

Respect for Authority – BY JERRY ELDER

In Home, School and Church

In “The Authority Song” by John Cougar Mellancamp, the premise is about the young person that goes against society and religion and how he “fights authority” but in the end “authority always wins”.

Even though this was written in the 80’s it still holds true today for many young people, (and older ones as well)! Is this the proper way that a Christian should respond in our world? Let’s look at three areas in which we should RESPECT authority and honor them.

A definition:

Re-spect : esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or ability, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or ability: *I have great respect for her judgment.*

1. Respect for authority at HOME. If you are student of the bible you know the passages “Honor your father and mother” and “Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right” (Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1). God put parents in the authority role to bring up children to love Him. It is the parent’s responsibility to train, nurture and admonish (Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4) and that role is NOT easy. Children want their parents to be friends and that just cannot be the case all of the time. Parents must make decisions that set their children’s lives on a path to heaven. It is the child’s responsibility to be obedient to that parent as they walk in the light of the Lord.

(Question) How would you feel as a teen that because of your disobedience to your parents, you would lose your soul? How about parents that fail in bringing up children in the way of the Lord? How would you feel knowing they were lost because they did not do what God had asked them to do?

Respect at home begins with understanding. Understanding that it is NOT the car, NOT the house, NOT the best clothes, but understanding that it IS ABOUT loving each other, ABOUT caring for each other, ABOUT bringing a FAMILY HOME TO GOD!!!

2. Respect for authority at SCHOOL. Okay, I know, you really do not want to hear about this, but allow me to write just a bit about this. In school you are to receive an education and part of that process involves administration, teachers and students (peers). I remember as a child I was terrified of the “PRINCIPAL” I knew the paddle he carried was a ”2x4 by 4 feet long”. No one wanted to cross him for fear of the “Board of Education” (that being the paddle). The responsibility that the administration carries is phenomenal and when rules are not enforced, things can become very bad, very quickly. Respect the administration for looking after you and making sure that you are in a safe environment to receive your education.

Teachers are a special breed in my opinion. Yes, there are good ones and some, well, not so good. It does not mean that they do not deserve respect. We are to give honor to them for their work and efforts. They are the ones that teach, test, grade, report, discipline, listen, care, cry, hurt and love. The passage “love one another” comes to mind because they encounter so much that most teens are not even aware of. They spend out of their pockets to feed, clothe, and supply the needs of those that do not have it in school. Yet sometimes we “call them out”, gossip about them, and maybe even do things to them that God would not be happy with. Think about it, would you want to be treated the way that some teachers are treated? When you walk in the classroom next time, just say “thanks” to the teacher that is leading you to your future.

Respect for PEERS in school...deep subject, so I will roll up my pants legs for this one!!! With every type of person imaginable in a school system you will not find two that are alike! You know ALL the names that people are called and have been called yourself. The old saying “if you want a friend, you’ve got to be a friend” goes a long way...True, but not everyone will be your friend. I think “the golden rule applies here” (Matthew 7:12) If we will all treat each other the way we TRULY want to be treated, things would be much easier. And when those times come when someone stabs you in the back or slaps you in the face, it makes it time to turn the other cheek. (Matthew 5:39) Love goes along way, (1 Cor. 13). Those that choose to not be your friend have made their choice. Make sure that you stay with friends that follow God and HIS ways!

Question: Do you really believe that disruptions in school accomplish good? Making teachers angry? What about your peers? What are ways that you can build UP and not tear DOWN relationships in school?

3. Finally, how about Respect at CHURCH. I guess this should be reworded as Respect for GOD. Volumes have been written about this and still the word is not listened too. When we have respect for Gods people, we love one another for love is of God (John 13:34). God has made us family by the blood of His son Jesus Christ (Romans 8:17). That is why we are called “brothers and sisters”. Yet many times we treat God’s family in ways that we should not. Anger, malice, envy...these are attitudes of those not becoming God children. When we treat others like this, we treat God like this because we are all of the same body. God expects us to use the “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22) in our daily life as we walk with our church family.

Jesus said that ALL AUTHORITY was given to ME. It is important that we all realized that the authority that directs us in our lives is from Jesus Christ. That is why Paul calls himself a slave to Him. That is why apostles went out to spread the Good News. We as the church need to work FOR God and NOT against him. People need to

see us following in the footprints of Jesus and living the transformed life that he has given us (Romans 12:2). They do not need to see or hear us “turning on and off” our Christianity. They need to see the reverence and respect that we have for an awesome God and how much we love HIM for what HE has done for US.

Question: Name three ways that tears down Christian relationships? What do YOU do to build ALL people up in the Lord’s church?

A simple challenge. Respect the word of God and what it has to say! For one day whether at school, at home or at church, give the respect due to those around you. Set your goal to live the life that God intended for you to live. Now go and do it!

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ACCOUNTABILITY **BY JERRY ELDER**

Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other (James 5:16)
Do not lie to each other (Colossians 3:9)

Accountability is one of those eyebrow raising words. Besides sounding a bit cultish, accountability runs against the grain of our self-sufficient, individualistic society. We like to be our own person, do our own thing, and not have someone else tell us what to do or believe.

God, however, says . . .

. . . so in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Rom. 12:5)

- Our connectedness means we must lay aside the island mentality. We do not stand independent of one another.

As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" . . . If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Cor. 12:20-21, 26)

- Because such an interdependency exists within the Body of Christ, we are responsible to one another to do our part and to help them do theirs.

Some people shy away from the concept of accountability because they associate it with confrontation. While rebuking, challenging, warning, and admonishing may be necessary at times, accountability also yields support, counsel, encouragement, and affirmation.

If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! (Eccl. 4:10)

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Eccl. 4:12)

There are benefits beyond the support described in Ecclesiastes 4. The contexts of the verses with which this article began provide us with the results of Body Life in which accountability is exercised.

What's in it for me?

James 5:16 indicates that healing is in store for the person who puts himself in a place of accountability.

What's in it for others?

Colossians 3:9-10 states that it is a reflection of the new life we have in Christ which is a wonderful testimony to the world around us.

What's in it for God?

Ephesians 5:21 lets us know that Christ is honored through it because this kind of accountability is the backbone of unity.

God designed the Body of Christ to function best when its members are there for each other in ways that spur them on and hold them responsible to the commitment they have made to follow Christ. How are these authentic,

accountable relationships developed and maintained? Following are some suggestions. [E-mail](#) your suggestion and it may be added to this list.

- Be patient. Accountability is best built over time and as a natural outgrowth of relationship.
- Be deliberate. Accountability is most likely to happen in small group settings or one-on-one not by merely attending a Sunday morning worship service.
- Be vulnerable. Accountability requires you to take risks at being transparent.
- Be real. Accountability comes out of depth of relationship. You can't stay on the surface and expect to experience the benefits.
- Be willing to spend time with one another. Accountability requires that people communicate with one another and that translates into time.
- Be teachable. Accountability is a learning process. Defensiveness and pride breaks it down.
- Be open to learn more about being accountable. You may want to read the following book:
[Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian](#) by *Bill Hybels*