

# *Truth for Today*

## **The Bible Explained**

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## **Truths that are out of fashion Submission**

*[The New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

### **Introduction**

This is the first talk in the series called 'Truths that are out of fashion.' We begin by looking at Submission, then over the next few weeks various speakers will look at Obedience, Discipline, Patience, Endurance and Bondservice. I encourage you to be ready to come with an open mind as we investigate these truths. I say this because sometimes these words are mentioned and we automatically jump to a conclusion, and usually the wrong one. For example, when we mention submission, our thoughts may go to the wrestling ring where the aim of the contest is for one opponent to gain power over the other and to bring a submission from them. Our minds may also go to one who would subject another to misery and do things against their will. So, to study this we will look at what submission means and as we always must do, see what the Bible says.

We will look at examples throughout the Bible, so we can understand a little more clearly what submission means in practice. Submission is not about control or inequality, it's about unity, mutual respect, and love that mirrors Christ's relationship with His people. In James 4 v.7 we are told to, 'Submit to God', and this is not in an oppressive way, because God for our own good is telling us that if we submit to His will and way in our lives, it will be good for us, and it will help withstand the temptations of the devil. God loves us and asks us to be obedient to the instructions He has given us. Submission is a mutual condition of the heart, it is a voluntary act of surrendering one's will, desires, and authority to a higher power or authority. This could be to God and to human relationships.

### **What does Submission mean?**

Submission is a state in which people can no longer do what they want to do because they have been brought under the control of someone else. It is a humble attitude where obedience is rendered within a relationship, whether it be to God, authorities, or other people at work, in the church, in marriage or in the family. Submission is the act of submitting. It is yielding, resigning, willing and ready to be subject.

### **Examples from the Bible**

#### **Abraham**

In Genesis 22 v.2 God said to Abraham,

"Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering in one of the mountains which I shall tell you."

Try putting yourself in Abraham's mind. He and his wife Sarah in their old age had miraculously been given a son from God. He loved his boy, and God knew it. Abraham was a friend of God's, and he lived his life in fellowship, (or under God's guidance and instruction). It was almost like

God was pushing him further into submitting to His instructions. Abraham was being tested by God so that Abraham's faith and trust would grow in the God he loved and served. Abraham had no hesitation to submit to God's will, and verse 3 tells us,

"So, Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him."

Sometimes God's ways in our lives are beyond understanding. Abraham to my mind must have had doubts, but we are not told he did as he quietly, humbly, and acted even to the extreme by submitting himself to the Word of God. As we read to the end of this incident, Abraham was prepared to do exactly what God asked by offering his son whom he loved so much. Isaac, he too submitted to his father. The Bible says that 'the two of them went together' to the place of sacrifice. Isaac the young strong man allowed his old father to tie him to the altar in preparation to be sacrificed. We know that God intervened as Abraham took the knife to kill Isaac. God provided a substitute for Isaac, a ram. We understand this scene to be a picture of Lord who took our place on the cross of Calvary, and was killed, there was no substitute for Him. So, Abraham in submission to God was used to point forward to what was to be the ultimate sacrifice of God giving His son for us. John 3 v.16,

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

### **Rebekah**

There is also a lovely story picturing submission regarding Rebekah who was to become Isaac's wife. Abraham had sent out his servant to his own country to seek a wife for Isaac under God's guidance. God led the servant to a well where Rebekah was drawing water. The servant after speaking with her to find out who she was and learn of her family history gave her some gifts. He went to her house and explained everything to her father, Laban. Laban accepted that the Lord had led the servant to his house, so he brought Rebekah so the servant could ask her himself. In Genesis 24 v.58 she was asked the question,

"Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."

Rebekah submitted herself humbly to the servant of Abraham and willingly left her home to go to marry a man she had only been told about. In v.67, we are told that Isaac and Rebekah loved each other.

### **Moses**

When we think about Moses, we think of him as the great leader of the children of Israel. We think of the times he stood before the Pharaoh of Egypt asking for the children of Israel to be released from slavery. We think of him leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and the miraculous parting of the Red Sea so the Israelites could cross over on dry land then the Egyptians were drowned chasing them. He was a great man. However, he was a man who had to learn to be in submission to God. We often consider his life split into three sections of 40 years. His first 40 years was spent in Egypt, the first 12 years learning about God from his mother then the next few years in Pharaoh's house. There he watched his people suffer under terrible slavery. Moses then spent the next 40 years working as a shepherd for Jethro his father-in-law in the wilderness of Midian. God needed to teach Moses patience and trust. Working with the sheep day and night taught him both. The Bible says that Moses became the humblest man on earth (Numbers 12:3). When Moses was 80 years old God told him to return to Egypt and that He would free the Israelites from slavery. God gave Moses specific directions on what to do and say when he went back to Egypt.

Moses was very hesitant to submit to God's instructions. Exodus chapters 3 and 4 play out the discussions between God and Moses. God calls Moses from the middle of a burning bush in the desert of Midian. Moses answers, 'Here am I.' God reveals Himself to Moses and Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. God explains that He had had enough of the oppression that His people were receiving in Egypt and that He was going to deliver them. God tells Moses that he was to go back into Egypt. This struck fear into the heart of Moses. He had fled Egypt 40 years previous after he had killed an Egyptian who had killed one of his brethren. Moses answers God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?' God assures Moses that He would be with him all the way. God maps out the way for Moses and makes it clear to him that He the great 'I AM' would do mighty wonders in setting His people free. Moses again doubts himself. In Exodus 4 v.1 Moses says,

"But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

God again makes it clear that He would do amazing things through him. Moses objects again in v10, he says to God,

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since you have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

God was getting angry with Moses because he kept doubting Him. Moses eventually in submission to God's word went to his father-in-law Jethro to ask him to let him go back to Egypt to see how his brethren were doing. Jethro gave him his blessing to go.

