

“Spiritual Authority – Good Leaders First Learn How to Follow”

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES:

The focus of this class is to help seminary graduates do some personal evaluation regarding their respect for spiritual authority and if they are ready to lead others. In other words: Can you recognize, respect and submit to good spiritual authority?

Specific questions this class will address:

1. What are some biblical descriptions/illustrations of good leaders and good followers?
2. What are some biblical descriptions/illustrations of bad leaders and bad followers?
3. What does a person that struggles with authority issues look like?

Hebrews 13:7-9, 17-19 *“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them... 17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. 18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. 19 I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.”* -

I. A BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

1. Qualities of Good Followers:

- A. They study the Scriptures to respectfully confirm what their leaders have taught them. Acts 17:11
- B. They watch carefully the outcome of the lives of those they are following. He. 13:7
- C. They understand that submitting to a good leader is the same as submitting to God. Heb. 13:17 & Rom. 13:1-2

2. Qualities of Good Leaders:

- A. They lead through the power of love, serving God and others. Mk. 10:42-45
- B. They demonstrate their understanding of authority by respectfully submitting to those over them. Heb. 13:17,18 & Ac. 20:28
- C. They are humble, motivated by Jesus’ example of Shepherding not bullying. 1 Pe. 5:1-5

3. Indicators of Lousy Followers:

- A. There tends to be jealousy and strife that is often rooted in immature competition and fleshly loyalties to human leaders. 1 Cor. 3:1-4
- B. Their leaders rely on patterns of manipulation and bribery. Micah 3:11
- C. They despise the word of God and love to hear sermons of peace and hate sermons about sin. Jer. 23:16-17

4. Indicators of Lousy Leaders:

- A. They don't see danger, they use their influence selfishly for their benefit and are lazy Is. 56:9-12
- B. They are selfish, greedy and inattentive to the concerns and needs of others. Jer.23:1-4; Ez. 34:1-8

II. IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTHORITY ISSUES

1. Red Flags Indicating a Person Struggles with Authority:

- No = 1 - this does not describe this person
2 - the individual may show some signs of this but not much.
3 - the individual definitely shows some of these signs but not all the time.
Yes = 4 – this characteristic is usually seen in this person's lifestyle.

SELF-IMAGE

No - - - Yes

- 1. 1 -2 - 3- 4 Most decisions, actions, or discussion tend to promote his or her own self-image and empower themselves as the best authority on a topic.
- 2. 1 -2 - 3- 4 This person promotes individuals that make them look good, and tend to ignore or belittle people that don't make them look good.
- 3. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They don't seem to sense that they should be more tactful in presenting their perspective.
- 4. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They are willing to distort reality to maintain his or her own perspective about who he or she is.
- 5. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They treat disagreement or disobedience as disloyalty.
- 6. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They tend to respond with vengefulness or vindictiveness when he or she thinks someone is being disloyal.
- 7. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They see themselves as special or unique.
- 8. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They seem unusually willing to destroy the reputation or work of someone that doesn't make him or her look good.
- 9. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They are deeply bothered if his or her image is diminished by other people.

ENTITLEMENT

No - - - Yes

- 10. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They expect special treatment.
- 11. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They thrive on the adoration and admiration of others and will seek it out regardless of the cost.

12. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They tend to hurt people without noticing that he or she may be “stepping on another person’s toes.”
13. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They often feel that the world (the church, an institution) owes him or her glory or respect.
14. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They seek out people who don’t know him or her personally to maintain this adoration and feeling of self-importance.
15. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They seem to be insensitive to how he or she affects others.
16. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They do not appear to care about others unless it ultimately serves their reputation or need for control.

EXPLOITATION

No - - - Yes

17. 1 -2 - 3- 4 This person is perceived by many to be manipulative and controlling
18. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They often abuse his or her position of influence and power while maintaining that this is for the other person’s good.
19. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They alternate between the extremes of promoting himself or herself and devaluing himself or herself.
20. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They often exaggerate your positive characteristics or ideals especially when they want you to do something for them.
21. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They can make radical changes in a short amount of time from caring about a person to being completely indifferent to this person.
22. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They will often resort to put-downs or highly critical judgments.
23. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They become somewhat paranoid or may see opposition to them, their work, or their opinion as part of a conspiracy.
24. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They seem to think he or she has a right to ignore others.
25. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They rarely admit personal failure and is adept to blame shifting.
26. 1 -2 - 3- 4 When in a bind they do not care how his or her behavior affects others.
27. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They use other people’s weaknesses to maintain a power position.
28. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They tend to excuse conning others when it will further what they believe in.
29. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They aren’t bothered when he or she makes people uncomfortable.
30. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They develop relationships that tend to be superficial and shallow.
31. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They make you feel off-balance or “crazy” at times.

DEPERSONALIZATION

No - - - Yes

32. 1 -2 - 3- 4 This person lacks genuine empathy, though they often are perceived as being caring.
33. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They do not seem to have significant feelings for others.
34. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They will not compromise nor negotiate fairly
35. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They sometimes treat other people like things or objects.
36. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They use denial, arrogance, haughtiness, charm, and exaggeration or persuasion to maintain a “superior” position.
37. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They are good at convincing you of his or her goodness (superiority)- and of your badness (inferiority).
38. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They expect automatic compliance with his or her expectations.
39. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They seem to retreat from genuine human need and ignores the pain of others.

- 40. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They see solutions and success as more important than personal relationships.
- 41. 1 -2 - 3- 4 They don't seem to feel the struggle when others are involved in personal pain.

____ Total Score

104 to 123 = a person with some authority issues.

124-164 = a person that respects no authority but themselves.

2. People Who Struggled with Authority:

- A. Joseph and his brothers, Potiphar, Pharaoh: Gen. 37-41
- B. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel: Dan. 3 & 6
- C. Sarah & Hagar: Gen. 16; 1 Pet. 3:1-6

III. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

1. Titus 3:1-6

- A. An attitude of submission is commanded regardless of the character of the delegated authority (1 Pet. 2:18).
- B. Submission should be active--not passive.
- C. Whenever possible, we should be sure that we understand why we are being asked to do something by the delegated authority. Eph. 6:5,7; Col. 3:22,23
- D. The burden of proof is on the one under authority to justify why he should not obey, not vice-versa.
- E. When we cannot obey the command of a delegated authority because we believe this would constitute disobedience to God, we should seek for a constructive alternative which will fulfill the righteous desires of the delegated authority and also enable us to obey God (Dan. 1:8-16).
- F. When disobedience to a delegated authority is necessary, we should do so respectfully, not rebelliously or maliciously. Acts 4:19,20; 5:29
- G. Within the church, dissent is different than rebellion or disobedience. Some issues are important enough that our conscience tells us that we need to take further measures.

IV. Resources:

- A. Spiritual Authority by Watchman Nee

