

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*
(Matthew 18:19,20)



SECTION 5 - LESSON 36

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

- *Men In The Gap*
- *Authority In The Home*

1. What Is Authority?
2. Authority Given To Men



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Introduction:

The transformation our Lord made in us while we were still in Israel was painful and extensive. Mike would chuckle afterwards, “We could’ve floated Israel on the tears we shed there.” Many more changes have been wrought by His hand as we’ve discussed the Hebraic foundations together and incorporated them as our way of life.

As we look back now, it’s as if our heart Circumciser, Jesus, extracted our previous understanding of matrimony and the divisive effects of our seminary training so that our marriage covenant would reflect our Covenant union with our Father.

The individuals we were at the retreat center would barely recognize the two of us today! They certainly wouldn’t understand the *covenant* basis to our marriage. We share this so that you’ll devote prayerful effort as you read through and discuss these lessons that focus on God’s perspective of the marriage relationship.

Your marriage may not need as much dismantling or rebuilding as ours did. But, we can assure you that after twelve

years of sharing the Hebraic foundations, there have been few that haven’t.

Remember this:

Stay repentant!

Diligently pursue your sanctification!

Live to glorify your heavenly Father!

In this lesson and the two which follow, we’re going to spend considerable time discussing *biblical authority* and how that’s enacted in your home. As you go through the different facets of authority, you’ll recognize that the role responsibilities for men differ from those of women in very distinct ways.

Both the will and the desire for husbands and wives to fulfill our Lord’s requirements and responsibilities are essential for the serenity of their home as a refuge and sanctuary. Remember, God’s design is for you to experience His presence and loving power within *your home first* before you occupy yourself with His work for you in the lives of others!

Our forefathers in the faith learned from His word to them as well as from experience that God loves to be among His people. That is, He loves to actively live *in union with* them. And, He delights to come into *our* homes through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Because His holiness can’t be compromised, He warned through His servant Moses to maintain a campwide condition of holy “set-apartness” in order to encounter their God in their midst.

Each person was to provide himself with a spade to deal with his own waste—another reminder of each one’s personal responsibility before God for obedience on a daily basis! That’s a very visual image in the *physical* dimension of the *spiritual* heart cleansing and circumcision God had commanded repeatedly to His people!

*You must **include a trowel** with your equipment, and when you relieve yourself, you are to **dig a hole first** and afterwards cover your excrement. For the LORD your God **moves about in your camp** to rescue you and to hand over your enemies to you. Therefore **your camp must be a holy place**. The LORD should **not see anything indecent** among you, or He will **turn away from you** (Deuteronomy 23:13,14).*

If the Israelite camp was considered a holy place because of God’s hovering presence, think about our lives and our homes as Spirit-indwelled followers of Jesus! It’s significant that God, through the angel Gabriel, ordered Mary to name her Messiah baby “*Immanuel—which means, ‘God with us’*” (Matthew 1:23). What a poignant reminder that He’s *with us* each moment and each place we go!

That’s the underlying theme of our Lord’s command to His beloved Israelites as they were about to enter the Land He’d promised their forefathers: to keep His presence *constantly in mind* throughout the day, whether at home or away:

*Tie [God’s words] **on your hand** [a reminder of whatever you DO] as a sign, put them at the front of a headband **around your forehead** [whatever you even THINK], and write them on the*

***door-frames of your house** [whenever you enter in] and on **your gates** [whenever you leave] (Deuteronomy 6:8,9).*

Your marriage should testify to the quality of relationship you have with our Father and our Lord Jesus. Your children ought to grow up experiencing our Lord in your home. And, as godly authority is exercised in your home, our Lord will feel welcomed in your midst.

Your home is where you first “*work out your salvation with fear and trembling*” (Philippians 2:12). Your spiritual teamwork as you cooperate with the Spirit of Jesus brings about fruition of the truths we’ll be sharing. Just keep thinking:
Together...Together. We do this together!

[For more on the loving cooperation of husbands and wives, see our [June-July 1999 newsletter: Crossing The Jordan.](#)]

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: *Men In The Gap*

“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none” (Ezekiel 22:30).

From Mike especially for men:

You probably grieve as I do over the paucity of godly older men who are both courageously loving in Jesus *and* willing to help other men. It seems as if most of them retired from spiritual responsibility once they left employment.

