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CHRISTIAN LIVING BIBLE STUDIES

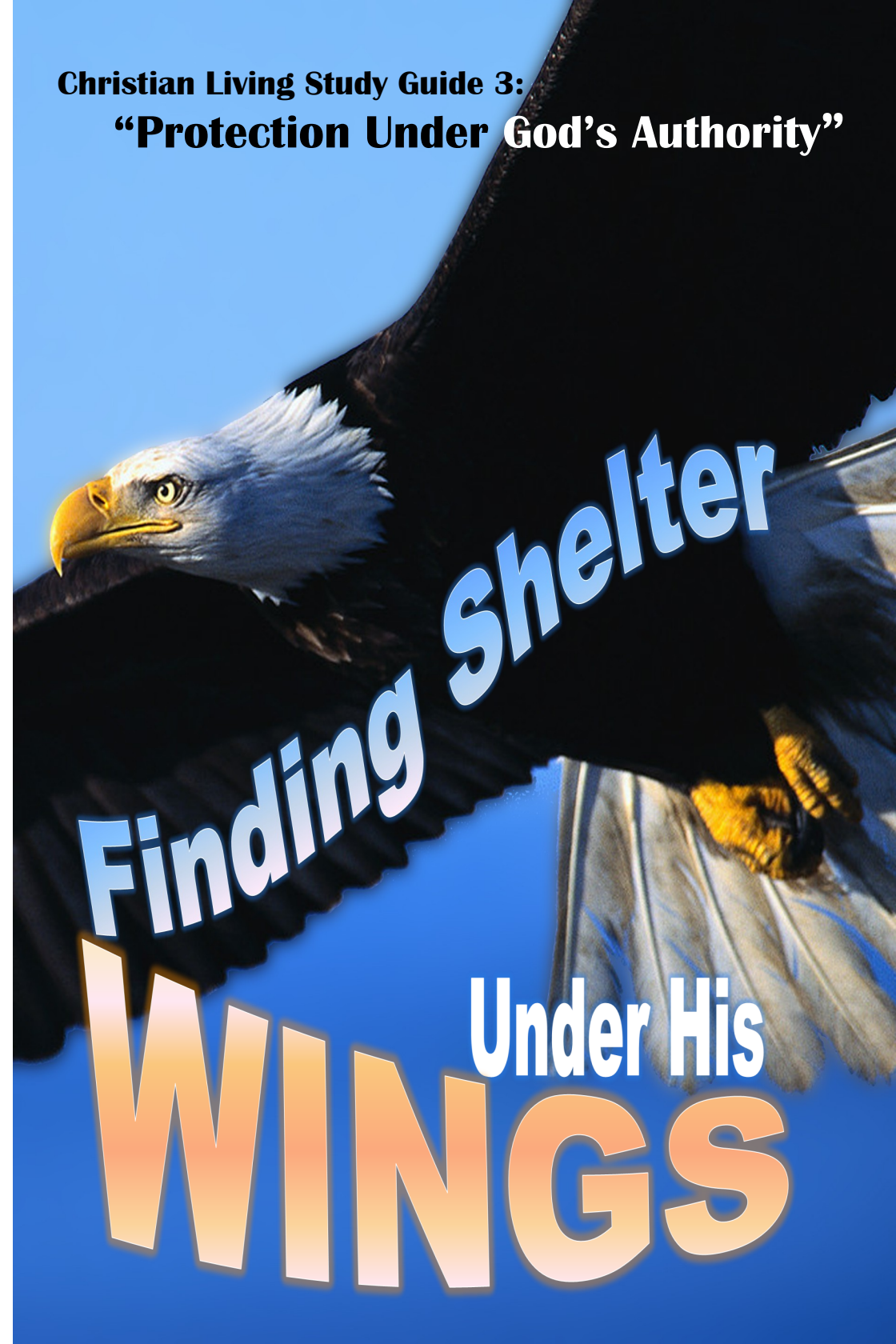
- Christian Living Study Guide 1: “You Can Avoid a Shipwrecked Life” (*Gaining a Clear Conscience*)
- Christian Living Study Guide 2: “Keys to Finding True Success in Your Life” (*Engrafting Scripture*)
- Christian Living Study Guide 3: “Finding Shelter Under His Wings” (*Protection Under GOD’s Authority*)
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Christian Living Study Guide 3:

“Protection Under God’s Authority”



God's Protection

is a gift which He longs to give to each of His children. The Bible reveals the key to having His guidance and protection, continually. In this lesson we will discover that key.

