

## **The Secret Power of Submission**

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: The Power of Agreement

**Text: Matthew 5:41, Ephesians 5:21 (NIV), 1 Peter 2:13-17, Romans 12:10, Philippians 2:3 (NKJV & AMP)**

All of us are in relationship with one another. This means that we are accountable to each other for how we live, speak, conduct our lives and the decisions we make. Ultimately, we are all accountable to and under the authority of God. All of our life's ambitions are to fall under HIS mission and will for our life. Ultimately all our desires must be a sub-mission or subordinated to His will and purposes. It is only when we live a life of obedience to God and His ways that we are able to walk in agreement with Him. Our submission and our obedience to God is the secret to the power that is in agreement.

As we give preference to God, we understand the wisdom and benefit of submitting to each other. This is clearly demonstrated in the area of marriage and family. **Ephesians 5:21-33, Ephesians 6:1-3** It is in the context of family that we learn how to submit, what it looks like, why we do it and how obedience and mutual submission releases blessing.

Nothing causes more friction in the western world than submitting to authority. Simply put, authority means that someone has the right to direct or correct our lives. That they have the right to speak into our lives and that we will do or not do what pleases them because they have a relationship with us. This includes our spouses, our parents, our employers and certain Government leaders. This also includes spiritual leaders that you have allowed to teach and speak into your life. **Hebrews 13:17-18 (AMP), 1 Timothy 2:1-6**

It is important to understand that submission to each other and to authority does not equal blind obedience, unquestioned obedience or control. Remember in healthy relationships submission and preference is reciprocal, it is never one sided. When things are one sided that becomes manipulation not submission. Remember that Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow Him and He can do so not only because He is God but because He did so for us.

Some of the most talented and gifted men and women of God fail to see the connection between obedience and pleasing God to receiving the blessings of God. In our culture we celebrate rebellion. The Bible tells us that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. **1 Samuel 15:23a** Rebellion is openly defying God, His commandments, His leading and His ways. It is also defying those in authority over us. Rebellion blocks the blessings of God and obedience opens them. Witchcraft is stepping out of the natural order of things through manipulation and control.

The reason many Americans have a hard time with authority is because many times we confuse reasonable expectations and restraint with being controlled. The American Revolution was deemed a "rebellion" by the British but in reality, it was casting off the restraints of tyranny. The Revolutionary War was a fight for freedom that benefited many.

Rebellion in a spiritual sense is all about self, self-interest and independence without accountability or responsibility to others. Submission recognizes that life is not all about you. It does not exclude you, but it recognizes our **responsibility** to others. This is the common ground of agreement. The highest law that we submit to is the Law of LOVE.

God longs for us to learn from one another, to **serve** one another and to love one another. All of us in some way are both in authority and **under** authority at the same time. Each of us are at different levels in different areas of our lives. This fellowship of being together helps us to learn from one another. There are many people that God places in our lives to give us accountability and guidance; Parents, Grandparents, Teachers, Bosses, Police, Military officials, Elected officials (in our Nation, of the people, by the people, for the people – so that we are accountable to one another), Pastors, Spouses, and Mentors (People that **you** have welcomed into your life to offer advice, guidance, and correction).

We learn some powerful lessons about submission and agreement from Judas. **John 12:1-8**

- **Greed** can have a profound effect on the best of us. Judas was one of the twelve. Somewhere along the way he became a thief. He saw his connection to Jesus and the others as a way to enrich himself. Before Judas betrayed Jesus he betrayed the trust of others. **James 4:1-4**
- **Power** has a way of corrupting even the most faithful servant. Submission keeps us humble and accountable. The moment that we step away from accountability and submission we open ourselves up to **pride**. **Proverbs 16:18-19** There is a famous quote - “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”. Judas was first corrupted by lust for money and that power corrupted him so thoroughly that he betrayed Jesus.
- Judas could only see the waste of resources instead of the **extravagance** of worship. This woman recognized all that Jesus had done for her and gave her all. The Bible tells us that wherever the Gospel is preached that this woman would be remembered. **Matthew 26:13** Because Judas was no longer submitted to Jesus but was only devoted to himself, he failed to even recognize that Jesus was worthy of worship. He never even **saw** the heart of the woman, he just saw dollar signs. When we submit to one another we see each other clearly. Jesus saw this lady. A lack of submission to one another means people get missed. We don’t see certain people because we don’t deem them worthy to be seen.
- Judas lost his **love** for his Leader, the One who entrusted him and promoted him. We must never forget the people who have loved us. We must remember where we came from and who helped us to get there. Jesus never forgot about those he led. This is good teaching for bosses in business and parents in family. It is also good teaching for us to honor our bosses and our parents. It makes what we are doing and who we are becoming a much easier road.
- Judas had a negative **effect** on others. **Matthew 26:8-9** The Gospel of John mentions Judas. Matthew recognizes the effect Judas has on others. Notice that Jesus’ response to this seemingly spiritual response was **rebuke**. **Matthew 26:10-12**

