

RUTH 3:6-9
TOTAL SUBMISSION!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Ruth chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study through the book of Ruth.

And I pray that you are being blessed as we go through this story and we see the hand of God working in the life of Naomi and Ruth.

I think that is important for us to understand in our own lives, because we go through difficult times and sometimes these difficulties, these things can last for a long time. And I think it is easy to lose sight that even through those difficult times, God is working. He is not only strengthening our faith, but He has a plan and a purpose for everything we go through.

Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 8:28, “**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**”

Now let me ask you this. Do you always see the good that is coming together with the difficulty you are going through? No, you don't always see the good that is coming out of these things.

What about this. Do you always feel that good is going to come out of the situations you are encountering? No, you don't always feel that good is going to come out of these things you are facing.

Then what is the point?

The point is this. We may not see the good. We may not feel the good. But we can **KNOW** that good is going to come out of these situations that we are facing.

How can we know this?

Because the Word of God has told us and we believed God about our salvation and we should also trust and believe what He has said about the situations, the difficulties we are facing, that He is working to bring about some good through it all!

I think that Naomi lost that perspective as she lost her husband, her two sons down in Moab. And as she was heading back to Bethlehem one of her daughters in law, Orpah remained in Moab. She did not want to travel back with Naomi to Bethlehem.

But her other daughter in law, Ruth, loved Naomi and she had come to saving faith and she goes back with Naomi to Bethlehem, to the House of Bread. In fact, she tells Naomi that the only thing that would stop her from going was death!

But, at this point, Naomi does not see the hand of God upon her life and she is bitter at God and has lost hope.

And our God is so gracious, He is so merciful, that as much as Naomi gave up on God, we see that God did not give up on Naomi.

And that bitterness that had filled her life was changing once again as she saw the hand of God working in the life of Ruth and how that would also bless her!

Remember what we read last week regarding the change in Naomi. She saw this relative of her husband, Boaz and she saw how he was blessing Ruth!

This is what we are told in Ruth 3:1-4, **“Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, ‘My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.’”**

And what Naomi was doing was preparing Ruth for a wedding with Boaz. Boaz, by his actions, showed Naomi that he was interested in Ruth. So Naomi tells her to wash herself, change her clothes and anoint herself. Then she was to go to Boaz and join him, but, as we will see, she does this in an interesting way.

This morning I want to focus on this – ***TOTAL SUBMISSION!***

I truly see that in the life of Ruth. She is going to submit herself to Boaz unconditionally, totally and what an important lesson for us as we are to submit ourselves totally and unconditionally to the Lord!

What we will do is go through these verses here in Ruth and then, as we see how Ruth submitted to Boaz, we will see how this applies to our own lives and we will look at the following points.

WHY WE DON'T SUBMIT TO GOD!

SUBMIT TO GOD!

SUBMIT TO OTHERS!

As I have said, I think this is important for us to understand, that we submit our lives to God, and it is out of that submission to God that we will submit our lives to others.

But who likes to submit to anyone? And I am sure we would say we submit to God, but to others is a hard thing to do. But let me say this. If you are not submitting to others, then you are not submitting to God because you are not doing what God has said in His Word.

Let me explain it like this. And I am sure you have heard this story, but it does drive home the point and it is our attitude many times!

We are told,

The captain of the ship looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance.

Immediately he told his signalman to send a message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south."

Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north."

The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south - I am the captain!"

Soon another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north - I am seaman third class Jones."

Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: "Alter your course 10 degrees south - I am a battleship."

Then the reply came "Alter your course 10 degrees north - I am a lighthouse."

In the midst of our dark and foggy times, all sorts of voices are shouting orders into the night, telling us what to do, how to adjust our lives.

Out of the darkness, one voice signals something quite opposite to the rest - something almost absurd. But the voice happens to be the Light of the World, and we ignore it at our own peril.

- Paul Aiello, Jr.

We might think we are big; we are strong, we know what we are doing, but there is one greater and that is the Lord, and we need to submit to Him and His direction for our lives. In other words – ***TOTAL SUBMISSION!***

RUTH 3

VERSES 6-9

Keep in mind that the harvesting of the grain is done and now it was time to thresh the wheat, thresh the grain.

