



In God's creative order everyone lives in submission to someone else. Even in the perfect intimacy of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), we see beauty in how the Godhead works together in order and purpose. That being said, submission is a difficult, and often divisive subject in our culture. Oftentimes it is driven by the lack of healthy leadership, healthy relationships, and past abuses. Additionally it can flow from our own human pride and resisting trusting others (even to God). In this module we will explore the various facets of biblical submission, as God has established an order in His creation and works beautifully within even broken human leaders for His glory and our ultimate good.

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DISCUSSION #1: TRUST AND SUBMISSION

This discussion unpacks how we live in submission to God because God's way is truly best for individuals and the world.

MY STORY | Starting Place

What things are easy to trust God about and which things are difficult? Is there a common thread in the things on each list?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.*

*In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths."*

Proverbs 3:5-6

Unpack the above passage. What do you think the author means by "not leaning on our own understanding?"

What does it mean, or look like, to "acknowledge God" in all we do? How can a person fool themselves into thinking they are doing this, but without really doing so?

Read Colossians 3:22-24 and apply your life circumstances to Paul's admonition to obedience and submission. What does this verse say to you in your life? Is there tension that arises? What does that stem from?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

How was submission and trust taught and modeled to you?

Flowing from the above, what “lessons” did you grow up embracing regarding submission and trust? How have those lessons created freedom or hardship for you in your life?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Ponder the various relationships in your life, particularly ones in which you have authority. Think about what your words and actions look and feel like to those around you.

DISCUSSION #2: GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

In this discussion we will discuss how we submit to leaders and governing authorities because God has said he uses their leadership for our ultimate good, whether we experience that in this life or not.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Do you have a bad boss or bad coach story?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Study the following passages to get a snapshot of submission to governing authorities. Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5-6; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Titus 3:1-2

What is the “weight” a person in authority should rightly feel?

What are some tangible things God’s people should do under the authority of others?

What are the benefits of those who peacefully live in submission?

Do the authors give any caveat for not submitting? Should we/can we read anything into those exceptions, while not nullifying the message?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

What “governing authority” is hardest for you to submit to? Distant (like the federal government) or near (like your boss)?

What do you think is at the root of your difficulty in submitting to governing authorities?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Did you learn anything or feel convicted during this discussion? Is there a conversation or activity you can engage in to find resolution, or to keep growing in this area?

DISCUSSION #3: MUTUAL SUBMISSION

In this discussion we will learn how we submit to one another out of godly love.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Have you ever shared a job with someone else where you worked seamlessly well together? What do you think contributed to that dynamic?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

There is a beautiful parallel between the submission God exercises within the Trinity, and what He calls us into. Read and make connections between John 17:20-23 and Philippians 2:3-8.

Read the following passages: Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3-8; Romans 12:10. What insights do you gain on how submission and humility should be exercised amongst God's people?

From these verses, how do you understand mutual submission? Define it together.

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Now that you have a biblical perspective on mutual submission, can you think of a time where this was exercised in a healthy, beautiful way?

Have you seen it abused or people taken advantage of when they lived in submission to someone else? How can one live in biblical submission, but safeguard themselves from being taken advantage of?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Is there a relationship or setting where you have been resisting mutual submission? Is there a practical step you can take to trust and lean in?

DISCUSSION #4: SUBMISSION IN MARRIAGE PT. 1

In this discussion we will dive into submission & love in marriage between husbands and wives.

MY STORY | Starting Place

How were the dynamics of submission in marriage modeled for you growing up? Was it positive or did it introduce fears, concerns, or self protection of some kind?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Read Ephesians 5:21-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Men, how do you think a woman might read these passages? What are some feelings that might arise?

Women, how do you think a man might read these passages? What are some feelings that might arise?

Women, share what you hear in these passages. Men do the same.

The author begins using the word “submit” in their affirmation to women, but ends the passage encouraging women to “respect” their husband. Are the two the same? How might these words (and what God calls men to) change the tone of the direction?

In light of how submission and interdependence is modeled first and ultimately by the Trinity, what makes submission a healthy and fruitful aspect of relationship? What are some actions and behaviors that make good things, like submission and interdependence, unfruitful and unhealthy?

Are there any actions, behaviors, or thought patterns that are currently making your relational submission and interdependence unhealthy? What can you do to change those?

Are you experiencing “flourishing” both in your submission and being submitted to? If not, what transformation needs to occur for both parties in the relationship to experience all that God made submission for?

