author of rebellion. He rebelled against God and now he seeks to get man to rebel against God by getting him to rebel against what He has ordained. Notice:

**Romans 13: 1** - *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: **the powers that be are ordained of God.***

God has ordained a structure of authority. He ordered it.

**Hebrews 13:17** - *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

Isn't it good to have God appointed leaders watching over your life? Here is a main reason the devil seeks to separate divine connections. He knows that followers need leaders and leaders need helpers. The believer must be on guard for offense, strife and division especially when it comes to submitting where submission is required.

Anytime we are tempted to break a connection that God established with our leaders, we must remember that those ordained by God to watch over our souls are there to be a blessing to our families and us. They are there to watch over our souls.

Great faith and godly submission and authority are related

**Matthew 8: 5-10,13** – *And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.... And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done*

*unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*

Understanding submission and authority and actually making it a part of our life will position us in great faith so we can receive all the benefits Jesus has provided.

The centurion had great faith and he also knew about submission and authority. He was under authority and in authority. This way of living helped him to have faith in the power of God and the willingness of Jesus to heal his servant. Because of his understanding of submission and authority he knew the Words of Jesus carried power and that sickness had to submit to His Words.

If we receive those Jesus sends, we receive Jesus

**Matthew 10:40** - *He that receives you receives me, and he that receives me receives him that sent me.*

God works through delegation. How we treat those He sends us is how we treat Him.

In the Book of Numbers, chapter 12, God heard it when Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, their leader, and God was not happy with them for doing so. If we were there all we would have seen is two people speaking against a leader, but in reality they were speaking against God because God had established Moses as a leader of the people. So many times believers don't know it, but the way they treat their leaders is the way they treat God Himself. It is unwise to speak against any leaders that God has permitted or commissioned to be in authority. It can actually bring about unnecessary adversity if it is not repented of.

## Practical government in the local church

1. Jesus is the Head of the Church. Ephesians 1: 22

2. He has set Pastors as under-shepherds in the local Churches.

Ephesians 4: 11

3. First Timothy also speaks of “deacons” which are helpers to the Pastor. Some of these helpers may serve on a Board of directors or a Board of advisors or they may be leaders of certain departments within the church. Many of these deacons also serve in other areas not so much as leaders, but as faithful servers, which also falls into the category of the ministry of HELPS.

Every Pastor should also be submitted to either another Pastor above Him in the Lord and or an Apostle or Prophet or Teacher. Every church should have the influence of all the five ministry gifts in them: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. See Ephesians 4: 11

True submission and authority brings great blessing and great advancement to the cause of Christ in the earth.