And this was a huge task and Warren Wiersbe sums it up for us like this as he gives to us a picture of what is going on here. He wrote,

Harvesting and threshing were cooperative enterprises. The men of a village would take turns using the threshing floor, which was usually a raised platform outside the village and often on a hill where it could catch the evening breeze.

The men would deposit the sheaves on the floor and then separate the grain from the stalks by having oxen walk on it (Deut 25:4) or by beating the stalks (see Ruth 2:17). Once the grain was separated, the workers would throw the grain into the air; and the breeze would carry the chaff away while the grain fell to the floor.

The grain would then be heaped up to be carried away for marketing or storage. The men often worked in the evening when the breeze was up, and they slept at the threshing floor to protect the harvest.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – OT, p. 487

That is what is taking place here. And we see Ruth obey what Naomi had told her and she heads down to the threshing floor of Boaz.

After a hard day's work, Boaz and his men had a good meal, and I am sure they were beat after working hard all day. So they head off to bed.

It was a time of celebration for all the hard work they had done, and, of course, how God had blessed them.

And we are told that Boaz went to sleep **“at the end of a heap of grain.”** That sounds strange. Why didn't Boaz sleep in his own bed? Why did Boaz sleep by the **“heap of grain”** he had threshed?

We touched on this and the reason is really simple. All the work is done and there were those people who would like to come in and steal the grain from you. So Boaz is protecting his grain that they worked so hard to harvest and thresh, so no one would steal it.

Remember what happened to Israel prior to God raising up Gideon as a Judge. In Judges 6:1-6 we are told of what took place. **“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.”**

Here we see the Midianites come and steal the grain from the children of Israel after they worked hard in planting the crops, caring for them, harvesting them and threshing the grain. And this was needed to sustain them, they could not go to the store to buy food.

And the Midianites were a nomadic people and they basically covered the area south of the Dead Sea and then over towards Gaza, which was located along the Mediterranean Sea.

Now because they didn't stay in a location long, being nomads, they didn't plant crops, but they would trade for what they needed.

But here they see a far better solution. They would wait for the children of Israel to harvest their crops that they planted and then they would swarm down upon them like locusts, stealing their crops.

It was so bad that there was not even enough left over to feed their animals. And these Midianites were a long-range threat as they traveled on camels, which could go as far as 100 miles per day!

We also see this problem occur in David's day. In I Samuel 23:1 we are told, "**Then they told David, saying, 'Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors.'**"

That is why Boaz was protecting his grain by sleeping next to it!

Now, as Boaz is asleep by the heap of grain he had harvested and threshed, Ruth comes in. And Ruth lays down next to Boaz, grabbing some covers that were around his feet to keep warm.

Now as some read this, they see Ruth's actions as provocative, that she was offering herself to Boaz in a sexual manner.

Maybe people feel that way today because that is the society we live in, but that was not Ruth's intentions at all!

We have to understand what the culture was like back then. What Ruth was doing was showing her total submission to Boaz.

You see, a servant would lie at their master's feet and be ready for what the master tells them to do.

Now let's apply that to our lives today. Isn't that what we are to do? Of course it is!

You see, we are to be bondslaves of Christ, ready to do all that He tells us or as Paul put it in Romans 12:1, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, [or spiritual worship].**"

Ruth was putting her life in the hands of her *GOEL*, her kinsman redeemer, just as we do with our *LORD!*

And look at what takes place here and you will see the intentions of Ruth.

As Boaz wakes-up, maybe being a little cold from part of his blanket being removed, he was startled to find a woman lying at his feet.

Keep in mind he was there to protect his grain and now someone is next to him and his grain.

Also, it was dark and thus, he could not see who it was. Thus, his question. “**Who are you?**”

And then Ruth speaks up. She tells Boaz, “**I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a near kinsman.**”

In other words, Ruth explains that she is coming to take refuge under the wings of Boaz in marriage.

