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## ROMANS 13:1-7

Romans Series: How God Changes People

Let's open our Bibles to Romans 13. Let's prepare our hearts for a moment before the Lord as we come and read His word because He's about to speak. We don't know if He's going to say something big or He's going to say something small. But He's about to speak and we want to be able to listen to whatever He's about to say to us.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you now as individuals – each one needy, each one knowing that we couldn't do anything without you. We come as grateful people, recognizing that it's because of your grace that we have anything that we do have. There's oftentimes we wish we had more. But we want to be grateful and thank you for what you've given to us. Lord, we also come not just as individuals but as a body, as a fellowship recognizing that you work in your church, and that your church is the vehicle you've chosen to pass the grace onto the rest of the world. So as we stand together we do so because we're part of something bigger than ourselves, something bigger that you designed that will stand the test of the ages. So Lord, we ask that you would use this church effectively to minister for your kingdom. We're grateful today for those who are visiting among us here. We thank you that you brought those folks here today and we know that this is a divine appointment. We ask that you would use your heart through your word today to touch each of us in the ways that we need to be touched today. Bless us as we look at your word this morning. In Jesus' name, amen.

If you look in your Bibles at Romans 13 you'll find that we're going to start at verse 1. What we like to do is teach the Bible verse by verse. We never know what's going to be presented in that because the scriptures are living and active. So if you read Romans 13 this week you'll gain some very important things. But if you read it again next week or next year, you'll gain some new things because the Bible is living and active. The Holy Spirit uses His word to teach us and to grow us.

Now in particular, as we're going through the book of Romans, we're asking an important question this time. We're asking the question about how does God change us.

Verse 1 – *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.* I'm going to read that part again. *There is **no** authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.*

So in that verse we're talking about all authorities. Any authority that we might have over us in any kind of way. All authorities. We're going to zero in on civil authority in just a moment, but notice verse 1 is talking about all authority there.

I think we all have this wrestling that we do in every one of our hearts that likes to say to people, “Don’t tell me what to do.” One of the first words that toddlers learn is “no.” When preschoolers are playing, sometimes you’ll hear them say, “You’re not the boss of me.” Sometimes teenagers will say something like, “I can hardly wait to be an adult so I don’t have people telling me what to do.” (They will be in for a surprise.) But you get the idea that sometimes people make that statement.

It reminds me of a story of a boy. This is young man that I counseled with when he was eighteen years old. His name was Joey. Joey graduated from his homeschool and then started working for his father in New York City in a warehouse. His dad wasn’t his employer overseeing him. He was the one who worked over the whole company, but his son worked for the warehouse manager.

After working for the warehouse manager for a couple of months, Joey came to his dad and said, “Dad, I quit.”

His dad said, “Why? What’s the problem?”

He said, “I am tired of people telling me what to do all the time.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I’m going to join the army.”

I just think that whether we boldly and defiantly challenge authority or it’s a kind of subtle manipulative thing that we do, there’s a lot of times when we say, “Don’t tell me what to do.” So this passage today, I think, reveals some very important truths that we will use in our lives.

There are three principles that I want to share with you today. Young people, I want you to listen to this because if you’ll catch these three ideas in this passage, they will help you for the rest of your life. There are some truths here that God has placed in His word that are strategic for us moving forward. There are three principles about authority in Romans 13:1-7. I want to take them one principle at a time.

The first principle is found in Romans 13:1-2. The principle is this: Authority is a God thing. I think you’re going to see that as we read verse 1 already. But let me read verses 1 and 2.

*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

Authority is a God thing. It’s important for us to realize that because I think many times we miss that concept and then end up finding ourselves free to rebel or disagree or argue or resist. Now before you react in your heart by saying something like, “But what if my authority is wrong? What if the person is living in sin who’s my authority? What if he’s not a Christian? What if that person is doing the wrong thing?” we’re going to come to those questions in a minute. I want you to know that’s down a couple of points here.

I want you to keep in mind as you think about that that Paul wrote this book of Romans during the time when the Roman government was in control. They were persecuting Christians. They were killing Christians at that time. It's a terrible thing that was going on. Yet Paul still writes these words.