There will be times that we do not agree with the person that God has placed in authority above us or someone that we are in mutual submission to. We need to deal with these things by trying to discern what God is trying to say to us or teach us during those times. Now Judas did not look to learn from Jesus. This does not mean that those above us in authority are like Jesus. As a matter of fact, they may be from the devil. Sometimes the leader may be right, or they may be wrong. (Bosses, Parents, Teachers) David dealt with Saul, Daniel with many pagan kings and Joseph with Pharaoh. God allows all kinds of leaders and authority in our life both good and bad. Sometimes we are to learn from the mistakes of others and how NOT to do things. Other times they have a different perspective than us and we can learn a great deal.

We all pass judgement on Judas, but the truth is that we all live our lives in a very similar way. Second guessing and challenging authority is almost a sport in our nation. The reason that successful musical groups, marriages and even effective churches split and businesses fail is that we are unwilling to submit to one another or those that God has placed in leadership. In the natural we all think that we know better than everyone else and that people should always think like us. Whenever we find ourselves thinking this way we must check and guard our heart and our attitude. When we are in the right, we must make sure that we stay humble.

Here are some signs that we need to check our heart:

- 1) When we feel that our agenda is more important than other's. The agenda of those we work for is more important than our own when we are on their time. If not, we should start our own business. In a marriage the two become one. There is only we not just me.
- 2) When the quality of our work or faithfulness and commitment begins to falter. When we decide to hold back or not to give it our all. When you have personal issues or offenses that we allow to linger it distracts our focus. We need to communicate with respect and love. Many times, this resolves issues and allows us to come back into agreement. This is submission to a boss, a spouse or a friend.
- 3) When we become critical of a leader or a spouse in front of others or behind their back. It is always appropriate to question those we are in a relationship with to their face and in a private matter. (texting and email are unwise because much is lost in communication) Your boss and your spouse need mature and quality people around them who will speak respectfully and ask the tough or difficult questions. To gossip or slander others is sin, even if you do it to their face with others around. Never jokingly or meaningfully demean your spouse or boss to others.
- 4) When we isolate ourselves from our spouse or those who are in authority over us. Judas snuck off making alliances with people who felt the way he did. It resulted in betrayal. It is important to know the difference in having a confidant who will listen, challenge and counsel you in the ways of God and people who will simply agree with you and reinforce your rebellion. Remember it was the so called "Spiritual" leaders who agreed with Judas and spoke his language. They gave the thief money to betray Jesus.

- 5) Always remember that like attracts like. If we are attracting people who encourage our sin, we need to check our heart. True counselors will always bring you **back** into agreement with God and His ways.

Remember that Jesus placed relationship over **assignment**. All the disciples were different from one another. They all had gifts, talents, personalities and cultures that made them effective together.

There are five benefits to living a life of submission to others and under authority to those who God has placed over us:

- ❖ We live a **higher** life. A higher life means having a purpose in life greater than us. That purpose is serving Jesus. It is a matter of position. Christ is submitted to the Father; we are submitted to Christ.
- ❖ We live a life that is secure because we are **hidden** in Christ. It is a life **under** a covering. **Colossians 3:3-4, John 10:27-29** He is our shelter from the storms of life and a protector from our enemies and an ever-present help in times of trouble.
- ❖ When we are in submission to God, we will live a **holy** life. **Colossians 3:5-8**  
The world tells us that we are to stand out. The Bible tells us that we are set apart (Holy). The differences couldn't be clearer. When we stand out, life is all about us. When we are set apart life is all about God, but the purity and power will be known to all.
- ❖ When we are submitted to the authority of Jesus, we begin to live a **supernatural** life. **Matthew 28:18, Luke 4:18, Luke 9:1-2, Luke 10:17-20**
- ❖ We will live an **honored** life. **Matthew 10:32-33**