That phrase “**Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a near kinsman.**” is translated in the KJV Bible like this, “**And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.**”

In other words, “**spread the corner of your garment over me**” and that was another way to say, “*I am a widow, will you take me as your wife?*”

In fact, Clarke tells us, “*Even to the present day, when a Jew marries a woman, he throws the skirt or end of his talith over her, to signify that he has taken her under his protection.*”

And Morris writes, *“The spreading of a skirt over a widow as a way of claiming her as a wife is attested among Arabs of early days, and Jouon says it still exists among some modern Arabs.”*

So this was a common practice and some still use it today.

Now in Ezekiel 16:8 we see God speak in regard to Israel, **“When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,’ says the Lord God.”**

It is the same terminology that is used here in Ruth!

Why did Ruth do this?

Yes, she wanted to redeem back to the family of her dead husband what was theirs. You see, what that meant was if a man married and died before they had any children, it was the obligation for his brother or near relative to take her as a wife and their first-born son would be named after the dead brother to keep the family name alive.

They would also redeem any land back if it was lost.

Thus, Ruth is asking Boaz to take the part of the kinsman redeemer and to have a child through her so that Elimelech’s name can continue on. It was not mandatory, but you were honor bound to do it.

But I think there is more to it than that. I think that Ruth wanted a deeper and more intimate relationship with Boaz. She was blessed by all the abundant crop that Boaz gave her, but she wanted more than just the blessings.

What a picture this is of what Christians should be like today, they should want more of Jesus, wanting the One who blesses instead of just the blessings.

You see, many Christians today want the opposite, the blessings more than the deep intimate relationship.

God wants us to have more than just a shallow relationship with Him, He wants us to rise above the physical needs and draw deeper into a relationship with Him.

The gifts that God has given us are great, and He has blessed us so much, but we should desire that deeper relationship with Him.

Here is a great illustration of what the Lord desires of us.

Many years ago, Thors Walden, a sculptor, chiseled a glorious statue of Jesus Christ. But the way it is designed, the position of the Lord's body, it is impossible to see his face while standing.

So they placed a sign next to the statue that says this: ***“If you desire to see His face, you must first sit at His feet.”***

Interestingly enough, that is the only way you can see the face of Jesus in this statue, by sitting at His feet and looking up.

And that says to me that if you don't take the time, sitting at the feet of Jesus, you will never understand His character.

If you don't humble yourself before Him, you will never see His face!

Ruth took the time to sit at the feet of Boaz in all humility, surrendering herself to him and we should do no less for the Lord!

And the picture is this – ***TOTAL SUBMISSION!***

Now what does submission mean?

Google's dictionary defines submission as **“the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person.”**

Submitting means putting God's desires above your desires. It means putting others before yourself; it means not always doing what you want to do.

It is interesting that people want to know "*Why am I here?*"

And we try to find the answer to that question on our own and we become frustrated and we really never come to the answer to our question or we come to wrong answers because we seek to find this out on our own.

The only solution to that problem, in finding the answer to that question is coming before the One who has the answer, our Creator. To humbly come before Him and seek His direction for our lives!

And that means if we are going to not only find the answer to that question but then live out the reason why we are here, we need to submit to the One who will show us, equip us and lead us in what we are to do!

The world gives to us counterfeit answers that feed the flesh, but in the end, they are empty!

What the Lord has for us is satisfying and it is a blessing to do what you were created to do!

So, with the remainder of our time this morning I would like to focus on submission.

The first point I want to look at is this – ***WHY WE DON'T SUBMIT TO GOD!***

There are many reasons why people refuse to submit to God, both believers and unbelievers.

I want to focus on believers here because I think we understand why those who don't believe in the Lord don't submit to Him, they don't believe, and you don't submit to someone you don't believe in!

But what about us as Christians, why don't we submit to the Lord or why do we struggle with submitting to the Lord?

There are a few reasons why we refuse to submit to the Lord.

First of all – ***WE ARE AFRAID!***

And what I mean by that is this. We are afraid we are going to miss out on something if we obey the Lord.

Now we would not put it that way because it does not sound spiritual and the reason it does not sound spiritual is because it is not spiritual, it is not right.

But the reality is, when we refuse to obey what God has said because we think we are going to miss out on something that is good, we are wrong.

