



Devotional Thoughts:

God has given specific order to His creation in His wisdom. Much of this order is active in how God wants people to relate to one another in different callings. In many of these relationships, one person is given authority over another. For instance, parents are given authority over children. Also, government is given authority over the citizens. Such authority is meant to be a blessing from God. But it does not always appear that way to us.

In each relationship, the person under authority and the person in authority must remember what God has told them to do. The person in authority also has great responsibility in making sure this relationship works well. They are not to use the authority they have to better their life or to boss people around just because they can. They are given authority for the benefit of those under their care. They are to serve them in every way possible.

Those under authority are to be “in subjection.” What does that mean? They are to be respectful towards authority and obey them even when they do not believe that a particular authority is acting wisely. The only exception is when any authority requires something God forbids or forbids something God requires.

When those in authority love and serve those under their authority and those under authority respect and obey them, all is well. When either party forgets what they are to do, trouble comes. When both sides forget, chaos reigns. When authority is used in self-serving ways and everyone ignores the respect due to authority, nothing is well.

We must repent of the ways we have abused authority we have been given and for disrespecting the authorities we have been called to live under. Jesus has promised to forgive us and raise us up to new life.

Scriptures:

Romans 13:3-5 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

Mark 10:42-45 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Conversation Points:

- What people has God given authority to in this world in the government, home, and Church?
- What is life like when authority is abused?
- What is life like when authority is disrespected?
- How did Jesus use the authority given to him?

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”