The key idea here in these first two verses is that authority is a God thing. It comes from God. Authority is established by God. Sometimes we have trouble submitting to authority and we have to realize it's something beyond just the authority that we're looking at. There's something beyond that. We recognize that authority is a God thing. It helps us a lot.

So what are authorities that we're talking about? Well one of the first authorities we come to in our lives are parents. Parents are an authority in our lives. Teachers and those who are involved in the school system over us are authorities in our lives. At work we have bosses and other supervisors who are authorities in our lives. In government we have police and other administrators who govern a lot of things. So those are the authorities and other authorities that we find ourselves under.

We have to be careful about how we respond to authority. One of the things that I think helps us and helps every one of us is that we recognize that behind the authority that we're looking at is God. God set up authority and it's part of what He designed for us.

Now for each one of these points (there are three of them that we see in this passage, three different principles), I'm going to draw upon a king from the Old Testament to illustrate this.

The first king that I want to look at is King David. I'm going to look at Saul and David and Absalom. Those are the three kings. So David is the first one I want to look at. Saul and David have completely different responses to authority and the way they think about it is different, so if we can understand how David handled this, it would be much more helpful.

David understood that Saul was the king. He became king because God put him in that place. He was still reigning as king because God had not removed him from that place. That's why he refers to him as the Lord's anointed. God had placed him in that place.

Now you have to remember, this is in a situation where David is running for his life because the king's trying to kill him. David was honoring him because of the position of the person. It was the position of king that God had placed there, that authority, and David understood this principle that authority is a God thing, so I'm not going to get involved in this. I'm going to run for my life. So at one point David is running for his life and he happens to be down by this area where there's a bunch of caves.

We're going to pick up the story in 1 Samuel. I want you to see how David thinks and what God is doing in David's life as he comes to this understanding of authority. We learn something from this story in 1 Samuel 24 as well.

*He came to the sheep pens along the way (this is Saul); a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself.* So he's going to take a bathroom break. He says, "Guys, I'll be right back. I'm

going up there into the cave,” not knowing that David and his men were hiding in the back of that cave.

*David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said, “This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’”* Here’s an unprotected guy now and David has access to him. He could kill him. *Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.* So obviously he put his robe down somewhere to do his business. I won’t get too picturesque, but you got the idea here.

*Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.* It affected his conscience. The conscience is that place inside of our hearts where right and wrong is affirmed. He felt uncomfortable in that conscience. Something’s wrong here for having cut off the corner of his robe.

*He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.” With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.*

*Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’ See, my father (he’s not really his father, but they were close at one time and there was a father-son relationship, so it is a term of respect), look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion.”*

A little bit later in the passage it says – *When David finished saying this, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” And he wept aloud.* This is what we talked about last week. If you remember, we talked about how when we do kindness to someone who’s out to hurt us, or kindness to our enemy, or to someone who’s mistreated us we do kindness it’s like putting heaps of burning coal on their head and it burns their conscience. Or it’s like allowing the wrath of God to work in their life. That’s what’s happening actually in this passage.

*And he wept aloud. “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.”*

Amazing story about David who understood authority and he understood that this authority comes from God. It wasn’t just a king there that we topple him or we can move him away, but that God placed him in that position.

Are you a young person? Maybe you're planning to get married someday, hopefully, and right now you leave the kitchen a mess, your clothes all over the place, or you don't make your bed, or you don't contribute to life. You've got a problem. Hopefully God has placed you in a home where you've got a mom and dad who are on your case. Because if you want to be successful in a marriage you have to know how to clean a toilet, empty the trash, clean out the kitchen, and do things like that on your own without having somebody tell you. Anybody who's married knows that. Right, married folks? Yeah.

So if you're a young person, take heart and listen to that. Because you're not too busy. Yes, you have lots of things you're trying to do on that iPad and you are trying to get your schoolwork done and you've got all kinds of things that you have to do. But you're not too busy. It only takes a few minutes to contribute to family life. God has placed an authority in your life, a mom or a dad or both, to help prompt you in that area and to train you and to remind you – “Hey, you left dirty dishes in the sink,” or “you need to take the dirty dishes out of the living room and put them into the kitchen.” Submission to authority is important, even if you don't like it.