Listen to what James tells us regarding what God has for us. In James 1:17 we are told, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”**

In other words, God has what is best for our lives and we might not see that; we may not even like what is happening, but God does not give us things to destroy us, but He gives us good things to help us grow in our relationship with Him!

And notice what James said about God, **“... there is no variation or shadow of turning.”**

In other words, we can trust that all that He has for us is good and that is not going to change. He knows exactly what we need and when we need it and thus, don't be afraid that you are going to miss out on something, trust that God is going to do what is best for your life and all you need to do is follow Him!

Another problem regarding why we don't submit to God is that – ***WE DON'T REALLY KNOW GOD!***

What do I mean by that?

This is so important. God loves us more than we will ever know. And now that we are a child of God, He is not going to disown us. We are His!

And in knowing that we can rest assured that nothing that God does in our life is to harm us, but He does it to help us, as I have already said.

Paul put it like this in Romans 8:38-39, **“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Think about what Paul is saying here. ***“If God is for us then nothing in this universe is going to take us from Him, His love just will not let us go.”***

In other words, nothing, no one can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus!

So we don't have to fear about what is happening in our lives. We don't have to wonder if God is mad at us and punishing us, not that He doesn't chasten us, but He always chastens us to restore us, not destroy us!

That is how much He loves us! And that love is unending. I don't think we can even imagine how much He loves us and has what is best for our lives!

Spurgeon put it this way in regard to the love of God as the great men and women of faith had. He said, “They did not speak of Christ’s love as though it were a myth to be respected, a tradition to be revered; they viewed it as a blessed reality, and they cast their whole confidence upon it, being persuaded that it would bear them up as upon eagles’ wings, and carry them all their days; resting assured that it would be to them a foundation of rock, against which the waves might beat, and the winds blow, but their soul’s habitation would stand securely if founded upon it.”

And yet, we get mad and say things like, “***God, why is this happening to me? I thought you loved me!***”

God does love us and remember, only good comes from God and He loves us and has what is best for us. Thus, whatever you are going through right now, and I am not saying it is easy or trying to downplay how difficult things may be for you, but you need to understand God, that He loves you!

Another issue why we don’t submit to God and follow His direction is this – ***WE THINK WE KNOW BETTER THAN GOD!***

Now when we put it like that, we know that is not true and it bothers us. And it should. But the problem is we don’t look at disobeying the Lord as thinking we know better than Him, but that is exactly what we are saying!

Think about teenagers, for example. And I will speak for myself here because when I was a teenager, I thought I knew everything, much more than my parents did.

Thus, you, as their parent, you tell them what they are to do and not do. But they disobey you and do what they want. Why do they do that? Because they think they know better than you do! At least that is what I thought when I was growing up!

Now, let's put this into perspective here. We are saying to our Creator, His creation, that we know better than Him. That sums it up. It makes no sense. How can we know more than our All-Knowing God? We can't and we don't.

The only thing we can do is submit to His direction and it is what is best for our lives!

And lastly, and there may be more, but – ***WE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT SUBMITTING TO GOD'S WILL!***

Think of the trouble that Christians have gotten themselves into, the trouble we have gotten ourselves into because we went by what we felt was right instead of listening and being directed by the Lord!

God has told us what is best for our lives. The Holy Spirit is guiding us. But then we need to listen, we need to obey, we need to submit to the Lord or there are consequences to our actions, and it is not good!

The next point I would like to look at is this – ***SUBMIT TO GOD!***

This is what we see here with Ruth, she submitted her life to Boaz, a type or picture of Christ. And we are to submit our lives to the Lord, completely, unconditionally!

And the best picture I can give you of submitting to God is seen in the life of Jesus! Keep in mind that Jesus is fully God and in the incarnation He is still fully God and fully man. And yet, He submitted His life to God the father.

Listen to what we are told in Luke 22:42. Jesus, in praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, **“saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’”**

In other words, we see Jesus submitting to the will of the Father!

Also, Jesus said in John 6:38, **“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”**

And in I Corinthians 15:28 we are told, **“Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”**

Jesus is our example to follow and if He could submit His life to God the Father, we should do no less!

And there is so much good that comes from a life submitted to God.

