

THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORITY IN YOUR LIFE

I am so glad that you are coming back for these lessons. I talk to a lot of you on the phone and by e-mail, maybe run into you at the grocery store. Many people from out of town call me and say they are watching this show. That is fun and I am really enjoying this. When I teach these lessons, I try to talk to you through this television camera as though I were looking at you. We all live in the same world. You live in the real world and so do I. We all make mistakes. We all try hard. That is just life. Yet, are you aware that God has authority structures set up in your life and if you line up with those authority structures your life will go a lot smoother. Have you asked yourself "Why do I have such a problem with authority? They irritate me. I resent it. I don't want to hear it. I don't like it when they tell me to do something I don't want to do. I don't like having to wait on them. I don't like the people that are in authority over me." Do you have a problem with authority? I think it is because you do not understand it. I think if you understand it, it makes a lot of sense and then you relax and move in it. I want to talk to you about that today. What is the purpose of authority in your life? We are going to talk about God, we are going to talk about your boss, we are going to talk about your husband, and we are going to talk about your parents. Let's just see if I can help you understand what God is trying to do in your life.

When Jesus came to the earth, He had been alive forever. He helped create the world. You can read that all over the Bible. Nothing was made that was not made by Him. You think how powerful He was and how much authority He had before the world ever even existed. What kind of power did he have? He had immense, unbelievable power. Yet, the Bible says when He came to earth He humbled Himself like a servant. That takes a confident person who understands authority. Think about the centurion who had a servant that was ill and he wanted Jesus to come and pray for his servant that the servant might be healed. Yet, the centurion sent a message and said, "You don't need to come. Just speak the word and my servant will be healed, for I am a man under authority and I know that when I say 'Do this', they have to do it, 'Do that' and they have to do it. So you just speak the word and my servant will be healed." Jesus was floored. That is not what it says in the Bible, but in our translation it would say "Jesus was floored." He said, "I haven't seen this kind of faith anywhere in Israel." The centurion was a Greek. He was not even a believer, but he knew authority and he knew how to operate under it. For those of you that have been in the military, you know what I am talking about. There is such an authority structure in the military. You do it right and everything goes great. You do it wrong and you end up in the brig, and that is it.

Here is Jesus, the greatest and supreme authority in all of the world, all of eternity. He comes to earth and starts out as a baby and a child. In the first chapter of Luke, it says "Jesus grew in wisdom and knowledge and in favor with God and man." If you are a rebellious person that is constantly bucking authority, you are not a person who can grow in wisdom and knowledge and favor with God and man. It is not going to happen. That means that Jesus had to learn how to do that. When He was 12, He was in the temple talking to the authorities there. They were asking Him questions and He was giving them answers. I am sure they wondered, "How does this kid know this stuff. He is just 12 years old." He knew what he knew inside Himself. He had the Spirit of God all over Him; they were three in one. What happened? His mother and his dad noticed He was missing. They looked for three days, thinking, "Where in the world is this child? What has happened to him?" They had to stop their trip, go back to Jerusalem, and search all over Jerusalem which was full of people because they were there for a great big occasion so there were lots of people in the town. They finally found Him in the temple. They said, "What in the world are you doing here?" He said, "Don't you know I need to be about My Father's business. I must be about it." They told Him He needed to come on home. What would you have done in that situation? Would you have said, "Remember, I am God. Remember the angel Gabriel said, 'You are going to have a son, and He is going to be God.' I am the Messiah. I should call the shots." Do you think He could have thought that and said that? Instead, He got under authority and did what they said. He went back. He was 12 then, and His ministry did not start until He was 30. So, He was under that authority waiting, waiting for God to release Him, under His mother and in His family. Never think that Jesus does not understand your situation.