“Let every man be subject unto the higher powers, For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God,”

Romans 13:1.

1. What does the Bible symbol, “wings of an eagle” teach us about protection under God’s authority in our lives?

ANSWER: The “eagle’s wings” is a Hebrew idiom which appears twenty times in Scripture. Although generally associated with God’s protection of His people, there is more. We sing, “Under His wings I am safely abiding,” without realizing that the promise implies the responsibility of submission. In Psalms 91 we find this symbolism used to express the promise for our abiding: “He who dwells...shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” We must choose to come under the protection and authority of the Eagle,

a metaphor for our Heavenly Father who protects and shelters His own.



- “His feathers,” – is from the same root as the Hebrew name of God, meaning “The Almighty.”
- “Under” – refers to submission to authority
- “His wings” – were seen above the Ark of the Covenant, as cherubim, and representing protection to those who obey the instruction within and submit under His Authority.

LESSON STUDY—3 continued

- 5) Authority often applies pressure to our lives which develops character in us that could not otherwise be developed. Identify several areas your authorities are working in your life:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- 6) When should you obey *God* rather than the authority structures over you? _____

- 7) According to the story in Daniel 1, what was Daniel’s method of obeying *God* rather than man? _____

- 8) From the story of the wise woman of Abel and Joab, what five things should be done when making and presenting an appeal?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- 9) If the appeal is rejected, what can still be done?

- Assess the failure in: _____
- Allow God to: _____
- Appeal to a: _____
- Recognize if God is calling you to:
 1. _____
 2. _____

13. Why Do Appeals to Authority Figures Fail?

The failure was in you – if the fault is in you, go back to the “Gaining a Clear Conscience”—Bible study Lesson 1 (in this series).

The failure was in your appeal – If your appeal was the fault, review the steps in question 12 and present your appeal again. (See Lk 18:2-8.)

The fault was in the authority – It is possible to have an authority figure who is antagonistic to God’s ways. When this is the case:

1. **Allow God time to change the authority figure’s mind.** This is often done by applying pressure on him. Note the story of Moses and Pharaoh in Exodus 5-12.

2. **It may be time to appeal to a higher authority.** When the authority refuses to listen to an appeal, it may be necessary to bring an additional authority to bear after you have given God time to change their mind. This is one reason our Heavenly Father gave a threefold authority system.

If, after all of these efforts have been exhausted, there is still a refusal to listen to the appeal, two more options remain (see the diagram on page 5):

1. **God may be calling us to suffer for “righteousness sake”.** If this is the case one would refuse to carry out the evil request, however, they would remain under the authority figure and accept whatever punishment is given. When a person refuses to do evil with a submissive spirit, they are respected and God is glorified.

2. **God may be calling us to flee.** Just like suffering for righteousness sake, fleeing should be done under the unction of the Holy Spirit and be such that it gives glory to God. We see both of these situations happening in the life of Christ and Paul. Early in both of their ministries they were called to slip away from their persecutors, but at the end of their ministries both suffered for righteousness sake.

LESSON STUDY—3

1. According to Romans 1:13, who ordained all authority and who is to obey it? _____
2. What are God’s three authority structures on earth? _____
3. What are two aspects of God’s government in our lives depicted by the wings of an eagle? _____
4. Why does God put authorities over us on earth? _____



Thus, it is those who submit to the authority of the Almighty who are protected “under His wings.” Under the sheltering Presence of God, we will mount up on high, according to Isaiah 40:31.