In Job 22:21 we are told, **“Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you.”**

I think The Living Bible makes this very clear as it tells us, **“Quit quarreling with God! Agree with him and you will have peace at last! His favor will surround you if you will only admit that you were wrong.”**

You want peace in your life, then submit to God is the idea here.

And I am not talking about the absence of problems, but a peace that surpasses all understanding as we are in the midst of difficult times!

There is a hymn, many of you are familiar with, by Joseph Scriven, and I will just read the first stanza of this hymn, but it does show us what we have and many times what we miss out on because we don't bring these things to God.

This is how it goes,

What a friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!

Isn't that wonderful. We can bring everything to God in prayer and get His direction and receive His peace knowing He will take care of us. That is so wonderful!

But the hymn does not end there. It goes on to say,

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,

Oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer!

– Joseph Scriven

How true that is. And the idea here is that we are not submitting to God, we have not sought His direction and we are doing our own thing and we are seeing the consequences of not submitting to God!

In Psalm 143:10 we are told, **“Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.”**

That is the attitude we are to have. Go before God and seek His direction for our life and ask Him to lead us in the right way. But it does not end there. Then we must obey, and we obey by submitting to His will for our lives!

And we should delight in submitting to God as we are told in Psalm 40:8, **“I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.”**

As you read the Word of God, as you are open to what the Spirit of God is showing you, it should bring great delight to your life knowing that Almighty God is directing you and not only bringing great delight, but there should be great delight in obeying the Lord!

And please understand that I am not saying that we are to be legalistic in our relationship with the Lord, that is not what He desires. Yes, we are to be obedient to the God of the Bible but that submission, that obedience is done out of *LOVE* and not the *LAW!*

And let me also say this. When we refuse to obey the Lord, when we refuse to submit to the Lord, this is a heart issue. It is our will fighting against the will of God! And that is never a good thing!

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 6:5-6, **“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”**

A heart that is right with the Lord is a heart that is in obedience to the Lord, in submission to His will and not in rebellion against it.

And please understand that a heart that refuses to obey the Lord is a heart that is hostile to God as Paul reminds us in Romans 8:7-8, **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

Now that may make some of you angry. *“How can you say that I am carnal!”*

I didn't but if you are hostile towards God, if you are not obeying what He is telling you, then you are carnal, you are acting according to the flesh and not the Spirit and I didn't say that; Paul did through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!

Let me share this with you regarding our submitting to God and it will lead us into our next and last point. We are told,

In all the New Testament incidences where the word submit occurs, the word is translated from the Greek word hupotasso.

The hupo means "under" and the tasso means "to arrange."

This word and a root of it are also translated by the words subject and subjection. The word's full meaning is "to obey, put under, be subject to, submit oneself unto, put in subjection under or be under obedience or obedient to."

The word was used as a military term meaning "to arrange troop divisions in a military fashion under the command of a leader."

This word is a wonderful definition of what it means to "submit" to God. It means to arrange oneself under the command of divine viewpoint rather than to live according to one's old way of life based on a human viewpoint. It is a process surrendering our own will to that of our Father's.

The Scripture has a great deal to say about being in submission to the "higher powers." This has reference to the establishment principles that God has ordained in our world - the government and the leaders, in whatever capacity, that God has placed in authority over us on this earth.

Passages that teach this principle are Romans 13:1-7; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-14; and Titus 3:1.

The principle is that being in obedience to the authority over us, whatever that authority is, will bring a temporal blessing in real time here and now and, for the believer, reward later.

The highest authority is God, and He delegates authority to others; so, in order to submit to God, we submit to the authority He has placed over us.

You will notice that there are no caveats [qualifications] that distinguish between good or bad authority or even just or unjust authority. We are just to humble ourselves and obey as “unto the Lord.”

We are also told to submit ourselves to God (James 4:7).

In Ephesians we read the wife is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord and the husband is to “love” his wife (Ephesians 5:22-25).

The Apostle Peter writes, “Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5).

The theme here is one of humility. One cannot submit to God without humility.

Obedience requires us to humble ourselves to surrender to the authority of another, and we are told that God resists pride - the opposite of humility - and the arrogance that fosters that pride.