There is someone watching this show right now who is a teenager. You love your parents but you have a lot of difficulty. You think, "They just don't get me. If they would just leave me alone, I could do what I need to do and what I know I am supposed to do." You just have to understand that God has a plan for your life. You just do the right thing now and God will take care of your future. There is also someone watching right now that might be a woman. You feel a great call on your life from God. Maybe your husband does not understand, maybe people around you do not understand, but you know God has

husband does not understand, maybe people around you do not understand, but you know God has called you and you have to wait under authority. There is something about waiting under the pressure of authority saying one thing and you thinking another that develops you. You need to just relax and let that happen. Do not be in a hurry. God has you under control. He has your life under control. He has an authority system that makes things go well. There is a spiritual authority system, there is a civic authority system, there is a marriage authority system, and there is a parent authority system. God has you covered. If you flow in that, you will see immense blessings. I know people that live with very ungodly parents, parents who are mean, alcoholic, and beat them. They are just bad. Yet, to the best of their ability, they have tried to trust God, stay where they should stay, and listen and wait for God's help. God will bless that. All through the Bible, there are stories of people who were under authority that was not good and they did the right thing.

How would you like to have been a Christian in the first century? You know God, you know His word, you know He is true, you know what He said, you know Jesus came and died, and yet you are under a world system that absolutely does not believe it and if you say you believe, then you are killed. Still you have to find a way to be under authority even then. I want to read you something from The Living Bible. It talks about how to obey the government. While I was getting ready for this lesson, I thought, "Paul wrote that when the Romans were trying to kill everyone and he was in jail for doing what he did." The authorities put him in jail, and he still wrote Romans 13 under that kind of situation. He wrote it when everything was hard, things were not great. "Obey the government for God is the one who has put it there. There is no government anywhere that God has not placed in power." Did God put evil people in power? No, He did not, but God is still in control even when they are and even when they are doing despicable things to their people, like some of the things that are going on in Africa. God is still in control and He will still bring about His will in your life, no matter what you are living under. "Those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God." Some of you do not want to pay your income taxes and you say, "I am not going to pay my taxes. I am not giving the government my money. I am not doing that." Listen to that sentence, "For those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God and punishment will follow."

When something bad happens to us and we say, "Why did God let this happen to me?" What we do not understand is that if God had not had all the mercy that He does for us, everything would be happening to us. Our sins punish us. God does not have to. Our sins do it. Right here it says, "Punishment will follow if you do not obey the laws of the land." In verse 3, it says, "For the policeman does not frighten people who are doing right but those doing evil will always fear Him." I laugh when I read that because I really try to drive right and no speed. Every time I see a police officer, I just get nervous. It happened to me yesterday. I was going to take someone to the airport and I was hurrying to get there. I saw the little red light and radar gun where they were watching people, and they were pulling people over and my heart stopped. I looked down at my speedometer quickly and thought, "I am not speeding. Thank heavens." If I was one of those people that drove 55 miles an hour all of the time I probably would not ever be afraid of a policeman because I would be thinking, "It's not me." I was grateful it was not me. The policeman is sent by God to help you. The reason that verse means a lot to me is that my son is a policeman in Austin. It is an amazing thing. I have a child that I think, "What's he going to do next." It is amazing, but he loves it and he really tries to help people. He told me once, "Mom, people will nearly always lie to a policeman. I don't know why they do it. They are caught with the goods. We ask them 'Do you have drugs in your car' and they say 'I don't know how that got there.'" Yet the Bible says the policeman is sent to help you. Then it goes on to say, "But, if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid for He will have you punished. It is interesting to me how angry people get at cops until they need one. Then they cannot get them there fast enough."

Obey the laws for two reasons. First, to keep from being punished, and second just because you know you should. What a way to live. You can live the kind of life with God, with civic authority, where you do not want to get into trouble and you do not want to be punished, even with a bad attitude. Or, you can be the kind of person that lives under authority because you know you should. It is the right way to live and God's blessing will flow. Think about this. I am going to show you an illustration. God has an umbrella of protection over your life. God is here, and you are under God. If you are a man, the husband, you are the head of the house but you are under God and you still have to answer to God. The wife has to answer to God and her husband, according to scripture. The children are below that. They have to answer to the mom, the dad, and to God. That is God's order. Now, look at this umbrella. It protects me everywhere I move, things are kept out of my life and I am protected. We do not all go through life with no bad things happening. I understand that. I told you that I live in the real world just like you do. But, God says, "If you will do this, I will protect you." There is no telling what has been kept out of your life because you did this.

