

Rebellion vs. Submission to Authority

"¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your lives, as people who will have to render an account. So make it a task of joy for them, not one of groaning; for that is of no advantage to you. ¹⁸ Keep praying for us, for we are certain that we have a clear conscience and want to conduct ourselves properly in everything we do."

Hebrews 13:17-18 (CJB)

REBELLION:

Rebellion is Witchcraft. God hates rebellion. Many times, the punishment is death, or the removal of authority or position.

Eli and his sons:

In 1 Samuel 2, Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, caused men to hate bringing their offering to God. They forced men to give them the fat from the offerings, even though that was not how God had commanded them to do the sacrifice. They also had sex with women right at the door of the tabernacle. Eli did not stop them. God asked Eli, *"Why do you honor your sons more than me?"* In chapter 4, the ark of God was captured, Hophni and Phinehas died, and Eli fell off of his seat and broke his neck and died as well.

King Saul:

The Jews rebelled in asking for a king to lead them, instead of letting God lead them. After they had begged for a king, they complained about their king in 1 Sam. 10:27. Samuel told Israel, *"...if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers."* During Saul's reign as king, he disobeyed God many times (1 Sa. 13:13 & 1 Sam. 15:9).

God told Saul not to take any spoils from the Amalekites and to spare no one. Saul instead spared Agag and took the best of the spoil and sacrificed it to God. *"²² So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."*

Subsequently, Saul was tormented by demons sent by God, and his authority as king was removed from him, and he died.

SUBMISSION to Authority and Loyalty:

Submission to Authority may be hard, but it is greatly rewarded. Many times, submission leads to promotion and recognition, although those who submit well are usually not looking for promotion. For the most part, true and lasting submission comes out of love.

Jonathan:

In 1 Samuel 18, it says that Jonathan's soul was knit together with David's. Jonathan defended David's life. He told David he would do anything for him. He even risked his life and position by going against his father, Saul, because he knew Saul had become evil, and David was innocent. He encouraged David and he was loyal to David until he died. He submitted to David in everything because of his great love for him.

King David:

David was anointed King, but had not yet been given the position or the authority. He respected King Saul and submitted to his authority. Saul became jealous of David, and tried to kill him over and over. Even after trying to kill him, David would not even speak a harsh word about Saul. In 1 Samuel 24, David's men tempted him to hurt Saul. David snuck up on Saul in a cave and cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

In 1 Samuel 24:5-6, it says that David's heart was troubled after cutting the robe, and he said *"The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD."* In chapter 26, David was again tempted by Abishai to strike Saul, but again, David would not touch God's anointed one. David submitted to King Saul's authority out of love for him, but this didn't mean he had to turn himself in and be killed by Saul. Because he loved God, David didn't want to disrespect the position God had placed Saul in. Later in life, David did succumb to other temptations, but God said he was a man after God's own heart. David's heart was toward God, and his bloodline was established forever through Jesus Christ.

Ruth:

Ruth married one of Naomi's sons. But then Ruth's husband died, along with Naomi's other sons. There was no reason Ruth had to remain with her mother-in-law Naomi. Then, Naomi decided to leave the land of Moab and go back to Judah.

In Ruth 1:15-17, Naomi said, *"Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."*¹⁶ But Ruth said: *"Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."* Because of her faithfulness to Naomi, Ruth was blessed with a new husband and a son, who would be a part of the bloodline that would birth Jesus.

The ultimate submission to authority is submission to God. We should never let submission to man replace our submission to God. But out of submission to God, we should submit to those men and women whom God has put into authority.

"Everyone is to obey the governing authorities. For there is no authority that is not from God, and the existing authorities have been placed where they are by God. ² Therefore, whoever resists the authorities is resisting what God has instituted; and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers are no terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you like to be unafraid of the person in authority? Then simply do what is good, and you will win his

approval; ⁴ for he is God's servant, there for your benefit. But if you do what is wrong, be afraid! Because it is not for nothing that he holds the power of the sword; for he is God's servant, there as an avenger to punish wrongdoers." **Romans 13:1-4 (CJB)**

"¹⁹ Don't quench the Spirit, ²⁰ don't despise inspired messages. ²¹ But do test everything — hold onto what is good, ²² but keep away from every form of evil." **1 Thessalonians 5:19-22**

Submission to Authority does not mean to blindly follow and never question. Test Everything. Blindly following a pastor can be very dangerous, like when people followed David Koresh, believing he was the Messiah. You should never follow leadership into something that goes against scripture. Leadership can and will make mistakes. But if a pastor or church is consistently going against God's word, you need to find another church.

I can't speak for other churches, but I believe our church leadership and pastors are making sound decisions based on God's word, and trying earnestly to operate in love. We will base the rest of this study on that understanding.