Therefore, having a humble and submissive heart is a choice we make. That means as born-again believers we daily make a choice to submit ourselves to God for the work that the Holy Spirit does in us to “conform us to the image of Christ.”

God will use the situations of our lives to bring us the opportunity to submit to Him (Romans 8:28-29).

The believer then accepts His grace and provision to walk in the Spirit and not after the manner of the old nature. That work is accomplished by choosing to apply ourselves to the Word of God and to learning about the provisions that God has made for us in Christ Jesus.

From the moment we are born again, we have all the provisions we need, in Christ, to become a mature believer, but we have to make the choice to learn about those provisions through study of the Word and to apply those provisions to our daily walk.

We have to choose to submit to God for the process of learning in order to grow spiritually. It is a process begun at salvation and ongoing with each and every choice that we make to submit ourselves to God. This process will continue until the Lord comes again or He calls us home.

The wonderful thing about this is that, as the Apostle Paul so aptly states, “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

God does not require us to submit because He is a tyrant, but because He is a loving Father and He knows what is best for us. The blessings and peace that we gain from humbly surrendering and submitting ourselves to Him daily are a gift of grace that nothing in this world can compare to.

- <http://bit.ly/3pSDc5v>

And here’s the thing. If we are not going to submit to God, then we will not submit to anyone.

And that does bring us to our last point – ***SUBMIT TO OTHERS!***

Let me show you what I mean in regard to the idea of not submitting to others because you are not submitting to God.

Let's go back to the commandments of God. The first table of the Law or the first four commandments, deal with our relationship with God. And for me, that is an interesting place to start and end. Because apart from us humbling ourselves before God, obeying His Words for us, the second table of the Law will not be accomplished in our life.

You see, the second table of the Law or the next six commandments, deal with our relationship with our fellow man. If you get the first four right, your vertical axis, then you will get the next six right, your horizontal axis.

But once you start moving that vertical axis away from dead center, then your horizontal axis will begin to shift as well, and this will be manifested in how you treat other people.

Let me show you what I mean. Paul said in Ephesians 5:21, "**submitting to one another in the fear of God.**"

The Living Bible puts it like this, "**Honor Christ by submitting to each other.**"

Why do we have so many relationship problems?

Why do we see so many marriages struggling?

Why do we see conflict between children and their parents?

Why do we see such animosity, so much bitterness between employers and employees?

Why do we see people in the church not getting along?

Because, like it or not, agree with it or not, you are not "**submitting to one another in the fear of God.**"

You see, as Spirit-filled Christians the evidence is not only the joy we have as we sing and praise God and speak with others. It is not only the thankfulness that flows from our lives.

It is also the mutual submission that we show each other, and this submission is all done in the fear of God, not the fear of man! It speaks of humility, to look out for others, and I will tell you this, it is not easy and apart from God, submitting to Him, I don't think we can accomplish it!

Do you have problems when someone tells you something that you may not agree with or that you just don't want to do?

Do you have to argue over every issue that is brought forth?

Do you have to be right all the time?

When someone tells you to do something do you do it, but you do it with anger in your heart, resentment, like ***"Who do they think they are? They always get their way!"***

Do you look down at others as you are superior to them or more spiritual to them because of what you are doing and what they are not doing?

If you are struggling with these things, then you are not **"submitting to one another in the fear of God."**

Now before I go any further, I am not picking on anyone because we are all guilty, we all struggle with these things.

You see, when you are filled with the Spirit, when you have submitted your life to the Lord, you will submit to one another in the fear of God or out of respect to God for all He has done, for who He is!

Of this Erdman tells us,

“It is a phrase too often neglected . . . It names a test of spirituality which Christians too seldom apply . . . Many persons feel that shouts of hallelujah and exulting songs and the utterance of praise in more or less ‘unknown tongues’ are all proofs of being ‘filled with the Spirit.’ These all may be spurious and deceitful and without meaning. Submission to our fellow Christians, modesty of demeanor, humility, unwillingness to dispute, forbearance, gentleness – these are the unmistakable proofs of the Spirit’s power . . . Such mutual submission to their fellow Christians should be rendered ‘in the fear of Christ,’ that is, in reverence to him who is recognized as the Lord and Master of all.”