What happens when you say, "I don't care what my parents say, I am doing what I want to do." You get out from under the umbrella of protection. The umbrella is over here, and you are over here. Satan can get at you. Another way is if you stay under it but you sometimes obey and sometimes you do not. You get holes in your umbrella. You might think, "Why is all of this bad stuff happening to me?" Yet, you are not under authority, so you have holes in your umbrella. I am telling you that God has a plan, and if you

get in the plan you are going to go with the flow and it is going to be great. Another thing the Bible says is to pay your taxes. I know some of you do not want to hear that but it is there. You do that for the same two reasons – one is that you do not want to get punished and the other is because you know you should, “For government workers need to be paid so that they can keep on doing God’s work serving you. Pay everyone what you owe.” Then it goes into paying all of your debts. Some of you have had family situations where you just needed to be out of it, or a marriage situation that maybe was domestic violence and you needed to be out of it. That is not staying under authority no matter what that bully says to you, and God does not expect you to. For one thing, it teaches your children to be bullies and to be abusers. I am not setting a hard and fast rule that there is no grace or that there is no freedom. I am not doing that. I am just trying to tell you the normal way life is supposed to be and reminding you that this chapter in Romans was written when they were under a terrible rule of authority.

How does God set up authority? I just talked to you about the civic, but God has church authority, too.

Are you aware of that? What is the church authority? In Ephesians, it talks about the five-fold ministry, pastors, prophets, evangelists, teachers. In setting all of that up, those are the people in authority over you in the church. Sometimes in churches, it gets out of hand. Years ago, they could not do anything.

They could not even get married without going to the church and saying do we have your permission to marry this person. That is an abuse of authority and God does not stand for that either, not at all. If you are a person in authority over people and you are abusive to those people, God will judge you for it and He will correct it. You cannot just say, “Well, I am the boss and everyone has to do what I say, like it or not.” In church, you have people that you can go to when you have big decisions to make, like who do I marry, or do I take this job, or I am thinking about doing a ministry. You can ask them, “What do you think?

I am having this problem in my life, what do you think?” God has them there for you to give you Godly counsel. Before you go to anyone for advice who is in authority above you, always pray and say, “Lord, tell them what to tell me.” If you are a woman and your husband is not a believer, and you are a believer, or he is not as on fire for God as you are, and you think, “He doesn’t get it. He doesn’t understand where I am,” God still have his place in your life. Even if he does not pray, even if he does not read the Bible and you do, you can still say, “Lord I am going to go and ask him what I should do. Would you please speak through him to me.” It will happen and you will be amazed because you will see God. It is a beautiful thing to see how God can work in difficult situations to do the very things He says He will do.

Another place that you have authority over you is in your job. You might say, “If I owned the company, I would tell everybody how to do it, and I would sure like to be able to do that.” There is not anyone who is not under authority somewhere. For instance, the owner of the company has to answer to his Board of Directors, or he has to answer to the people who buy his product. If he does not do a good job with his product, no one will buy it. Everyone has to answer to someone. There is no one anywhere that does not.

Even Jesus put himself under the authority of God when He was on earth as a man. We all have to do it. Yes, sometimes you do not like to do it. Remember what the Bible says, God will bless you when you do it. If God made everything there is, why can he not be your authority? If He made you, why can’t He be your authority? Have you ever asked yourself that? Have you ever said to yourself, “Where is God really in my life? Does He really run my life? Does He really have the final say?” If God does, you have a blessed life. If God does not and you are a Christian, you have troubles and you cannot figure out why life does not go like it should. If I said to you right now, “Okay. Just let go and say God you are it. I give up. You are in control of all my life, my job, my family, my marriage, my kids, my money, my friends, everything.”