Satan is well aware of this protection given to those who love and obey *God*, as shown in *Job 1:9,10: Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not Thou made an hedge and all about him... and all that he hath, on every side?*”

Many metaphors are used in Scripture to describe God’s authority and protection, but none more often than the symbol of being “under eagle’s wings.” Under His authority (wing), we will not trust the arm of flesh, but will abide in the “shadow of the Almighty.” When facing temptations and trials, we will find our refuge “under His wings,” as we submit to His authority in our lives. When we are perplexed, He will carry us through the clouds to the place where we can see more clearly His purpose for us. By remaining close to Him for comfort, guidance, and protection, we abide “in the shadow of the Almighty.” We are in submission to His authority.

2. In What Context Does the Bible Symbol of “Eagle’s Wings” Appear?

ANSWER: David and Moses used the symbol of Heavenly Wings to represent God’s over-shadowing protection in the lives of His people.

Ps. 17:8 Hide me under the shadow of Thy Wings,

Ps. 36:7 Our trust is under the shadow of Thy Wings.

Ps. 57:1 In the shadow of Thy Wings will I make my refuge.

Ps. 63:7 In the shadow of Thy Wings will I rejoice.

The eagle is a fit symbol for the wise, loving, and protective care of God:

“He found him (Jacob, who represents the saved)... He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, So God alone did lead him...” Deuteronomy 32:10-12.

This metaphor first appears in the Exodus from Egypt, when God told His people that He was carrying them “on eagle’s wings.” (Ex. 19:4). Revealing God’s wise authority and loving care, this metaphor reappears in Revelation 12:14. Not only does the symbol of an Eagle sheltering her nestlings suggest protection, it also shows that God is the Authority over us.

3. Did God Intend for Humans to Hold Positions of Authority, Under His Headship?

ANSWER: In the Beginning, God created mankind in His image and told our first parents to have dominion over the earth. This was the first time God delegated authority to man, as it says in Genesis 1:27-28.

“So God created man in His own image... male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion... over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:27-28.

God also established a “chain of command” in human authority under Him; which He expects His children to respect, obey, and submit under. There is a Heaven-ordained authority structure in the home, the Body of Christ, and in society. For example, in the home, both parents have authority to instruct and command the children under God. (Ephesians 6:1). But, God has ordained that the husband be the highest human authority, as the Bible says in Ephesians 5:22-23:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body.”

All humans, in positions of authority are only able to hold this post because it is allowed by God. Submission to the human authorities in our lives is submission to God. And we cannot abide under Heaven’s protective Wings unless we remain under the authority structure (see pg 5) God established.

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation... Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake,” Romans 13:1-5

Daniel and three of his friends are among those taken. Because of Daniel’s “excellent” spirit, he finds favor with the prince of the eunuchs, Melzar.

But the first conflict arises over the king’s dietary choices. Daniel, and his three friends, purpose not to eat food that would defile them so Daniel “**appeals**” to Melzar not to eat the king’s food. Melzar tells Daniel if they don’t eat the king’s food they will look worse than the rest of young men and the king will have his head! Daniel now comes up with an “**alternate plan**”. He asks to be tested for ten days on pulse and water. At the end of the time, he asks to be compared with those who ate the king’s food and promises to abide by Melzar’s decision. Melzar agrees and after the ten days, “their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the young men which did eat the portion of the king’s meat.” So Melzar took away the king’s food and gave them pulse and water. Further, the king tested Daniel and his three friends and found them ten times better in matters of wisdom and understanding than all the wise men of his realm. Daniel 1:1-20

Note Daniel’s method: First, he was in good standing with his authority figure. Then, when requested to do something against his conscience and God’s laws, he made an appeal and came up with an alternative plan.

12. If we Need to Make an Appeal to our Authority Figure, How Should We Do It?

ANSWER: 2 Samuel 20:14-20 tells us the story of Joab and his army ready to tear down the walls of Abel to get a rebel leader who had fled to that city. A wise woman of Abel made an appeal which saved the city. Let’s follow her example to see how to make and present an appeal.