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 2:1-4, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

Paul is saying that since you are part of the body of Christ; since you are enduring these things, then live in humility! You see, it is difficult to have unity when people are looking out for themselves. Unity comes as we humble ourselves before God and others in Christ!

Yes, sound doctrine, moral purity and a passionate commitment to the Lord and His work are vital, they are essential to a church’s effective ministry, but they cannot guarantee protection from discord, disunity.

William Barclay put it like this:

The one danger which threatened the Philippian church was that of disunity. There is a sense in which that is the danger of every healthy church. It is when people are really in earnest, when their beliefs really matter to them, that they are apt to get up against each other. The greater their enthusiasm, the greater the danger that they may collide. It is against that danger that Paul wished to safeguard his friends.

- William Barclay, *The Letter to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p. 31

Make no mistake about it, this all begins with our submission to God and as we submit our lives to God, then we will be able to submit to the authority of others like our spouse, boss, friends, leaders and so on. Those relationships will fall into place. I am not saying that they will be perfect because it all depends on what the other person does, but don't get in the way by exalting your rights, your privileges, or whatever.

Christians today have lost sight of the fact that we have no rights. I realize that in America, those are fighting words. But if you are truly a Christian, then you are a bondsman of Jesus Christ and you have no rights, your life is freely and totally surrendered to Him! It is not about your will, what you want to do, but, as you submit to God, what He wants for your life!

And thus, how we treat others is according to what God has told us in His Word opened up to us by His Spirit!

Let me share this with you to give you an idea of humbling yourself for others. We are told,

Driving down a country road, I came to a very narrow bridge. In front of the bridge, a sign was posted: "YIELD."

Seeing no oncoming cars, I continued across the bridge and to my destination.

On my way back, I came to the same one-lane bridge, now from the other direction. To my surprise, I saw another YIELD sign posted.

Curious, I thought, “I’m sure there was one posted on the other side.”

When I reached the other side of the bridge I looked back. Sure enough, yield signs had been placed at both ends of the bridge.

Drivers from both directions were requested to give right of way.

It was a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision.

When the Bible commands Christians to “be subject to one another” (Ephesians 5:21) it is simply a reasonable and gracious command to let the other have the right of way and avoid interpersonal head-on collisions.

- Stephen P. Beck

Exactly. What stops us from submitting to others? Pride. We think we are better than they are, know more than they do, or whatever the reason. And we think highly of ourselves because we have not submitted ourselves to God and because that relationship is off kilter, then our relationship with others is off kilter as well and it is seen in the things we do and say to others!

Now, back to Ruth. Look at how she submitted herself to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi told Ruth what to do and in Ruth 3:5 we see the response of Ruth. She told Naomi, “...
‘All that you say to me I will do.’”

That is submission to others and the reason that she could do that was that she was submitted to God and we see that illustrated for us as she submitted her life to Boaz, a type of Jesus or a picture of Jesus.

Listen again what she said to Boaz here in Ruth 3:9, “... **‘I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a near kinsman.’**”

In other words, as we come to Christ as bondslaves, freely giving our lives to Him, we then will be able to do as Ruth did and submit to others, and, in this case, it was to Naomi!

I realize that this is a difficult message because we don’t want to submit to anyone today!

Remember the sculpture by Thors Walden that I shared with you.

I want to close again with this to drive home the point of submitting to God and our relationship with others will fall in place.

This was a glorious statue of Jesus Christ.

But again, the way it is designed, the position of the Lord’s body, it is impossible to see his face while standing.

So they placed a sign next to the statue that says this: ***“If you desire to see His face, you must first sit at His feet.”***

Interesting enough, that is the only way you can see the face of Jesus in this statue, by sitting at His feet and looking up.

And that says to me that if you don’t take the time, sitting at the feet of Jesus, you will never understand His character. If you don’t humble yourself before Him, you will never see His face!

Ruth took the time to sit at the feet of Boaz in all humility, surrendering herself to him and we should do no less for the Lord! And out of that, the way she treated others was a reflection of her submission to Boaz!

And the way we treat others is a reflection of our submission to the Lord!