For years one of the members of our Board of Directors traveled the country trying to find older men who were willing to get involved to help the younger generations. He couldn’t find even one!

I remember at the end of a seminar at a congregation in Atlanta, I was sitting with all the men. Two guys in their 30's asked if any of the older men who were present would mentor them. Out of the thirty or so men over 50 in the group, not one volunteered.

One of these younger fellows, a brand new believer, left the faith shortly afterward. He determined that no one cared if he was a brother or not, and without discipling, his relationship with Jesus withered. The other man is now my spiritual son who has followed us across the country as family in Jesus.

All through out the Hebrew Scriptures in particular, our Lord emphasized His pattern of truth transmission: from the older generation to those that follow. Fathers were to pass along God's will and His ways to not only their sons but to their *grandsons*. That way each generation would not only hear the truth at least twice from an older man, but have double the opportunity to keep sharing it themselves!

Note God's purpose to reinforce a rightful perspective of *Who He is*, and to stress His desire to bless each generation through their obedient trust in Him:

[S]o that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged (Deuteronomy 6:2).

The impact that godly older men can have in the lives of other men can't be overemphasized. In 1960 children had a 90% probability of living in a two-parent home. A child born in 1980, however, had less than a 30% chance of being raised by both birth parents.

In a very short period of time something important was lost, and it's only gotten worse. We're failing to show our children how to succeed us in the covenant of marriage. Two factors in particular have contributed to the demise of healthy marriages:

- The **diminished exercise of godly authority in the home by a man who is a servant leader;**
- The **failure to understand God's purposes for marriage and child-raising.**

During the last century much of what has always been considered *parental responsibility* has become the domain of schools, including Sunday schools and youth groups. A father's God-given authority as servant-leader—and his accompanying responsibilities to his wife and children—have been drastically undermined. The man's jurisdiction has been stolen from him, and many don't even realize what they've forfeited.

We're suffering severe consequences of that loss in this Atomistic culture. On all sides it seems as though Satan has made it as difficult as he can for us men to fulfill our responsibilities. From a scriptural standpoint I believe the 1900's will be remembered as the century in which the U.S. became an effeminate nation. The men simply withdrew.

“So God created humankind in His own image; in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27,CJB).

God had specific purpose in creating two genders. There's much more behind the words 'male' and 'female' than most Christians pay attention to—to our

detriment! Because the genders are so different, only men can truly understand the wiring of boys, and women the unique wiring of girls. That's by our Father's design!

The whole intergenerational responsibility of helping boys become men has been forfeited to our culture's infusion of individualism. We were deceived, and have failed to recognize the true, biblical nature of male development.

Prophetic voices today have been warning how much the **spirit of Jezebel**, an effeminate, domineering demonic entity, controls this nation and much of Hellenized Christendom as well.

Women now call themselves "Reverend" and "Pastor", a practice that's become widely accepted. Surely there can be no doubt that, like ancient Israel, we are in a time in which our Lord again grieves, "*My people—children oppress them, and women are ruling over them. My people! Your guides lead you astray and obliterate the paths you should follow*" (Isaiah 3:12,CJB).

Today's culture has the largest group of *immature* people under 50 years of age that ever existed! Adolescence, a period sociologists considered to end at age 19 in the 1960's, now extends well into the late thirties. This trend is being driven by immature males. But prolonged adolescence isn't totally the fault of men who've resisted taking full responsibility for their lives. Something has gone drastically wrong in this culture at large.

Just think about it: When we men over 50 got married, we were generally responsible enough to have a wife. Now, men who are still **adolescent in motivation and responsibility** are trying to learn *after* they're married the same responsibility we had *before we got married*.

No wonder women are filing for divorce in droves. Over eighty-five per cent of all divorces are now instituted by women.

Since the end of World War II in 1945, this nation has dashed headlong into female dominance over many areas of culture and Christianity. Few in western society seemed to have examined the Bible to discern God's gender responsibilities. People in the past took it for granted that boys would become responsible men, and girls become mature women.

If you recall, a biblically healthy society is a "**Trustee Family**." It is patriarchal, with self-sacrificial men in authority as servant-leaders who serve the interests of the people as a whole.