- First, she made sure she was talking to the person in charge, General Joab. – We, also need to make sure we are talking to the person who has the power to act on our appeal.
- Second, she humbly established and confirmed her position under his jurisdiction. She did this by saying, “Hear the words of thine handmaid.” And he answered, “I do hear.”
- Then she went about to discover Joab’s intent for tearing down the city walls –Understanding the basic intent, reason or purpose our authority has in making the command which we are appealing allow us to go to the next step...
- The wise woman’s next step was coming up with an alternative plan that reached the leader’s ultimate purpose.

From the human perspective, the leader is the one who is the “top of the food chain,” so-to-speak. This is the person who gets to boss everyone else around. But, this isn’t *God’s* view of authority. A godly authority figure will be a gentle servant, like our Saviour, as it says in [Mark 10:44](#) “*And whosoever of you will be the chiefest (highest authority), shall be servant of all.*” In fact, of all people, persons in areas of leadership also have the highest responsibility before *God*.

Husbands are not to “lord” their leadership over their wives, but are to love them and give themselves for them as Christ loved and gave Himself for the Church (Ephesians 5:25). Fathers are not to taunt and brutalize the children under their authority, but are to be tender and loving examples to them, leading them in righteousness (Colossians 3:21).

Pastors and teachers within the Body of Christ have the awesome responsibility of never speaking or doing their own will in leadership. They are to make sure that the words they speak are from *God*, for He will call them into account for the doctrines they have taught in His Name (Jer. 23:1-2).

Civil authorities are to govern those under them by the Commands of *God*. This is why they were commanded to write out a personal copy of the *Torah* (God’s Law), read it every day, and govern by its teachings (Deut. 17:18-19). The civil leaders who have obeyed this prospered, like David; while the governmental figures who rebelled against *God* were ultimately removed from office, like Pharaoh.

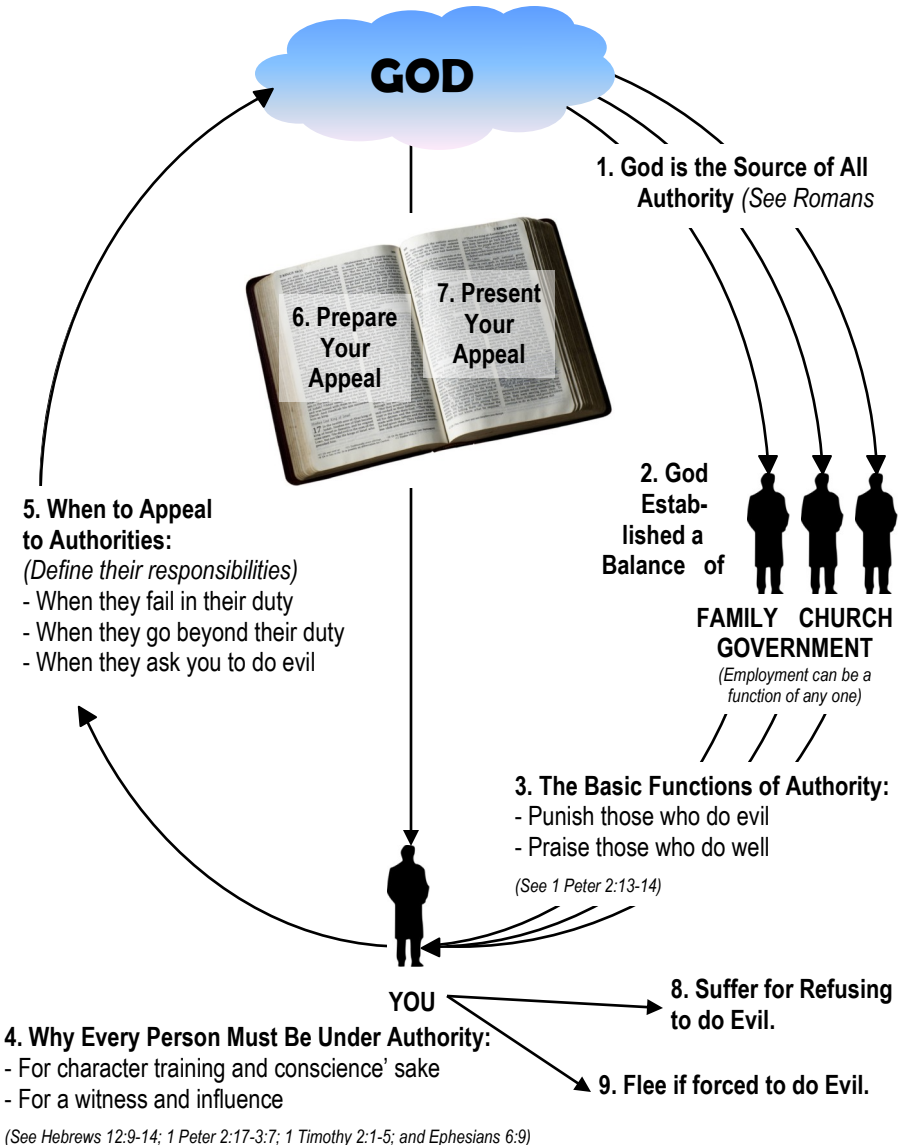
11. What if our Authority’s commands Disobey God?