If a man is called to a point of leadership in the home, how does his execution of that responsibility affect the ability for his wife and children to “submit” or “respect” him and his role?

Women, if a man loved and served you as outlined in these passages, how does that affect the admonition to “submit” or “respect”?

Men, how does the directive to men color the possible assumptions that “God says, I’m in charge because I’m the man?”

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Why is it easier to submit to someone who always makes your best interests a priority when it comes to decision-making?

What new insights have you learned in this module?

Articulate what you might have learned about how the opposite sex might hear this?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you about your role and actions within that?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Identify two things you can change this week to walk more in line with truth and God's design.

DISCUSSION #5: SUBMISSION IN MARRIAGE PT. 2

In this discussion we will dive into submission & love in marriage between husbands and wives.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Have you ever been punished for something that wasn't your direct fault? Share...

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Read Genesis 3:1-13

It's curious that the whole dialog with the serpent was just with him and Eve (even though Adam seemed to be present). What do you learn about the deceptive nature of his words to her?

It sounds like Adam was somewhat absent during this conversation. What do you make of this? Do you think he was there all along, or left her alone for this unique conversation? What does either option say about the nature of Adam?

Though the entire dialog was between Eve and the serpent, when God engages the scene, he calls out to Adam to give an account. What might we observe from this?

How does the idea that God seems to have called Adam to responsibility for what happened intertwine with submission and responsibility of men and women? What are some possible conclusions or applications you could make from this?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Discuss the specific responsibilities of a person who is given responsibility, leadership, or authority for an environment or situation?

Discuss the responsibilities (or opportunities) of a person in their care?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Who can you discuss insights you've gleaned so far from this discussion?

DISCUSSION #6: SUBMISSION IN PARENT/CHILDREN RELATIONSHIPS

In this discussion we will dive into submission in parent & children relationships.

MY STORY | Starting Place

How would you describe your home as a child? Was it rigid, loving and safe, or with no boundaries (good or bad)?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Read Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:20-21.

The direction in these passages, and throughout the Bible, it's clear that children are supposed to submit to and honor their parents (the directive is even in the 10 commandments).

The second half of these passages uniquely warn fathers to not hinder their children by their leadership. What do you think this means? Give examples of practical ways fathers, or parents, can both bless and hinder their children through their leadership.

Within a parent/child relationship there is direction and even discipline that God's wisdom states is actually for our good (Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 23:13-14; Hebrews 12:7-11). From these passages discern the wisdom and fruit of healthy discipline. When and how does discipline become unhealthy? Are there guidelines or safeguards to keep from this?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

Christians have varying views about parenting children in healthy ways. One extreme is the premise that parents execute their leadership the same throughout childhood until their kids leave (this is the basic premise of a book called *Growing Kids God's Way* by Gary Ezzo). The other extreme is to teach the consequences of decisions and train your kids from an early age to ultimately make their own choices (the book *Parenting with Love and Logic* outlines these ideas). Where do you stand on this? What are good guidelines to follow?

How should submission and parenting change as kids get older? What guidelines would be healthy to consider in this? What insights can be gained about submission and parenting from Proverbs 22:6?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

If you have children, to what degree do they feel safe under your leadership? What steps have you, or could you take to own what might be your responsibility in regard to making your kids feel safe?

DISCUSSION #7: RESPONDING TO UNGODLY LEADERSHIP

In this discussion we will learn how to respond to ungodly leadership.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Do you have an experience of working for a boss or leaders who was ungodly, immoral, or just a #*@&?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

It seems clear from Scripture that God simply calls and expects His people to submit to leadership. We covered this in discussion #2 when we looked at Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5-6; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17 and Titus 3:1-2. We can't overlook the historical context of the New Testament where Christians were living under increasingly barbaric persecution under the horrific leadership of Nero in Rome.

Is there EVER a time Christians should not submit to leadership? How can you justify that with all these verses on submission?

In Acts 5, God is doing amazing things through the church, and political authorities command the Apostles to no longer speak in the name of Jesus, to which Peter replies "we must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). Based on this scenario, what guidelines could you build for a caveat of civil and situational disobedience?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

The heart of God is about resolution and reconciliation. Matthew 18:15-17 (that focuses on church discipline) is often used as a template for resolving conflict. How could the wisdom of this passage be applied in situations of conflict with an employer/governing authorities? A marriage? A child/parent relationship?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

What has changed in your perspective on submission in this module? Is there a friend you could share what you've learned with?