Unhealthy societies are "**Atomistic**." People are individualistic and preoccupied with self. Feminism abounds. Every culture in history that has reached this latter stage has destroyed itself. The U.S. is in the process of societal meltdown right now!

Our purpose in writing these lessons is not to save this nation, but to equip the followers of Jesus to live for Him and to raise Godly generations to succeed them. As we'll see in later lessons: Hebraic home fellowships are patriarchal, led by mature male servant-leaders who personally role model a Christ-like way of life.

As we continue to share the Hebraic foundations, we're endeavoring to help establish Trustee-style faith communities with converts from today's "Atomistic" culture. With God's help it can be done, but the task will be neither easy nor readily accepted.

Distinctively humble men are needed who will first apply the Hebraic foundations in their homes.

We men who follow Jesus are attempting to be obedient in one of the most difficult periods in history. The **Atomistic culture** around us opposes everything our Father is restoring. The **Nicolaitan religious system**, which has so readily adapted to the atomistic culture, is an entity He hates and is warring against (see Revelation 2:6,15).

[Please read our Hebraic Article, **I Hate Nicolaitanism**, for confirmation of the destructive impact of this system.]

Never forget that the more impossible a situation appears, the MORE possible it is for our Lord to bring it about for His glory (see Matthew 19:26)! I don't think He's looking for large crowds of men standing together rooting in stadiums. He's searching for one man who will stand in the gap in his own home. That man, bent on being obedient and bringing glory to our Father, is all that's needed, one home at a time.

A shepherd boy named David could defeat the Philistine giant Goliath with a sling and stone. It was the young man's relentless heart devotion to his God that made victory possible: *"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty..."* (1 Samuel 17:45).

Just think what our Lord can do with you, a man who has His Spirit in him. The only question is: Are you a man with resolve, ready to stand in the gap?

"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant"
(Matthew 20:26).

Be confident of this: The Hebraic Restoration encompasses the necessary elements for men to stand in the gap for our Lord *and* to produce godly successors

in the faith. No matter in what stage of life you find yourself, realize that our Father's goal for you is to ultimately be His *zaken*, an elder who is prepared to represent Him in the compassionate care of His children.

Everything we'll be sharing in these lessons on authority in the home are aimed not only to help your current situation, but to prepare you to be our Fathers' representative—a wise, biblical *zaken*!

Let's review our Father's goal for your sanctification:

For Men

- To be a true wise elder representing fatherly concern for God's children. Any lesser goal will only impede the process of your sanctification.
- For your character to grow in Christ-likeness so that you will be Jesus-in-the-flesh to all you meet.
- For your wife to experience the love of Jesus through you. Your home life is our Father's means to teach you the humility, love and servanthood you need to lead others (1 Timothy 3:4,5).

For Women

- To be the wise wife of an elder (see Proverbs 31:10-31) is a wonderful culmination of your role as *ezer*, the life companion and helper suitable for your particular man. Any goal less than this will only impede your sanctification.
- To manifest a loving, submissive spirit and grow in Christ-likeness so that you'll be able to teach younger wives how to love their husband and children (see Titus 2:3,4).
- As your husband's best-suited helper/partner, you are our Father's primary

human means to help him learn the humility, love and servanthood he needs to lead others.

Both husband and wife must fully embrace our Father's purposes for themselves. By knowing our Father's mutually interdependent goals for the two of you *together*, the process of your sanctification will be that much more meaningful as you help each other.

Anything less will ultimately lead to grieving, quenching or even blaspheming the Holy Spirit. And, you'll only hurt each other unnecessarily. Again, this is truly a time in which you as a couple must ***“work out your [plural] salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose”*** (Philippians 2:12,13).

At this point in time you may indeed be the fruit of the Atomistic society around you. But presently our Father is choosing to reveal the Hebraic foundations as He restores the Jewish people back to Israel in fulfillment of His promise: ***“He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth”*** (Isaiah 11:12).

People are as unaccepting of His truth now as when Jesus walked in the midst of Rome's occupation of Israel. The Judaizing religious establishment was corrupt. Both government power and religious authority conspired against Him. Yet that didn't keep our Lord from fulfilling His Father's purposes and redeeming for Himself a people who would trust in Him! So do take hope.