But what I'm trying to say in this first point is that the spiritual understanding of authority means that as you submit to a parent or a boss or a policeman or something like that, you are doing a spiritual exercise. It's part of your spiritual requirement. God is doing something in your life and this authority is there for a purpose. This is a spiritual experience. We all have character weaknesses. We all have character flaws in our lives. Parents can often see those. Leaders in authority can see those and God uses authority to deal with them. So we want to be sensitive to that. All authority comes from God because authority is a God thing.

Principle number two. I just want to remind you here as I go to principle number two that all authority has a scope. We're going to talk about that. The point is that only God has absolute authority over our lives. But God segments our lives into different places so that different authorities have authority in different areas. So in the home we might have accountability of family members. On the job there's accountability to a boss or other parts of the company. At church there's spiritual authority. In society there are civil authorities. None of these authorities have total authority over our lives. None of them do. So all authority has a scope.

We're going to read now as we zero in on zero authority in verses 3-4 what the scope of civil authority is. It's important to understand that as we're trying to understand what we're trying to do as we're obeying or sometimes disobey the government. So we have to understand what their scope is. We'll talk about maybe what's disobeying the government in a moment. But we have to understand this idea of scope.

All authority has a scope, so verses 3-4 of chapter 13 say this: *For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

The primary job of civil authority is to reward those who do good and to punish those who do evil. Their job is to provide justice in society. So having practices that are fair use practices that govern buying, selling, traffic, and other kinds of things. That's the government's job to oversee those things. Protection and safety are part of the government's job. That's their job is to reward those who do good and to punish those who do evil. A policeman has no authority to tell you what to believe about God. He's not to invade the private sanctuary of your home. That's why search warrants in our country have to be justified before someone bursts into a home, because there's sanctity there. Civil authority is not an absolute. Their job is to punish evil and reward good.

Let's look at King Saul, another king. He was the first of the kings of Israel. He became king at thirty years of age. But King Saul had a problem. He couldn't follow instructions. Listen to this, young people. He lost the kingship because he couldn't follow instruction. If he would've learned how to follow instructions as a child maybe he would've done better following instructions as an adult.

At one point he attacked the Philistines. When he attacked the Philistines they were like hornets nests, so they started getting upset and they gathered Philistines together to fight back. They were going to attack him. So what Saul does is he goes and sends the cry out to all the people in Israel. "Come on, guys. We're about to have a battle here. Come on over. And Samuel, come on over and offer sacrifices for us so that we can bless this battle. The battle will be the Lord's." That was the good thing to do.

But unfortunately Samuel was delayed or...I don't know why he didn't come for seven days. And the tension was increasing. The Philistines were about to attack Saul and all the people. So there came a point where Saul decided to take matters into his own hands. He decided to exceed his authority, exceed his scope of authority, and he decided to offer the sacrifice himself. So he offered the sacrifices and then he went forward. Now the problem with that is he didn't have the ability or the authority to offer sacrifices. So Samuel's going to rebuke him.

We have these famous words that Samuel says in 1 Samuel 15. I want you to see these because sometimes people rebel against authority for spiritual reasons and they're stepping outside of their scope to do that. That's what's happening here.

So Samuel says to Saul, *"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."*

You see, on the way back from the situation where he had killed, God had given him instructions – I want you to kill all these Amalekites. In 1 Samuel 15 that's what's happening here. Kill all the Amalekites and don't bring any plunder back. Sometimes they were able to bring lots of plunder back. But in this one case Saul had a better idea.

Samuel comes to greet him and says, “Look, *what is this bleating of sheep I hear?* The instructions that I gave you from the Lord were to kill all of these. Not bring any plunder back at all.”

Saul says, “Well I had a better idea. I brought these sheep back so we could offer them as sacrifices to the Lord.” It’s not in his realm of authority, you see. He was outside of that realm. He got himself into trouble. His job was to obey the Lord, to follow instructions. He was not there to be the priest and offer sacrifices or even have the priest do it. His job was to follow instructions and he couldn’t do that. He didn’t understand authority, he didn’t respond to authority well, and so bad things happened to him. Everyone must live under authority.