ANSWER: When an authority figure has over-stepped their bounds, God often uses those under them to bring the human leader into compliance with God’s will. The book of Daniel has many excellent examples of this. One such example is found in the first chapter of Daniel. Here we see Judah besieged and overcome by Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar who brings promising individuals from Israel to be trained in the best learning of Babylon.



4. How Does God’s Authority Structure Function?

(from a diagram in “Principle of Authority” booklet page 2, by Institute in Basic Life Principles)



5. Why is Submission Under Godly Authority so Important?

ANSWER: Submission under godly authority is a living demonstration of faith. The connection between submission under the Heaven-appointed “chain of command” and living faith is revealed in the Bible story of the Centurion with the sick servant (Matthew 8:5-13).



The centurion beseeched the Saviour to heal his sick servant, yet said he was unworthy for Jesus (*Yahshua*) to come to his home to do it. He then explained the human chain-of-command and revealed his own understanding of submission under the authority. Within this framework of understanding, the centurion asked Christ to simply say the Word, and his servant would be healed. This Roman Centurion understood that God exercises His power

and protection, through a chain of command, just as did the government of Rome. Jesus was amazed at the man’s comprehension of godly authority. He said this understanding of Heaven’s chain-of-command demonstrated great faith.

*“When Jesus (*Yahshua*) heard it, He marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,”* Matthew 8:10.

6. What Does it Mean to Be Submitted Under Heaven’s Authority?

ANSWER: Submission under godly authority is a choice. The one who submits must choose to do so (Joshua 24:15). The word “submission” is important to understand. In 1 Peter 2:13, the Greek, the word “submit” is:

ὑποτάσσω (*hoop-ot-as'-so*)

It is used in the middle voice, which indicates that the one doing the submitting participates both in the action (submission) and in the results of the action (obedience).

9. When Human Authorities over us Make Demands or Commands that Disobey the Higher Authority of GOD, What Should We Do?

ANSWER: The answer is found in the experience of the Apostles after the Day of Pentecost. When arrested for obeying the authority of Heaven, we read:

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men, Acts 5:29

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego also faced such a test, when king Nebuchadnezzar demanded they bow to his golden image. Notice that these godly young men did not act in a rebellious or disrespectful manner toward the king.

They maintained a submitted spirit, even while refusing to obey his Lawless command (see Daniel Chapter 3). In this manner, we are all called to remain in submission to our human authorities, even while we must not comply with any commands which disobey God.



10. How Does God Want Human Authorities to Conduct Themselves in Leadership?

ANSWER: The very meaning of “leadership” is “preparing to be a godly authority.” The Pharisees held authority over the people, but they were not submitted to the “Higher Power.” We need government within the home, the Body of Believers and in the nation (Isa. 2:13), but any command structure -whether in the family, the body of believers, or the nation -will fail if divided against itself (Matthew 12:25, 26) or if it is rebellious against *God*.

THE BODY OF CHRIST—

The next level of authority is the Body of Christ, or the believers in the Faith. It is under the leadership of authorities that the body of believers is instructed, nurtured, and edified. Hebrews 13:17 counsels believers to heed their spiritual leaders within the Body of Christ, because these leaders “watch for your souls.”