"Just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not looking out for my own interests but for those of the many, so that they may be saved; try to imitate me, even as I myself try to imitate the Messiah." **1 Corinthians 10:33, 11:1 (CJB)**

"¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your lives, as people who will have to render an account. So make it a task of joy for them, not one of groaning; for that is of no advantage to you. ¹⁸ Keep praying for us, for we are certain that we have a clear conscience and want to conduct ourselves properly in everything we do." **Hebrews 13:17-18 (CJB)**

Submission to authority allows the pastors and leadership to effectively serve you. If you constantly fight against submission, it makes the jobs of leaders seem like a chore. The leadership at TOBCF wants to serve you with joy. And please, do pray for us. I believe we do have a clear conscience, and we do so desperately want to make good decisions.

The world is a dark place. Many who come through the doors of the church have been abused, neglected, and hurt in every way imaginable. Sometimes, it is hard to let go of past hurts and failures and learn how to trust again. It may take longer for some. But if you cannot learn how to trust the pastors and leaders at a church, it will greatly hinder you in your walk with the Lord, and you may never be effectively used in the ministry. It takes time to learn someone's true character. Often we harshly judge people because we think they will treat us how so-and-so did in the past.

As a leader, I find myself constantly defending pastor and other leaders; pleading the case for their character. I have been through some major trials with this team, and I know their character. You may not know your leaders as intimately as others, but I hope you will seek to know them in a way that will lead you to trust them and defend their character when and if they are accused or attacked. All pastors and leaders are human, and they WILL make mistakes and disappoint you. Just as your birth parents have made mistakes and disappointed you. But

we should continue to love them, knowing they are flawed and just doing the best with what they were taught.

If you come to a place where your earthly parents have been abusive or neglectful, we must sometimes separate from or distance ourselves. We forgive, but we no longer have to submit ourselves to the abuse. The same is true in abusive church situations. Even those who are well meaning can sometimes get off track. If you feel you cannot trust or submit to the church you are in, pray about it, and begin to search for a place where you can get plugged in, truly submit, and grow in the Lord.

"¹⁹ Never listen to any accusation against a leader unless it is supported by two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Rebuke before the whole assembly those leaders who continue sinning, as a warning to the others. ²¹ Before God, the Messiah Yeshua and the chosen angels, I solemnly charge you to observe these instructions, not pre-judging and not doing anything out of favoritism." **1 Timothy 5:19-21**

Sometimes, a minister may fall to temptation. If they continue to sin, this verse applies to them. Situations may arise where you feel that a leader needs correction. It is best to let someone who holds another authority position correct them. In scripture, we see Apostles openly correcting and rebuking. If you have an issue that needs to be addressed, pick 2 leaders that you trust, and share your grievance, but be sure that you do not gossip and that you don't share it with anyone else. Then those leaders can choose how to resolve the matter. This protocol applies to accusations against a leader that require correction, but there is a different way to deal with being offended.

Many times, when someone is offended, it is 100% fabricated and implanted by the devil. So many times, accusations I hear against leadership are so far from the person's true character, that I can immediately defend it. I can quickly see that the accusation is rooted in some sort of insecurity, jealousy or a misunderstanding. If you cannot pinpoint an exact sin someone has committed, it is likely that your offense has been fabricated by the enemy. When you come to make an accusation against a leader, elder, or pastor, be sure there is proof that some sort of sin has actually been committed.

So many times, our insecurities and desires of the flesh lead us to be offended. The devil has tried so hard to discredit the church. One of his best tactics is to rip apart the church from the inside out through offense. Scripture is very clear on how we should deal with offense.

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector." **Matthew 18:15-17**

When you need to confront someone about an offense, always start in this way:
"Please forgive me, I was offended at you."

This will soften the blow and show that your heart really longs to patch things up. When you humble yourself and ask forgiveness, even though you were the one who was offended, it will help them to "hear you" so you can "gain" your brother back.

How long should you wait to resolve offense?

"²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly...." Matthew 5:23-25a

Do not come to worship God with offense in your heart. Before every church service, you should ask yourself "Do I have any offense I need to resolve before I approach the throne of God today?" What does it mean to agree with your adversary? If you are truly humble, you will not be defensive. When someone brings an accusation against you, and you are defensive, this is your pride rising up.

Don't leave it unresolved for even a single day.....

*"²⁵ Therefore, stripping off falsehood, **let everyone speak truth with his neighbor,**^[b] because we are intimately related to each other as parts of a body. ²⁶ **Be angry, but don't sin**^[c] — don't let the sun go down before you have dealt with the cause of your anger; ²⁷ otherwise you leave room for the Adversary." Ephesians 4:25-27 (CJB)*

So many times we ignore offense, and we try to pretend like nothing is wrong. **This is a falsehood.** Be truthful if you are upset or angry. If you have an offense and you put off resolving it, you leave room for the devil. Do you really want to make room for the enemy of your soul?

