Coronavirus Social Distancing Daily Devotion #57

Obey Authority

[*Romans 13:1*](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=-101&sec=70061313) *— “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”*

I remember as a teenager when my dad would tell me that I had to split firewood. I would hate it. It wasn’t so much that I hated splitting wood, I liked that, it was the fact that he told me to do it. I remember feeling a great sense of “I don’t want you to tell me what to do.” kind of attitude. One of the most challenging commandments from God is to obey authority.

But as I have grown in my understanding of being a dad myself and having to direct my children, I understand much more the value of authority. I also understand how damaging and hurtful disobedience can be not only to me as an individual but also to families and society collectively.

The Apostle Paul lived in a day when dictatorship ruled Rome. Caesar had all power over people in his territory. And Christians were the recipients of his totalitarian regime. If you remember history, Nero was in power during the life of Paul and even Peter. And Nero had an insatiable desire to build. He wanted Rome to be the premier city of the world. But when there was nothing left to build, he secretly set fire to the city and blamed it on the Christians. As a result, persecution began in an inhumane way. Christians were hunted and tortured, beheaded and even used as human torches to light the city streets.

Yet in the midst of that terrible time of persecution, God clarified that all authority is from Him. All authority exists because God ordained for it to exist and every person is to be in submission to that authority. To be a follower of Christ in that day would have been extremely difficult. I can’t imagine having a family member murdered in such a horrific way and still have to obey the Roman authority. But that is what God said.

It is God’s people who are to be the examples of obedience. We are to be the models of humility and gentleness and obedience, even when that governing authority doesn’t make sense. It was Peter to whom God gave these words,  ***Peter 2:18 (NASB)*** *18  “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable*.” We are to obey our earthly leaders, godly or ungodly, bosses, directors, congressional leaders, etc. even when their demands are unreasonable. And if you notice, God does not qualify His directive unless the authorities demand or command for God’s people to violate God’s Word. In that case, we are to obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:27-29)

Admittedly there are times when it is difficult to determine what is a violation of God’s command and when it is not. Therefore, we must determine if God’s Word is being denied or we are being told to deny God’s Word. If not, we are to humble ourselves and remember what the Lord has said. ***1 Peter 2:13-15 (NASB)*** *13  “Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14  or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15  For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men*.”

When we obey, even those who are unreasonable with their demands, we silence those who want to criticize God and His people. When we follow humbly and kindly those who make demands of us, we are to remember that God has given them to be authorities over us for His purposes. It is our role to obey them because Satan is always looking for something to accuse God’s people. We must always do what is right so that the enemy is silenced.

It is extremely important in these days that we, God’s church, do what is necessary to represent Him so the world will take note and be in awe of Him and want to surrender their lives to Him. Let us always do what the Lord requires because that way we will be blessed and see many come to Christ and rescued for eternity. Afterall, we are safe. Whether we live or die, we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)