

AUTHORITY

Lesson 9

Is God your boss? What does that mean practically since God has never spoken to you in an audible voice? How do I know if it is God who is giving the commands or perhaps the Devil, or perhaps I am just doing what I want to and saying that I am obeying God?

If you were in the military, you would easily know what the general was commanding by the loud voice of your sergeant. The military system is called the **chain of command**. The general passes his commands down through the chain until it finally arrives at the buck private. The private is not allowed to question the sergeant's authority. Most privates will never hear the actual voice of the general, so the sergeant speaks with the authority of the general.

The Word of God

In **Psalm 138:2** we hear the inspired writer saying about God "For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." The only way that anyone will know for sure that God has spoken is if he reads it in the Bible. Some have said that God spoke in their ears what they were supposed to do. How can they be sure that the voice they heard was not Satan's? One thing is for sure: God will never tell you to do something that the Bible tells you not to do. Whenever you are not sure of God's Will, always go to the Word of God first.

God's Chain of Command

In the Word of God we read one of God's most well known commands **Ephesians 6:1** "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right." Notice the "**chain**" here: children do not have to question whether they are obeying God as long as they obey their parents. How wonderfully simple is childhood when all God asks them to do is obey their parents.

In **Ephesians 5:22** we find a less popular command from God: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Now let us quickly say that wives are not children, nor are they to be treated like children by their husbands. Wise husbands often ask their wives advice about things, but when decision time comes, his decision is God's decision. A good wife does not have to hear God's voice since she has God's command through her husband.

The apostle Peter adds to these commands in **I Peter 2:13** when he tells us: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." Surprisingly God has included government authorities in His **chain of command**. We are to pay taxes like Jesus did. When laws are passed, we are to recognize the Voice of God guiding us in His Way. Do remember that the government Jesus and the apostles obeyed was the Roman government headed by the Caesars, and the wicked Nero was one of those Caesars.

This next individual that we are to recognize as part of God's **chain** should be welcomed by all Christians, but sadly is not.

Hebrews 13:17 tells us: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls." This is speaking of our pastors. God has promised to speak through our pastor to show us His Will for our lives. Perhaps you say, "I can study the Bible as well as he can, so why can't I just get my commands straight from God?" That could be said about any other of God's designated authorities. And if that is what God wanted us to do, He would have told us so and saved us all the angst of deciding which ones to obey. If we casually make the decision to ignore the leadership of our pastors, we will find ourselves quickly out of the Will of God.

When Authorities Are Evil

Sometimes the authorities over us will command us to do wrong as was done to the apostles when they were commanded not to preach in Jesus Name. Their answer is found in **Acts 5:29** "We ought to obey God rather than men." This decision to disobey authority is not to be done lightly. They had a clear command from Jesus to do what they were doing, and they simply obeyed Him. Without a clear command from God in His Word, we should be extremely careful about defying authority. Do remember that the apostles accepted the punishment the authorities meted out without complaining.

If you have any questions for us, you may contact us at bmason6@bellsouth.net or you may call one of our counselors at 864-498-1943