Maybe you and I are like Moses, and we are stubborn with God in not submitting to his word. Moses was looking at himself, doubting himself rather than relying on God's power and strength. We go on to read of what a great leader Moses became, and that God never let him down. Yes, he had some difficult situations to face with the enemy and with his people, Israel, but the more he submitted to God the more God shone out of his life.

### **The Lord Jesus**

The greatest example to us of submission is the Lord Himself. We can trace through the Bible and see His willingness to be subject to His Father. In Isaiah 6 v.8, we have a glimpse of a conversation that took place in Heaven, the question was asked,

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" [The Lord] said, "Here am I! Send me."

Even knowing what He would have to suffer when He came into this world the Lord offered to go. Hebrews 10 v.7 the Lord said,

"Behold, I have come - in the volume of the book it is written of Me - to do Your will, O God."

The Lord was prepared to do His Father's will, no matter the cost. Luke 2 vv.41-52 tell us about the attitude of the Lord when He was 12 years old. Firstly, he made it clear in v.49 that He was here to do His 'Father's business.' Secondly, in v.51 He was subject to His parents. The Lord of glory making Himself subject to His earthy parents is an amazing example to us. During His pathway on earth the Lord often said why He was here, for example John 4 v.34,

"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."

And John 5 v.30,

“I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.”

The Lord was always in submission to His Father’s will and was obedient to it.

When we come to the cross of our Lord Jesus, we see in fullness His true, perfect, submissive attitude to the will of His Father. In Matthew 26 v.39 the Lord prayed in the garden in agony of soul, with the cross only hours away,

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

And in Philippians 2 v.8,

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

The Lord who had the power to take Himself from the horror and suffering and death of the cross remained in total submission to His Father’s will. He had to carry out the work of redemption or we would never have been brought back to favour with a Holy and righteous God. Jesus is our great example in all things.

### **Lessons for us today**

You and I know how stubborn we can be. As a Christian we each must allow the power of the Holy Spirit to rule or guide our lives. Romans 6 v.13,

“Do not present [or yield] your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present [or yield yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

We quoted James 4 v.7 earlier,

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

In staying close to God, we can, by His power, overcome things that we should not do with our bodies. There are also examples of people in the Bible who did their own will or were self-willed. Men like Peter and Paul. Peter was a great man, he was the type of person who crashed on with things, he was a real doer, but sometimes that put him out of God’s will or plan for his life. Peter was a fisherman and one night when he went out fishing, he tried all night, using all his skill and experience to catch fish, but he caught nothing. Next morning, he met the Lord on the shore as he was cleaning his nets. He said in Luke 5 v.5,

“Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net.”

Peter set sail and in obedience to the Lord, he and his fishing partners let their net down, and their net broke because there were so many fish in it. Peter often needed to be tested, for his self-will to be broken, for him to submit to the Lord, and this usually brought blessing. Paul was another man who was marked by self-will until he met the Lord on the Damascus Road. The Lord spoke to him, he was made to realise how small he was and how great the Lord was. He was literally brought to his knees, and he was blinded. Instead of riding into Damascus with his posse to kill the Christians, he was humbly led by the hand into Damascus to learn what the Lord has in store for him in his future service for Him. Both Peter and Paul needed to be broken for them to realise what true submission really was, and both Peter and Paul experienced a true walk with the Lord. It

is true that in submission we begin to enjoy the Lord's presence more while we walk in His will. We could say that submission leads to obedience and service.

### **Husbands and wives**

In the world that we live in today what the Bible says about husbands and wives is very quickly taken the wrong way, and the Bible is accused of putting women down. In Ephesians 5 vv.22-33 we see, by reading the verses carefully the character of submitting to one and another, and wives submitting to their husbands. The Christian married life illustrates Christ's love for the Church. Just to be clear, 'The church' mentioned here is the body of Christ, which is made up of every believer in Christ. v.22 says,

"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

Vv.23-24 state,

"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in everything."

In God's order of creation, we have man and woman. The man was made first and the woman was made from a rib of man. In 1 Corinthians 11 v.3 we read,

"That the head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

There seems to be an order: God, Christ, man, woman. Given the order there is absolutely no thought of anyone being inferior. Husbands are told that they must love their wives as much as Christ loves you and me.

"Christ...loved the church and gave Himself for her."

Wow that's a challenge! When we looked earlier at the Lord in submission to His Father, we saw His willingness, love, obedience, sacrifice, and humility. There was never the attitude from God, and I say this reverently, 'You will do what I say.' The Lord said openly, 'I delight to do My father's will.' When it comes to a wife being in submission to her own husband, it is in the same sense as the Lord, its fully in love. We husbands must also remind ourselves that we must be in submission to Christ.

In summing up, I would like to remind you about what I said at the beginning. Submission is not about control or inequality, but it's about unity, mutual respect, and love that mirrors Christ's relationship with His people. May the Lord richly bless you today.

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk on 'Truths that are out of fashion', 'Submission.' Talk number T1408.

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