

**Date:** February 16, 2020

**Title:** Whose Authority?

**Text:** Proverbs

**Big Idea:** We are made to thrive in appropriate relationships of authority and submission.

**FCF:** Because we don't like to submit to authority, we struggle with exercising wise and godly authority.

- **AUTHORITY IS GIVEN BY GOD**

Because it is a book of such practical wisdom, Proverbs doesn't dwell much on where authority comes from as much as it recognizes the bare fact that earthly authority exists, and how it should function in God's good world.

- **AUTHORITY SHOULD BE HONORED**

Proverbs 24:21-22 & Romans 13:1-7

Allow me to draw out five principles here in regards to authority:

1. **First, governing authorities have the *power of the sword*.**

14:35)16:13)(16:15 19:12)20:8)20:26) 22:11)

2. **Second, God reigns over *every* human authority.**

21:1) 29:26)

3. **Third, *might does not make right*.**

God-given authority does not give free rein to injustice or abuse. Just because God has put someone in a place of authority does not make them right. Every authority will answer to God for the ways in which they abuse their authority.

4. **Fourth, *submission to authority is a training ground for our submission to God*.**

Submission to authority is not only necessary, but it is good, because it helps us learn to submit to God, who put the authority over us.

Of course, there will be times in our lives—as in the situation of the early disciples to whom Paul was writing—when we will be asked to submit to ungodly or unjust authorities. For them it was the Roman Empire. For us, it might a law, or a governor, or a president we don't agree with.

5. **Finally, in both *submission and* authority, *humility wins the day*:**

25:6-7) 27:18)

- **AUTHORITY SHOULD BE USED WITH WISDOM**

What we've covered so far is the broad stroke of how Scripture views relationships of authority and submission. But Proverbs also speaks directly to those who are in authority. How does one wield authority with wisdom—for the good of others, and the glory of God?

- **Authorities must lead with wisdom:**

8:15-16) 31:3-9)

- **Wise Authority Brings Blessing:**

28:2 16:12 25:4-5 29:4) 29:14)

- **AUTHORITY IS A TERROR IN THE HANDS OF FOOLS**

28:15) 28:16a) 29:12)

- **AUTHORITY IS ULTIMATELY ABOUT RELATIONSHIP:**

20:28) 14:28)

**APPLICATION: HOW DO I LIVE IN AND UNDER AUTHORITY?**

- **If you lead people, seek their good.**
- **If you want to learn to lead, learn to follow.** And do it well.
- **Submission to God gets tested when life is hard.**

So the question is, how do you respond to the circumstances God puts in your life? Maybe it's the sudden death of a loved one. Maybe it's a financial crisis in your family. Maybe it's a scary medical diagnosis. Maybe it's an estranged relationship. Whatever life brings to you is not accidental. It's God's authority that has allowed it into your life. And how you respond when life is hard is a litmus test of how you submit to God's authority.