That is what you have to do to make God the final authority. If He is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all. You know him as Jesus, but you do not know Him as Lord. He is the Lord, Jesus Christ. He does not want to just be your savior, He wants to be your Lord. What is another word for Lord? Boss.

This is not a true story. One time a man was going down the road and it was very difficult. The road was hard and bumpy, and he was swerving to miss rocks and everything. Jesus was in the passenger seat.

Suddenly, Jesus said “Stop the car and get out.” The guy got out and Jesus said, “Get in the back seat.”

The man got in the back seat and Jesus got in the driver’s seat and drives off. Suddenly, the road gets smooth. That is what I am talking about. Why do people not like it if what I am telling you is so good?

Rebellion is one reason. Another is an independent spirit. There is nothing wrong with being an independent person provided you still understand that you are under authority. You have to be. You cannot say, “I’ll do it my way. Everyone leave me alone. I know what I am doing and I know how to do it.”

Spiritual pride is another reason. There are people that think “I am a big Christian. I know how to do everything. I don’t need to pray. I don’t need to read my Bible. I know what to do. I don’t need to go to church.” There are people who say to me, “Well, Betty, I don’t go to church, but I don’t need it because I know what God says and I think about God. When I am outside, I think about God.” My answer to that is, “Oh, really. How intimate in your relationship with God? How much time are you spending doing it His way, the way He wants it done, because you love Him, or do you have that old independent spiritual pride?”

Another one is the fear of exposure. You think, “If I go to authority and I say what I have done, it is going to be Katy bar the door, or I am going to be exposed and humiliated.” Let me tell you, never forget what it says in James. “Submit yourself to God, resist the devil and he will flee.” You can go to God and humble yourself and say, “Lord, I have really blown it and I need you to help me. I am so sorry.” God will help you

yourself and say, "Lord, I have really blown it and I need you to help me. I am so sorry." God will help you.

What are the benefits of it? I hope I have sold you on this. I used to sell makeup and they always said sell them on the features and the benefits, and you will get a big sale. I have been telling you about the features of accountability and authority. But now, what are the benefits of it? Wisdom that you do not have. You can go through the school of hard knocks, you can reinvent the wheel over and over, or you can have people in authority over you who have experience. The only way you get up is because you have proven yourself worthy of going up. They can see what you cannot see. There is an old saying, "You can't see the forest for the trees." Well, they can see the forest, you are just around the trees. They can say, "I see this and this and this." You might think, "I didn't see that." That is what is so great about it. Another is experience, especially with parents. When you are a teenager, you do not want to hear "When I was a kid, I did such-and-such, and you have to do such-and-such." That is the last thing you want to hear, especially in your late teens because you are trying to become independent. You think, "I just wish they would leave me alone. They don't understand. They don't have a clue." They do have experience. They may not live in your world, but they have experience. Also, authority can cover you. When you make a mistake, they can say, "They were trying. Just give them another chance." They can defend you. They can be a good coach in your life and they can grow you up. Jesus even said, "Submit to one another." In a marriage, God says, "The man is the head, the woman is beneath him. She goes through him." At the same time, it also says, "Be mutually submissive to each other." It is not like, "You have to obey me because I am the husband and that is what the Bible says." It is not like that.

If you are in authority, remember that you have to have a godliness and be in authority. Remember, as the authority, you are listening to God, too. You have to answer to God. So this authority structure is throughout society, it is throughout government, and it is throughout home life. Get in that. You will like it so much. Your life will go better. Ask Jesus to take over your life. You will be different.

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What are the different types of authority in our lives?
2. What does Paul in Romans 13 say about authorities?
3. Can Jesus relate to us about authority in our lives? Why?
4. What gets in the way of being under authority?
5. What are the benefits for being under authority?

To watch the video on THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORITY IN YOUR LIFE, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

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