Now it is hard to be in authority. Those of you who are parents or bosses or pastors know this. It’s hard to be in authority, and abuse of authority can come probably pretty quickly in our lives. We have police that violate their authority and do things that are corrupt. We have pastors that violate their authority and abuse people or do things that are wrong. It’s dangerous to have power and authority. So it’s very important for us to do what 1 Timothy 2:1-4 says. As Paul is speaking to Timothy, he says this: *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority.*

Kids, you need to pray for your parents. We need to pray for those bosses. Because the challenge of having authority is a hard one. It’s a dangerous one. It’s very easy to make bad decisions, do the wrong thing, and get into trouble.

The verse continues. It says – *that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

We need to pray for those who are in positions of leadership because being in a position of leadership means you’re making choices, you’re making difficult choices of how you’re going to govern and how you’re going to lead, and what you’re going to say and do for the people that are under your authority. Which leads us to an important question we have to ask, and that has to do with civil disobedience.

Civil disobedience. Civil means government and there’s sometimes when we might disobey the government. You have to know when to do this and when not to do this.

We see examples in the Bible of civil disobedience. In Acts 5:29 Peter and John were told by the Sanhedrin, “You may not preach about the Lord anymore.” So they said, “We’re going to continue preaching. We have to do that because we obey God rather than man.” Because that was out of their scope.

There comes a challenge when government or authorities challenge or step out of their scope or they require or ask us to do something that’s against what God would require.

In the Old Testament we see the example of Daniel who was told, “You cannot pray anymore. Prayer is not acceptable, even in your own home.” But Daniel knew that wouldn’t be right, so

Daniel prayed anyway. That's how he ended up in the lion's den and God rescued him. Civil disobedience.

There are rare times when we may disobey an authority because the authority is not doing what God would have, or he's violating scripture or something in that position. But I just have to say, it's rare that we take this stand, I would suggest. I think we have to be extremely careful because our hearts have this desire inside to say, "Don't tell me what to do." We can come very easily to the conclusion that says, "Well God told me to do this, you're telling me to do something different. I'm going to do what God told me to do," as if somehow we step outside of the authority of that person. We just have to be really careful in this area of violating authority or not submitting because we think that God wants us to do something different than that.

Be really careful. It's very easy to take scripture out of context. You can prove almost anything you want from the Bible. I would suggest that we have to be sensitive to the issues regarding our rebellious nature. When it comes to authority I think our preference would be to rebel against authority because we have a better idea. Or we think that God has called us to do something different or something. Be careful about that.

I would think that this next principle, principle number three, will help in that regard because I think that sometimes we stay under the authority and in a difficult situation that we're in because God wants to do something deeper inside of our hearts.

So principle number three, we're going to see in the rest of this passage that we're looking at today, is that submission to authority has personal benefits. It's not just about getting things done or maintaining law and order or the boss getting his way. It has personal benefits for our own hearts.

God uses the authorities in our lives to chip away at some of those problems that we have inside of our lives. He uses the authorities of a dad and a mom to bring out the gem that's inside, but the gem is covered by all this other stuff that has to be chipped away. So when we submit to a parent or we submit to a boss or we submit in a situation that's difficult, God often uses that to do some very powerful things inside of us.

Let me read the passage and then I'll comment more about it.

*It says – Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. Here we're back to the idea of conscience again, that I'm doing the right thing. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

We're doing those things, not only to benefit that person; we're doing it because submission has personal benefits for us. It does something inside of our hearts. It deals with our own selfishness, our rebelliousness that often gets us into trouble. And it's tested when we don't agree.

We can often try to justify rebellion. “My parents are wrong because they don’t let me go to that party.” Or “they’re just being mean.” Or “that boss is unfair by not letting me have some of the same benefits other people get.”

Let’s go back to David for just a moment because David lived in an unfair situation, a painful situation. He was running for his life. But he learned some valuable things by submitting in that situation. He learned how to wait for God’s timing. That’s a lesson most of us, I would suggest, need to learn. We need to learn to wait. Because we don’t want to wait. We want to do this now. So like Saul offered sacrifices outside of his scope, got himself into trouble, it’s the wrong thing to do.

Also as I think about David’s life, God was training him to be the king and David was a man after God’s own heart. He had a compassion for people. I think that compassion in part was developed because he was mistreated by Saul who was often out to get him.