If you've spent considerable time in the Hellenist religious system, you may find you need to “unlearn” a lot of what you accepted to be authentic Christi-

anity so you can live the Hebraic foundations. But remember this vital motivation: Our Father, in His mercy, is opening these truths to all who have ears to hear.

Remember that with His revelation (*rhema*) comes His power to fulfill it. The promise of Jesus stands firm: ***“Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever trusts in Me will also do the works I do! Indeed, he will do greater ones, because I am going to the Father”*** (John 14:12,CJB).

As a follower of Jesus you can be fully confident in this:

- Our Lord Jesus is the Great Circumciser. Whatever you lack in your ability to fulfill your responsibilities to Him, He can accomplish through your ongoing *repentance* and *sanctification*.
- You can wholly depend on the empowerment of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

If you live in humble reliance on the Spirit, He will strengthen you ***to serve***, to ***role model*** and to ***courageously guard the family*** our Lord has entrusted into your care. As we'll discuss, this multifaceted role begins with you enacting godly authority as a servant-leader in your home.

Godly authority produces peace. And where peace exists, love blossoms.

As you help your children learn to live by these truths while they're still in your home, how much better prepared they will be as loving servants willing to walk in Jesus' steps wholeheartedly when they're away from home. They won't have to struggle with the religious garbage we who are the first generation to embrace the Hebraic foundations must rid ourselves of.

First, Are You Completely Dead To Yourself?

“Your old men will dream dreams”
(Acts 2:17).

A while back our Lord gave me a dream that illustrated the intense sacrifice men who stand in the gap will have to make.

A battle was raging. An Army officer hunkered down in a foxhole spotted one of his troops wounded in front of him. With bullets flying around him, he crawled from the foxhole and dragged the wounded man back into it. The officer was glad just to have survived the rescue.

A few minutes later a hand grenade was tossed into the foxhole. The wounded soldier was too injured to move from it. The officer could have jumped out of the foxhole to save himself, leaving the wounded man to die. But instead, he leaped onto the grenade, absorbing its deadly blast.

To lay our lives down for others is the true nature of anyone our Lord calls to lead. Jesus' conclusion for every man who would follow Him is still death to self: ***“No one has greater love than a person who lays down his life for his friends”*** (John 15:13).

Before we get into godly authority in the home, you need to take a close look at yourself to discern how *truly dead* you are. This isn't a pass/fail issue, but a point in time so that you can determine where you need the help of our Lord and your wife.

In fact, wherever you may find yourself falling short of our Lord's standard, don't be embarrassed or ashamed.

Instead, repent! Only repentance opens the door for our Lord to effect sanctifying changes in your heart.

Your wife can be of great help in assisting you to die to yourself. Make sure you see her in this light. You must die to yourself if you're going to be an effective servant-leader.

We shared the following anecdote in a previous lesson, and it may be worthwhile to repeat it so you can evaluate yourself.

For years at our retreat center I used to test the self-centered fruit of Hellenistic Christianity: men who yearn for personal acclaim rather than wanting to be the servant leaders our Lord calls for. I'd simulate throwing a hand grenade in the middle of a group. “You have three seconds before the hand grenade blows up. One...two... three...”



- 0% of the clergy ever jumped on the grenade.
- 10% of non-clergy men jumped on the grenade.
- 50% of the women and teenagers jumped on the hand grenade.

If you think about this scenario, it appears that Hellenism produces leaders who are more concerned with self-preservation than with personal sacrifice. And, from the time a boy is a teenager and grows to be a man, his chances of jumping on the hand grenade significantly decrease. There's a tragic pattern here.

Do you remember *the funnel* from Lesson 27? It signifies the path of *dying to self* we all need to go through. The whole process of *repentance* moves you to the center of the funnel, and sanctification

moves you downward to grow in Christ's likeness.

In your ongoing pilgrimage to salvation, you're eventually drawn into the stem of the funnel. The love of Jesus is so compelling that you don't even want to think about yourself but *only to do His will*. Your personal discretion to choose what *you* want to do withers as you continue to yield yourself as a bondservant to His will.

You aren't as concerned with yourself as you are in serving the purposes of Jesus by serving others. This means you've prepared yourself to embrace **intrusion** in your life.

