

Hebrews 7:4-5

Greatness, Authority and Privilege...

The world sees authority and privilege as a bad thing that should be removed. It think that those who possess either authority or privilege should be stripped of them, demonized and punished; for we live in an age where privilege is equated to race and made to be a vile thing... but scripture paints a different picture. Scripture attaches privilege to the pleasure of God in choosing a people (and remember that it is from every tribe, tongue and nation) and in giving immense privilege to that people so that they may display the greatness of their God, to declare the wonders of His love and to care for all those who have been placed under their authority. In the world according to God, greatness is in serving, authority is derived from the greater and privilege is always centered around love and the sharing of God's glory.

I. GOD ALONE GIVES ALL MEN THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD

1Samuel 2.6-10

- A. This is the foundation of all authority, privilege and greatness

Romans 13:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

- B. God gives the foundation of all differences by His sovereign decree
1. In election
 2. In the dispensation of His sovereign will (ie: lazarus and the rich man)

Luke 16:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.'

3. In the gifts and spiritual abilities and blessings, given by the Holy Spirit as He wills, and not as we will

1Corinthians 12.4-11

- C. Let us each strive to the full measure of obedience according to the light we have been granted
- D. Let us all seek to bring maximum glory to God through that which He has been pleased to grant us.
- E. Let us all be content with the lot that has been granted unto us.
 1. Humble when our gifts are praised or noticed

2. Meek when we are ignored, or mistreated
3. Content when others outshine us
4. Pleased to rest in the joy of service to the King

II. GOD IS THE AIM OF ALL AUTHORITY

- A. He gives and takes according to His pleasure to show His own power and authority

Daniel 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'

- B. We are to obey to show the same purpose - the display of the nature of God

1Peter 2:13–17 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as

supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

- C. Our response to authority rightly derived and rightly applied should be joy

Deuteronomy 28:47–48 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ “Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

III. ALL MEN LIVE UNDER AUTHORITY

A. Jesus Demonstrated right relationship to authority

1. He spoke with authority - not according to whim, selfish ambition or the pleasure of His audience

Mark 1:22 (NKJV)

²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

2. He spoke as one UNDER authority - for all authority is derived

John 12:49–50 (NKJV)

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

3. He acted as one under authority at all times, doing that which was the will of the Father

John 5:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

4. Jesus was given ALL authority

Matthew 28:18–20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe

all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

5. He then gave that authority to others to use in His name... “go therefore”
 - a. No authority exists for its own sake
 - b. All authority is to be used for the will of God
 - c. Authority does not make the user great, it makes them responsible for its use.
6. He willingly submitted to the authority of the Father

1Corinthians 15:20–28 (NKJV)

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For “He has put all things under His feet.” But when He says “all things are put under Him,” it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. ²⁸ Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

B. God chose Abraham to be the father of all His people, but still we see Abraham submit to the greater authority.

1. Yielding to Melchizedek out of submission to God and a recognition of the greatness of this man
2. Surrendering a tithe
3. Engaging in a worship based relationship

C. We all live under authority

1. Authority is itself a privilege -

2. None may refuse to submit and escape the consequences

2Peter 2:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, ¹⁰ and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, ¹¹ whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

3. No matter the height of your privilege, you must still submit to your duty and the authority that is over you. -
 4. Privilege is less than duty.
 5. No privilege exists that exempts a man from his duty.
- D. Privilege and duty are inextricably joined
1. All privilege exists to either –

- a. Make us aware of duty
- b. Enable us to fulfill it

John 13.11-17

- 2. All privilege is given in trust to care for those given to us

1 Timothy 6:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. ² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

- 3. All gifts and abilities are given in trust for the good of all

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

4. The physical items of our privilege and authority are also given in trust

Ephesians 4:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

1Timothy 6:17–19 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

5. All opportunities for duty ought to be willingly & joyfully embraced

Ephesians 6:5–8 (NKJV)

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with

eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

IV. THE RIGHT USE OF PRIVILEGE AND AUTHORITY ARE ACTS OF WORSHIP

- A. We aim others to God
- B. We acknowledge His authority and wisdom when we submit to His authority in the exercise of ours
- C. We are ourselves blessed in the blessing

Hebrews 6.10-12