In our society we have all this emphasis on rights. There are rights. I think there’s a place if you’re being abused to step out of the situation or set limits on other people, but I also think it’s very important to recognize that sometimes living in difficult times, difficult situations does something inside of us and God uses that situation to work on our hearts in some very powerful ways.

Let’s look at verse 5 up to the word *conscience*, the first three lines. I use this verse when I’m talking to young people because I want to teach them the difference between internal motivation and external motivation. Internal motivation is doing something that’s right from the inside. External motivation is reward and punishment.

So I’ll say to a young person this question: When you’re given an instruction, why do you do what’s right?” Many times the young person will say, “So I don’t get in trouble.” That’s the most common answer. “So I don’t get in trouble.”

That’s when I take them to Romans 13:5. I say, “Let’s read this verse together.” It says – *Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities* (that is do what someone says – so we’re talking about following instructions), *not only because of possible punishment* (so you don’t get in trouble) *but also as a matter of conscience.*

Conscience is on the inside. Conscience is this “I’m doing the right thing.” God wants us to have this internal sense of motivation, not just so we don’t get in trouble. He wants us to do what’s right because it’s the right thing to do so that we can move forward. External motivation versus internal motivation in our lives.

I would suggest that if we are working on this we’ll be able to overcome some issues in our lives. Let’s just take the problem of procrastination. Procrastination is a problem when a person needs to rely on external motivation to get something done. So if you’re working with someone, they might say to you, “Give me a deadline.” Why are they saying, “Give me a deadline”? Because they don’t have the internal motivation to do it on their own and move forward. They’re relying on something from the outside, an external motivation. Or the person waits till the pressure gets

big enough on the outside so they keep putting it off until the pressure increases and then they do it. That's external motivation.

I would suggest internal motivation is a matter of conscience. As we start developing this understanding of conscience we realize that one of the ways we develop a strong conscience is by living under authority and doing the right thing. God does a work inside of our lives to help us with that. God uses authority to help us grow in our character. There's something about submission to God that's worked out in submission to those people above us.

The problem that sometimes people have with authority is that they think about superiority. They think somehow that the person is more superior. Authority doesn't matter if the person is smarter or dumber than you. That person was chosen by God for whatever reason to be put in that position.

It doesn't make a difference whether the person is a Christian or not a Christian or the person is spiritual or not spiritual. The authority there, there's something behind it, the authority is a God thing. They may not be gifted or qualified as you are, but they're the authority. They're in that position. It's God's sovereign right to put that person there, whoever He wants to put there.

It's the position or the office that we honor in those situations. Even if we have little or no respect for the person, it's the position that they have that we honor. What matters is that God has orchestrated authority, and authority is very important in the world. There's no country in the world that can exist without having some kind of laws. Because without laws you have confusion and chaos. So governments in their various ways try to establish some kind of authority. Some do better than others.

How we respond to that authority is very important. Often it does something inside of our hearts. So even if we end up rebelling against authority or working around the authority because they're doing the wrong thing, we want to be careful that we're not developing in our own hearts this rebellion and this nature. We do it carefully and we do it with grace, realizing we are in danger ourselves.

Just look at David again. He had a lot of reasons to rebel. Saul was demon-possessed. God had already promised David the throne. He already knew he was going to get the throne and he could've taken it himself as a demonstration of "Hey, I'm just helping God out here." The way Saul was treating David was totally unjust. Saul was not a man of integrity. But that's not what David was submitting to. David was submitting to God.

I think that if we can get this idea that authority is a God thing and we can understand that, it allows God to do a deeper work inside of our own hearts. That becomes pretty significant.

Joseph in the Old Testament was hurt quite a bit by his brothers when he was sold into slavery. But he worked through the system and honored authority and became an authority himself.

Even Jesus acknowledged authority of Pilate when he was before him.

Now I do believe God wants to promote us and I do believe God wants to bless us and He wants to do good things. It's not bad to have a dream or a hope. I think we should pursue our dreams and our hopes. But we want to do that in a way with a heart that's totally surrendered to submission to God and recognizing that He sometimes puts authorities in our lives to do a deeper work inside of our hearts.

1 Peter 5:6 says this: *Humble yourselves, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* Pride asks the question, "Why am I not in charge? I know more than that person does." Submission knows how to live in a place under authority. Very important that we all know that.