Remember that we're dealing with relational priorities and the right of those people to intrude into your plans and desires. Not all of your relationships can place the same demands and privilege of intruding in your life. If everyone interrupted whenever they wanted, you'd be overwhelmed.

Yieldedness to our Father gives Him 100% right to intrude as He desires. Your spouse and family should also have the privilege of immediate intrusion within certain specified parameters. Those in the extended spiritual family of your home fellowship have some permission to intrude but a greater requirement to "schedule" their intrusion.

Your willingness to let those you intimately care about interrupt through unscheduled, serendipitous intrusions is a means of evidencing your servant's heart. This makes these relationships more special than others. Receiving



appropriate intrusion with joy is a sign of how much you have died to yourself.

Even though we're addressing men, everyone should answer these questions.

Evaluate yourself: Would you jump on the hand grenade? *Would you really?* Would you have to stop and think about it first? . . . **BOOM!** Write down how you'd respond.

Ask those close to you for their evaluation. Do they see areas in which you aren't dead to yourself? Are there areas you must have your own way, no matter what?

How do you handle unscheduled intrusion in your life? Do you find it a joyful opportunity or inconvenient interference? Ask your family members and others close to you in the faith for comment.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"
(John 10:10).

Another recent dream came in two parts:

In the first segment I saw a woman giving birth. Her husband was waiting to receive the baby. I knew that the image of the father awaiting his child symbolized a deep truth.

The Lord explained the dream to me. A healthy biblical tension exists between a mother and a father as they raise their children. Each has a part to play in developing mature young adults. The transition from Momma-dependent to Father-directed has deep implications in producing spiritually and emotionally healthy young men and women.

The second part of the dream offered the same scene, a husband waiting to receive the baby from the mother. But this dream featured an added element: A man representing the *government* was standing behind the father, waiting to snatch the child away from him as quickly as possible.

I could feel the father's sorrow as he tried to do his part. But he was stuck between the child's mother and the government's overbearing influence. We'll come back to this scene when we address parenting in a later lesson.

[At our website under **Hebraic Articles** is an essay entitled **He Has Showed You**, in which we deal with the government quest to undermine a father's influence in his children's lives.]

As we discuss the issue of authority, you'll discover that it is one of the most crucial topics for followers of Jesus to understand. Sadly, few do. Just keep this in mind:

**If you have trouble with authority,
you have trouble with God.**

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: *Biblical Authority*

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me’” (Matthew 28:18).

As Jesus departs Earth He affirms to His disciples, and to all of us, that He has ALL authority. Have you ever wondered why this was important enough for Him to make a point of it? Understanding authority and its God-given role in our lives is indispensable for a follower of Jesus.

1. What Is Authority?

We all use the word “authority”, but do you know what it means? As it pertains to a man and his home, biblical authority can be defined as the privilege and responsibility to:

- ***include*** those people or things that contribute to peace and harmony in the home, or ***exclude*** those people or things that rob the home of peace and harmony;
- to ***commend*** those actions and attitudes that contribute to the peace and harmony of the home, or to ***correct*** those actions and attitudes that rob the peace and harmony of the home.

The person in authority is like a gatekeeper. He includes and commends those people and things that support his responsibilities to God, and excludes or corrects those that do not. If the gates of the home are to filled with *shalom*, the well-being and peace that each person needs, then anything that would disrupt that peace must be confronted and eliminated.

The reality of biblical authority is a crucial matter for us today in particular when people are so consumed with being their own boss and looking out only for their own interests. Yet Paul makes clear God's position:

*Let every person **be in subjection to the governing authorities.** For there is no authority **except from God**, and those which exist are **established by God.** Therefore he who **resists authority** has opposed the **ordinance of God**; and they who have opposed will receive **condemnation upon themselves** (Romans 13: 1,2,NAS).*

Rebellion against God's established authorities results in judgment. We've encountered countless people who call themselves "Christian" but live in personal chaos because they've rebelled against the authorities God has set in place. In this Atomistic culture, respect for authority is at a low ebb, and many Christians have bought into this resistance.

In fact, democracy is closely connected to the Atomistic mindset. The Founding Fathers understood clearly from the Bible: "*When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers*" (Proverbs 28:2).

The more democratic this nation becomes, the closer it approaches its own demise.

