

Living Connections Bible Study



Getting Along with Uncle Sam

Prayer

Text: Romans 13:1-7

Icebreaker: What good advice would you give to someone who has a hard time holding down a job, or being promoted in the work place?

The goal of every Christian should be to so live our faith that others would ask for an explanation for the faith, hope, love, and peace they see demonstrated through our lives. One of the ways a Christian demonstrates their faith and trust in God is by their attitude and submission toward the authorities God has placed over their lives.

1. There are basically 6 kinds of authority. Read the following 6 references and match them to the correct type of authority. Draw lines from each reference to the type of authority that is described in the text.

Deuteronomy 5:33

Hebrews 13:7

Ephesians 6:1

Ephesians 5:23

1 Peter 2:13-14

Ephesians 6:5-6

Civil authority

Marital authority

Spiritual authorities in the church

Occupational authority

Parental authority

Sovereign authority

2. Why did God establish chains of command (varying degrees of authority) in society?
Judges 21:25; Romans 13:3-4; Matthew 8:8-10

3. How does obeying those who are over us demonstrate our trust in God?
Can we believe God to direct us through the authorities He has placed over us?

Romans 8:28

Proverbs 16:7 & 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Proverbs 21:1

Romans 13:1

4. What if an authority figure asks us to disobey God? Acts 4:19-20; 5:27-29

There are 7 steps of action we should take when asked by an authority to do something that we believe is wrong. The first is

Check your attitude

Put a check by the wrong attitudes you need to deal with in regard to your authorities.

Ask yourself, do I have

- an independent or rebellious spirit? – *Nobody's going to tell me what to do!*
- a disloyal spirit? – *This man doesn't deserve my loyalty!*
- a condemning or critical spirit? – *This jerk has so many faults!*
- a prideful or self-righteous spirit? – (holier than thou) *I'm better than he is!*
- an ungrateful spirit? – *I deserve better than this! My authority owes me!*
- a selfish and self-indulgent spirit? – *I want to break these chains and live it up a little*
- a bitter spirit – *I have a right to be angry and resentful because of the way this jerk has violated my personal rights and freedoms*

The second step of action you should take, after checking your attitude is to

Clear your conscience

Read Daniel 6:4; Romans 13:5; Acts 23:1; 24:16; Hebrews 13:18.

Fill in the blanks and discuss how the following actions will make it possible for God to use you to make a positive impact in the home, your work place, your community, nation, etc.

- correct any offending _____ or _____ toward your superior
- fulfill their known _____
- learn to show _____ for their position of _____ over you
- you may need to ask them for _____ for a wrong attitude toward them
- make _____ if you have stolen from them, or deceived them, or sought to usurp their authority, or offended them in some other way

The third step of action you should take when asked to do something wrong is to

Discern the basic intention of your authority

- Ask yourself, *Why are they _____ me to do this?*
- Discover your authority's _____.
- Learn their _____ of reference. *Why are they making this demand?*
- Ask for _____ spots.
- Be sure and approach them with a meek and _____ spirit, saying: I don't understand why you want me to do this. Would you mind explaining your directives to me so I can help you _____ your goals?

Read Daniel 1:10 to discover why the king's chief eunuch (steward) was requiring Daniel and his friends to eat non-kosher foods.

This brings us to the fourth step of action

Design a creative alternative that doesn't violate your Biblical convictions

- Seek _____ from God's Word, especially the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 1:1-3
- Look for Bible _____ of those who have faced similar situations. Daniel, David, Joseph, Job...
- Seek godly council from other Christians, especially those who have years of experience in applying God's Word in their lives. Proverbs 1:5
- Look at alternatives from your superior's _____ of _____, as well as from God's.

Your fifth step of action is to

Appeal to your authority

Read Daniel 1:12-13 to see how Daniel appealed to the king's steward.

- Explain your _____ without condemnation
- Approach your authority as a servant with a _____ spirit
- Give him a creative _____
- Emphasize how your alternative will accomplish his _____
- Leave the final _____ to him

The sixth step of action is to

Give God time to change your authorities mind

- Expect him to get _____ as God begins to work on his conscience
- You should expect to get _____
- Those under conviction can be pretty hard to live with for a while until they _____ to God.
- Your part is to welcome the pressure as a _____ that God is working.
- Look at such times as an opportunity to _____ the attitude of Christ who lives in you.
- Rejoice that this pressure will produce Christian _____ in you.
- Be consistent in responding lovingly and _____ to your authority.

The seventh and final step is to be taken only after you have completed the first six. If your authority still insists on your doing wrong, you must be willing to commit yourself to God and suffer for non-compliance.

Lovingly and gently as you know how you must say, As a Christian, and a child of God, I cannot do what you're asking me to do.

5. What possible consequences should we be ready to accept for non-compliance?
Matthew 5:10-11; Matthew 19:29; Acts 8:4; Daniel 6:12-16; and Luke 21:12-19.

Think about it this week:

1. What are some ways I can be a better testimony and example to those around me regarding my being under authority?
2. How will my example of being under authority affect those who are under my authority?