Let's look at the third king and that's King Absalom. He made himself king. Now here's a kid growing up in his father's house (he's David's son), and he knew that his dad had power, had authority. He often took some of that and abused it and used it for his own gain, got himself into trouble. He had a growing jealousy, even of his father, and he started to plan a rebellion against his dad.

I want to read the passage that illustrates what he started thinking and how he started doing that. I think we do some of these same things that Absalom did. This passage is found in 2 Samuel 15.

*In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.* He's starting to build himself up so other people can see how great he is. So he's starting to ride around on his chariot, taking advantage of the power that his dad has and misusing it.

*He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."*

In a country that's managed by a leader (say a president or something like that), there are things that go right and wrong. So someone like Absalom could stand up and take advantage of the anger of all of the people, the criticism that people have and say, "I can solve your problem," and ride on the coattails of anger and come into a position of leadership. Absalom was usurping the throne here in a very interesting way, to take over the throne from his father.

Here's a bright, energetic, and handsome prince. He had everything going for him, but he wasn't humble, he wasn't submissive. He didn't know how to handle leadership in the right kind of way and so he found himself in a significant problem. His life ended in judgment. He lost everything, including his own life.

Submission does something in our own hearts. I would suggest that if we live under submission we learn some valuable things. We learn how to manage those things properly.

I was inspired by this story this week. A man walked the streets of Philadelphia looking for a job and a man named Gerard hired him. This is years ago apparently when this story happened. Gerard said, "Okay, here's what I want you to do. Take that pile of bricks, move them over there, stack them neatly." The man did the work. It took him all day. When he got it all done, he got paid for that day, and the guy said, "Is there any other work?" Gerard said, "Yes. Come back tomorrow and I want you to take those bricks and I want you to put them over there in a pile." So the next day he came back and he did the same thing. Every day he came back and he moved the pile of bricks back and forth for a week.

After a week of doing that, Gerard says, "I've got a different job for you today. I want you to go down to the auction house and bid on sugar for me. I need sugar, so I want you to go down and bid on it."

Well this guy goes down to the bidding and people don't know who he is. He's a new guy in town. He ends up winning the bid, and they ask him, "Who's going to pay for this?" He says, "Gerard's going to pay for this. Mr. Gerard. I'm his agent."

Now in this story here's a guy who was entrusted with something more because he was supposed to do something menial that he didn't even understand.

I would suggest that many of us find ourselves in situations where it doesn't even make sense. Why do you have me do this? Why do I have to do his particular job? I think God is often using those difficult and challenging situations to have us live under authority for a while before we're able to move into a position of more management, whether that's in a home, having your own home eventually, or whether that's in a job, becoming a manager. Sometimes we work through some things in our lives in order to be able to move forward. That is this third principle.

In fact I think all three of these principles coming from this passage are very important for our lives. We must realize that authority is a God thing. All authority has a scope and that submission has personal benefits in our lives. So it makes a logical jump here for us to be able to say that we must look at Jesus as our boss. He is our Lord. He is the one that we respond to.

One of the things we say when you get saved and ask Jesus Christ to come into your life is you make Him the Lord of your life. You know what 'lord' means, right? I don't know if you know that, but the word 'lord' actually means boss. That's what it means. He becomes the boss of my life. When He comes in and He's the boss of my life, then He starts to change how we operate and we start doing what He wants us to do. That submission that we take is powerful. When we say, "Jesus is Lord," we are saying, "I am submitting myself to His authority and what He wants to do in my life."

Let's stand together. I'm going to pray and then we're going to worship the Lord together.

[PRAYER} Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are God and that we are not. Sometimes we act as God or we act as God in our little situations. Please forgive us for those times when we usurp authority or become rebellious. Lord, we thank you for the authorities you've placed in our lives. I pray that you would help us to respond to them more effectively. Teach us those lessons

early so that we don't have to experience some of the judgment that comes from being rebellious. Give us hearts to follow after you. Help us to be like David in our own lives. Father, we love you and we believe in the power that you provide to us. We thank you for the opportunity we have to come to you in prayer. So as we continue these next few minutes in prayer, we ask that you would be speaking to our hearts. Teach us what you want us to learn. Grow us in character as your servants. In Jesus' name, amen.