We mentioned in a previous lesson that our God's form of government is a *republic*, not a democracy. Our Founding Fathers established a republic that has now disintegrated into a popularity contest called a democracy.

If you recall, biblical republics are led by *zakens*, the most qualified men of wisdom and experience who have the interest of the entire nation at heart. Demo-

cracies are led by those who are looked to to fulfill each person's own special interests—or who just tickle the fancy of fickle voters.

Sadly, many Christian homes have become "democratic" and are suffering the consequences of God's judgment by their resistance to His ways. Husbands and fathers are failing to exercise godly authority as servant-leaders. Rather than exuding the love and harmony of God's order, their homes erupt with the strife and turmoil of selfish insolence.

We realize that in this Atomistic culture the word "authority" can conjure up all sorts of images, mainly negative. While abuse of authority must be confronted, that's not cause to do away with authority as many lawless Nicolaitan teachers advocate.

Anchor this truth:

Authority is our Father's means to maintain peace among His children, to effect Christ-like changes, and to instill loving obedience to Him in succeeding generations.

Note that biblical authority *is not* authoritarianism:

Authoritarianism uses power and position to control and conform people to meet someone's agenda.

Authoritarianism serves the interests of the few who dominate the many. It will never produce responsible spiritual growth in anyone.

Biblical authority is based on servant love, not personal power.

Authority *confronts* the selfish and self-centered focus of the human sin nature. Through *instruction* and *role-*

modeling biblical authority helps you live for purposes beyond your own narrow desires.

Four types of authority call for personal submission:

1. Spiritual authority of husbands and *zakens* (biblical elders);
2. Parental authority;
3. Government authority;
4. Employer authority.

If you have trouble in any of these areas, you'll have trouble with God. Don't be ignorant of God's requirements regarding authority. His perspective on the issue applies both to those to whom He has given authority, *and* those who are called to submit.

If you follow Jesus, *deference to authority* and *trust in God* are inseparable. (In a later lesson we'll discuss the crucial importance of deference.) Authorities are often God's chisel in our character development to remove self-will and develop Christ-like humility.

As events past and present demonstrate, rebellion surfaces more in response to *authority figures* than toward anyone else. Rebellion against authority can have far reaching consequences. Remember, you reap what you sow (see Galatians 6:8).

We'd like to share an observation from our years at the retreat center:

Fathers would occasionally bring up difficulties they were having with their "rebellious" children. When we asked these fathers if they themselves had slandered or gossiped about their bosses at work, many confessed they had.

We explained that bad-mouthing was rebellious and insubordinate

against those God had placed over them. As a result, these men were reaping the consequences of the **spirit of rebellion** in their own homes.

When the men who had slandered later asked forgiveness from their bosses for their attitudes and actions, much of the rebellion on the homefront often ceased as well.

What is your understanding of biblical authority and God's purpose for it?

How is your attitude toward authority? Do you have a submissive spirit?

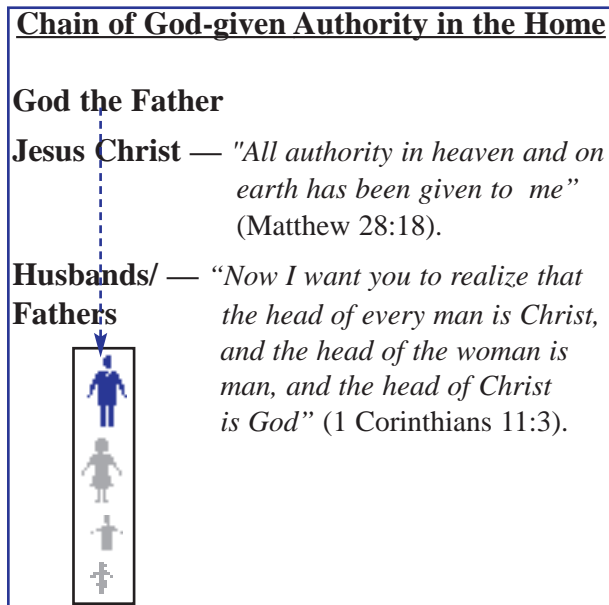
Is there a particular authority area with whom you have the most trouble: spiritual, government, family, employer? Yes or no? If yes, describe the nature of your resistance.