"¹⁶ Therefore, openly acknowledge your sins to one another, and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

James 5:16 (CJB)

Do not be ashamed of offence, or of any other sin for that matter. This scripture tells you that if you want to be healed, you need to quit hiding it. If you want a relationship to be healed, tell the person you were offended. If you want to be confident in the Lord, confess your insecurities to someone you trust. If you want jealousy healed, then tell someone you are struggling with it. If you have trust issues, step out in faith and tell someone.

The devil will always present situations where you could possibly get offended. Don't think because you have conquered offense a few times, that you are done with offence. You have to decide in your heart ahead of time to rebuke the devil when he comes. Ask God to pour out discernment and wisdom so you can see when offense is trying to weasel its way into your heart. When you feel pride, jealousy or resentment, stop right then, and say "Spirit of offense, I command you to be silenced and leave now in the name of Jesus." James 4:7 says "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Negative Consequences of Offense:

- It can separate you from God's presence
- It can alienate you from your brothers and sisters in Christ
- It can cause you to never really get plugged in and rooted in a congregation
- It can cause you to leave the fellowship completely
- It can ruin ministries and churches and cause churches to close down or split in half

Offense is the sole reason I wanted nothing to do with church in my young adult life. Do you want people to walk into this church and turn right back around? We must come to a place in our walk where we face offense head on, and we decide in our heart not to be offended, even when we are justified in being offended. God wants to use each one of us in ministry. However, before we can be a leader, we must learn how to follow the leadership that is already in place.

Healthy Submission to Authority includes:

- Trusting their decisions even when you don't agree (as long as it doesn't lead to sin)
- Not gossiping or speaking negative about leaders or their choices
- Align yourself with the pastor's vision, and vision for other ministries already in place
- Do not seek to promote yourself or your own vision. When you submit to the leadership God has put into place, they will promote you and propel your ministry faster than you could ever do on your own.
- Above all, trust God's timing. Trust that if God has not moved you into a desired position yet, that God knows better than you. Trust that there may be a reason you cannot see, which may likely be some kind of darkness in your heart that must first be removed before you can effectively serve in that position. And God's timing may have nothing to do with you. Could he be using this timing to prepare someone else?

Definition of Mutiny –

a situation in which a person or group of people refuse to obey orders and try to take control away from the person who commands them; forcible or passive resistance to lawful authority; *especially* : concerted revolt (as of a naval crew) against discipline or a superior officer ; to rebel.

Many times, I have seen all out mutiny against church leadership or pastors. When churches split, there is mutiny. Growing up, I saw our Baptist church split many times. I have seen people get offended at God and quit going to church all together. I have seen gossip and back-biting. As leaders we never ever want to lord our authority over you. But if you try to take control of a situation or a ministry, or try to assert your ideas or vision over the pastors, you are in mutiny.

Have you ever said or thought things like this:

"Why aren't you using my talents God? I'm ready."
"Why did they choose to do it like that? My idea was better."
"Why did he get promoted ahead of me? I've been here longer."
"My ministry is never going to grow here."
"No one takes me seriously."
"Everyone judges me."
"I feel left out. Why didn't they include me?"

Have you ever heard other people make these comments to you like this?

"I don't see why they used him for this job. You would have done it better?"
"If things don't work out here, you would have no problem finding another church to serve in."
"Did you see what she did? That was so wrong. I can't believe she did that to you."
"You are so anointed. I can't believe they don't have you in that position."

All of these questions and statements come from pride. All of these thoughts are rebellion. And all of these lead to offense.

I was in a death metal band for over 10 years. I thought God would immediately use me in worship when I gave my life to him. He kept me hidden for a full year. I see now that God was removing pride from me before I could effectively serve Him. I have wounded people because I had a lot of zeal and no self-control. It is only in hindsight that we can see there was always a purpose or reason why God's timing was not quite fast enough for us. We can rarely see the darkness in our own hearts. But God knows that if He lets us loose before we were ready, we would destroy ourselves and possibly destroy others. And when you find yourself in a situation where your pride begins to rise, and you start to feel offended, yield yourself to the process. Say, "Ok God, I see you are putting your finger on darkness in my heart. Please, take it out. Remove it Lord! I submit to you."

Many times, a leader is tasked with exposing this darkness. Even when this is done in love and humility, it still may be rejected. I have been rejected many times and I have felt alone. I am called to a higher accountability. I refuse to compromise. And because others are not on fire for God or they still want to compromise, this pushes them away from me.

Sometimes, you will see leadership make mistakes. The devil will try to convince you that your leaders are unfit. But no one is truly worthy. Leaders are only stewards of the church. And our position could be changed or removed at any moment. Your ministry doesn't belong to you, it's God's. And just because God puts you in a position today, does not mean He will not move you tomorrow.

Church is like a family. Just because you have a disagreement, you don't leave the family. Have you harshly judged your brother or sister Christ? Have you been in rebellion? There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. God wants to heal this part of your heart. God will help you every step of the way, for the rest of your walk. Just submit to Him and ask Him to help you.

Also see: Romans 12:2-18 and 1 Peter 2:13-23