

Submissive Master

As a gesture of team spirit and cooperation my principal (I was a school teacher.) invited each teacher to his office so he could get to know us. After asking a series of questions about me, his final question was, "What is the job of a principal?"

Without hesitating I answered: "The best principal is a servant to his teachers. It is his job to insure that the teachers can teach." (That was what my first principal believed and modeled.)

As you might imagine, his face did not light up with joy. In fact, he looked puzzled and then framed the question another way. I guess I did not answer *correctly*.

I think we sometimes react the same way to the difficult statements in Scripture. You know, things like offering forgiveness and being submissive and showing mercy to *those* kind of people. Like my principle, we sometimes act puzzled as if we do not understand.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21 NASB)

We see the imperative in the prohibitions: *Do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not lie;* but somehow the imperative about submission does not carry the same weight. Some folks simply breeze over this verse while others argue about the words until it has little meaning.

The word '*submit*' means to '*stand in rank under.*' It is a word applied to servants and is not really popular in any circle.

Submit to God? Yes!

Submit to Christ? Yes!

These imperatives make sense.

But, submit to one another!? Difficult!

'Submit' forces us to look beyond ourselves. It requires us to see people as spiritual beings for whom Christ died, not just human beings.

Paul instructs us that "**...our struggle is not against flesh and blood...**" but against spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:12 NASB). So, I must recognize that no matter how difficult it is to get along with *you*, *you* are not the enemy!

So, how can I submit?

I must adopt the right attitude by submitting to my fellow Christians "**out of reverence for Christ.**" This might be explained as a response of submission to Christ as my Master. In other words, I am submitting first to Christ himself.

It is also the imitation of Christ. As I submit to my brethren I am walking in the steps of Jesus just as he demonstrated submission while on earth. Do you remember how Jesus responded to God in the garden of Gethsemane?

"...not My will, but Yours be done."

(Luke 22:42 NASB)

He then died on the cross...

...in my place,

...in your place.

By this selfless act of love he announced:

You are more important than I.

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