2. Biblical Authority Is Given To Men

"For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His Body, of which He is the Savior" (Ephesians 5:23).

The foundation for a man's authority comes from God Himself. A man's wife and family didn't give him his authority, God did. This is a critical understanding: *God* is behind a husband's authority as servant-leader in the home. The husband is accountable to God *for how* he walks in that authority leadership. And, those in his household are called upon to submit because God is the Source of that authority role.

Our Lord has established a chain of authority within a family. There's a vital reason for this: God is looking for *one person* who is responsible to render account to Him.



Personal responsibility is a key feature for those in authority. Remember, when God confronted Adam and Eve after their sin, all He heard was *blame and excuse*. Adam blamed his wife, and she blamed the serpent. [We'll discuss blame shortly.]

God has called for men to exercise authority as servant-leaders in the home. He states it simply in His Word, "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the **head of the**

woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3; see also 1 Timothy 2:11-15).

In each of the Gentile communities Paul addresses, there is a strong Hellenist influence, a tendency for women to brazenly seek control—not unlike today! Paul is quite direct in his command for faith gatherings: "*But I do not allow a woman to teach or **exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet [more accurately, at peace, undisturbed]***" (1 Timothy 2:12).

We realize that many within various Nicolaitan systems have imprisoned these words within cultural boundaries so that they're meant only for congregations 2000 years ago. There lies great danger, however, when we pick and choose what we want to believe in God's Word and ignore the rest.

You may be wondering about the function of authority in a home in which the husband is absent through death or divorce. The wife then comes back under her father's authority as her servant-leader, or abides in the authority of the elders of her faith community. In either situation, she can find help to raise her children according to God's Word as well as find security in knowing there is a male perspective to guide her decisions.

What about a single woman who lives alone? The same is true. She is under her father's authority or that of the elders of her faith community. The role of these men in her life is to safeguard her, especially her dignity as a vital member of the Body.

Is there a clearly understood and respected chain of authority in your home by which even your children abide? Yes or no? If no, what have the consequences been? What do you think they will be?

From Sue especially for women:

As followers of Jesus, we women are called to place our hope in God regardless of the circumstances or outcome. A key example for us is presented in Hebrews, chapter 11, of a trust that wouldn't quit!

By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised (v. 11).

What does trust in the faithful Lord of our lives mean for us in our daily walk? Unless our Lord specifically prefaces a passage to men or kings or sons or husbands, His Word is meant to pierce my heart with **trusting obedience!**

BUT, there are definitely different roles and responsibilities demanded of me as a woman, a wife, and a mother than those that face my husband. I'm now an "older woman." I've walked with our Lord 29 years and with Mike 36 years. My husband is now an elder, caring for our Father's children.

In the decades leading up to Mike becoming a *zaken* there have been times when he's had to confront injustice boldly. He's paid the price of being scorned and ridiculed. But through these trials our Father has molded us into greater unity *together*.

I rejoice that my husband can stand for truth even when it's unpopular! That qualifies him to "*sit at the city gates*" and help other men to not duck their biblical responsibilities. As an elder's wife I'm pre-

sented with opportunity to fulfill God's guidance for older women that's pictured in such detail in Proverbs 31:10-31.

The biblical lessons I've learned at the Potter's hands are universal to women everywhere, be they single, widowed, divorced or married. Since we are each called to be conformed to the character of Jesus, we are responsible to help one another fulfill our life roles through whatever means we have. That may take the shape of direct experience, observation of a godly role model, or testimonies of sisters who have run their race with endurance and victory.

God Designed Women To Be Under Authority

Authority, that is, "covering", has always been part of our Lord's plan. Acceptance of that call helps you to find the confidence, rest and trusting peace of Sarah, Mary and Hannah.

- Our Lord intended that first **your father**, and then **your husband**, be your covering to protect you and provide for you. Yet, the reality is that all fathers and husbands are imperfect. That's one reason God raised you up to help them through your submissive spirit, affectionate support and earnest prayer.

Just because your father or husband has failed you has never nullified their role as God's covering for you. Permitting **rebellion, independence or bitterness** to become a wall erected between you and these God-designated individuals opens you to an array of emotional hurt and spiritual oppression.

