

Under Authority - True Submission

What does true submission to authority actually look like and how does it compare to obeying authority.

I Samuel 8:1-3 NKJV - *Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.*

The leaders (judges) here are not doing the right thing. But does this justify people NOT submitting to authority?

I Samuel 8:4-5 NKJV - *Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.*

The people decided, on their own, that they needed a king.

They had a king (God), but they wanted a person here on earth as their king. They were not even interested in what God thought about it.

Many people justify rebellion when we don't agree with people in leadership.

I Samuel 24:1-4 NKJV - *Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.' " And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.*

David had not done anything wrong. Saul was doing many things wrong and trying to kill David because he was jealous of him.

People will sometimes try to use prophecy, Scripture, or what God has said about you to justify rebellion against authority. These were good men—but they were misapplying God's promise. David had been anointed as the future king, but that did not give him permission to overthrow the current one.

David was a man after God's own heart. (1 Samuel 13:14)

I Samuel 24:5-6 NKJV - *Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. And he said to his men, "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."*

Here's the key distinction: David was **submitted** to Saul but he was not **obeying** Saul.

The Bible teaches unconditional submission to authority, not unconditional obedience to authority.

I Samuel 24:7 NKJV - *So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way."*

David restrained his men who wanted to kill Saul.

Do not allow emotions to guide you and convince you, based on your feelings, that you are not under authority because of what someone has done. David didn't use that excuse.

Only when there is a disagreement do you find out if you are in submission or not.

Submission is proven when your will is challenged, not when it's agreed with.

I Samuel 24:8-10 NKJV - *David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My Lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm?' Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.'"*

David called him his **Lord** the king, respected him, honored him. He next bowed down to Saul, his king.

Are you submitted to authority? Are you teachable? Prideful people will do neither, even though most times they will say they are both.

David never spoke poorly of Saul. He didn't complain to others or try to rally people to his side. Even when Saul was doing the wrong thing, David stayed submitted to the authority God had established.

New Testament Example

Acts 5:17-20 NKJV - *Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 'Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.*

Acts 5:25-28 NKJV - *So one came and told them, saying, 'Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!' Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!*

When is it okay to not obey authority? The answer is this:

You do not obey authority when that authority is asking you to violate the Word of God.

These were people in leadership positions. They strictly commanded them not to teach in the name of Jesus.

Here is the balance Scripture teaches:

- **Unconditional submission to authority**
- **Conditional obedience based on God's Word**

Here we see clearly the difference between submission to authority and obedience to authority. **If the person in authority is asking you or telling you violate the Word of God, you don't have to obey.**

This applies to civil authority, religious authority, and authority in the workplace.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experience the same thing (Daniel 3:1-25)

Daniel experienced the same thing (Daniel 6:1-22)

Acts 5:29 NKJV - *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.*

If there is ever a conflict, we go with what God says. Hopefully, if we are in good companies, good churches, this won't be a conflict. But if it ever is, you obey God rather than men.

True submission is not blind obedience.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV - *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.*

The Biblical way to handle a situation where a leader, that you are submitted to, is not doing the right thing, we are to pray for them.

Matthew 5:44 NKJV- *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*