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: *for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*”

Within the Body of Christ authority is structured by office, within the congregation and by Spiritual Gifts.

Ephesians 4:11-13 “And Jesus gave some, **apostles**; and some, **prophets**; and some, **evangelists**; and some, **pastors** and **teachers**; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

We are warned that rejection of God’s work through His human authorities is the same as rejecting the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

THE GOVERNMENT—

The third area of authority God has established is governments. 1 Peter 2:13-14 instructs us to obey our government, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for God’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.”

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but, when the wicked rule, the people mourn (Proverbs 29:2).

The Bible makes no provision for God’s children to only submit to “good” and kind leaders. We are to submit to the gentle and froward “masters” will equal obedience, as the Bible says in 1 Peter 2:18.

Submission also carries the military connotation of “lining up under.” This concept can be seen in our military today. Our involvement in the military is voluntary, but once we choose to enlist, or “line up under” that authority, there are binding obligations upon us, and we must obey.

By choosing to line up under Heaven-ordained authority it shows that we understand several important, Biblical principles:

- GOD is the supreme Ruler over all, 1 Timothy 6:15.
- GOD ordained all human authority, Romans 13:1.
- GOD is the One who establishes those in authority over us and influences their decisions, Proverbs 21:1.
- GOD doesn’t force us to get under His Authority or the authority of those He establishes for us during our lifetime, Joshua 24:15.
- GOD uses these powers and authorities to work His ultimate will.

Because God is in control over our lives, so long as we remain submitted under His chain of authority, these authorities will be used of God to accomplish His good purpose our lives. Romans 8:28 tells us, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

7. Are there Rewards for Submitting Under Godly Authority?

ANSWER: Definitely! Here are a few of the many benefits:

- Things will go well for you, Ephesians 6:2-3
- You will have a long life, Ephesians 6:1-3
- Discernment will be gained, Proverbs 15:5.
- You will be given clear direction, Proverbs 6:20-22.
- You will be protected from evil people, Proverbs 6:23-24.
- You will obtain a good report, Heb. 13:17.
- You will avoid fear of condemnation, Romans 13:5.
- The Lord will be pleased with you, Col. 3:20.
- You will not blaspheme God or His Word, 1 Timothy 6:1.
- You will receive the reward of God’s inheritance, Col 3:23-24



8. Who has our Heavenly Father set up as our Heaven-given Authorities?

ANSWER: God has established three main authority structures. In order of authority, these are: the family, which was established in Eden; the church, defined as a body of believers who have experienced the life changing work of in their lives; and the government, on all it's different levels.

FAMILY—

It is significant to note that the family was the first human authority structure. It is the highest human authority structure under *God*.

Within this authority structure, children are to submit to their parents. This means that children are to honor and obey their fathers and mothers, as it says in Colossians 3:20, “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto *the LORD*.” (See also Exodus 20:12.)

When the child matures and leaves the home, obedient submission to parents ends, but respect and honor continue throughout life. In fact, *GOD* intends that the young will always honor not only their parents, but also those of the elder generation.

Leviticus 19:32 “*Thou shalt rise up (stand up if you are sitting) before the hoary head (grey-haired person), and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.*” (See also Proverbs 16:31).

There is a promise for those submitting to the Heaven-given authority of family in Ephesians 6:1-3, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*” In other words, *God* extends a special measure of blessing and protection to those who submit under the God-given chain of authority.

The next authority level within the family is God's establishment of husbands in authority above wives.

Ephesians 5:22 “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*”

Choosing not to submit under our Heaven-given, human authorities is called rebellion. Rebellion is a serious offense, before *GOD*. It is biblically likened to witchcraft.

REBELLION = WITCHCRAFT

1 Samuel 15:23 “*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...*”

Why is rebellion so serious to God that He equates it with witchcraft? Because when we rebel against our human authority, we step out from under God. In so doing, we place ourselves out from under *God's* protective care and expose ourselves directly to the enemy's destruction.