- Sarah "*did not fear any terror*", the literal translation of 1 Peter 3:6, because she was able in her heart to recognize her husband's **biblical authority and covering** over her. That's why she could call

him “lord”, as the one responsible for the well-being of her and their household.

When a wife gets out from under her husband’s covering, she brings onto herself **anxiety** and **agitation**. And worse: She becomes a public rebuke to both God and to her husband. Her lack of peace causes others around her to doubt the ability of her husband (or her God) to shelter her heart.

Remaining under Mike’s authority as the servant-leader of our home has given me a **position of influence** in the lives of others. And, in many ways the position of influence can be greater than the position of authority.

Why? Because authority is given to a husband regardless of his ability to walk effectively in it. He needs to learn how to exercise it in a godly manner. That requires sanctification. Influence, however, grows through the choices a wife makes to be under authority and to permit our Lord to sanctify her.

My influence is a sign of the work our Lord has done in my heart, and my willingness to submit to my husband as servant-leader in our home.

Our Father gave me to Mike as a life companion and helper suitable for him. (Remember that *ezer* in Hebrew is the same word God uses regarding His relationship to Israel. It’s by no means inferior!)

I voice my input on situations to Mike, and also bring them up to our Father privately. I ask Him to bring confirmation to or conviction on Mike. Our Father is faithful to give me peace and to stir up Mike to seek His will. That way, God gets the glory and I’m not a contentious nag!

Mike and I have failed each other many times over the years. Both of us are

so imperfect as we journey on our pilgrimage of His transformation process. But even though Mike’s made mistakes as he’s walked in his role, those missteps have never negated his place of authority that our Father bestowed on him when we married. Nor have they allowed me to duck out from that protection and still be true to my Father’s call for me.

How do you feel about the responsibility of husbands to have authority as servant-leader of the home? If you differ with what we’ve shared, write your own biblical foundation for your view.

Are you a woman of godly influence? Do others seek you for wisdom? Yes or no? If no, describe why you think that is.

Are you a woman who is plagued by anxiety or worry? Yes or no? If yes, describe why.

Abiding Under God’s Authorities

• I recall at times asking women on retreats if they’d rather *love* or *control* their families. When they understood “control” as doing whatever was necessary to achieve an outcome *they felt was best*, over 90% admitted control!

Sadly, control opens the door to **manipulation, insecurity** and a **critical spirit**—arenas that destroy peace in your home. If you give way to these, you're undermining your husband's authority as servant-leader and negating any influence you might offer.

Does the concept of "authority" that we've been describing as a protective "covering" resonate in your spirit? I realize that it's certainly counter-cultural, as so many women feel their fathers or husbands have failed them miserably.

But that ensuing bitterness has produced an epidemic of independent, self-sufficient, achievement-oriented women who have discovered to their grief that they're emotionally hollow. What a sorrowful legacy for their daughters!

Are you a woman known for your *love* or your *control*? Describe yourself.

Ask your husband and family for their input?

Do your husband and those who know you well see you as "public compliment" to God and your husband, or a "public rebuke"? Ask them to give you their reasons.

Where You Can Begin Today!

- Start now by prayerfully identifying and eliminating all **false expectations** you have for those in godly authority in your life. Biblical justice demands that you never expect of oth-

ers what you wouldn't expect of yourself (Matthew 7:12).

God never intended for a man to think or respond as a woman does, so eliminate that expectation. Prayerfully seek an **older woman** with whom you can rejoice, pray, and trust our Lord. However, DON'T use these conversations or prayer times to gossip, slander, or otherwise grouse about your life situation or those in it!

As you find mutual edification in your relationship of "one anothering", you'll be uplifting not only your own heart but bringing spiritual and emotional strength back to your home.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

If you've discovered things in this lesson that need to be changed in you:

1. Repent of any sin (Psalms 103:11,12; Isaiah 43:25).
2. Don't let up on seeking the Spirit's help until the way that is in the character of Jesus is formed in you (Matthew 7:7,8).
3. And don't lose sight that our Father is merciful and longsuffering. If you stay repentant, He will continue to readily forgive and restore (Isaiah 30:18).

Don't stop on your pilgrimage until the character of Jesus is completely formed in you! Press on, dear ones:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).