**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 55**

**Ephesians 5:21**

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What does submission mean?
2. Why is submission in my Christian relationships important?
3. Who are the Christians I find most difficult to submit to? Can you imagine being a servant to every disciple? Why?
4. How will submission affect a difficult relationship I have now?
5. How will reverence for Christ help me submit?

***Insight:***

Christians submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. In the body of Christ, we should have an attitude of humility toward one another. As Christians we should not insist on getting our way all the time. We should yield in favor of other Christians whenever we can. It is not just to leaders we ought to submit to. The obligation is to submit “to one another” which means we should submit to all and any Christian.

The Greek word translated as “submit” has a range of meanings which include "to subordinate” or “to subject” oneself. To submit ourselves to another is to subordinate ourselves or to treat ourselves lesser in importance with respect to another importance. In a sense when we submit ourselves we make ourselves a servant of another. We prioritize their needs over our own.

This principle is so contrary to our nature and how we were trained by the world. Before becoming Christians we lived for ourselves. Our nature is to prefer doing things our way. If it were up to us, everyone would do what we would tell them to do. But as Christians we need to unlearn this self-centeredness. We must consciously think of the needs of others first. This will take focused practice because it is so unnatural to us.

We submit to each other not because the other person deserves it. Our motivation for our submission is our reverence for Christ. We yield to fellow Christians out of respect for Jesus. The broader principle here is that we should treat people not because of who they are but because of who Jesus is in our lives. It is no longer about basing our relationship with people based on what they have done for us but on what Jesus has done for us.

This principle is so unlike how relationships are in the world where it is conditional or transactional. Relationships in the world are transactions because how we treat others depends on how they treat us. In the world we are excused from treating people well if they don’t treat us well. Even if they used to treat us well, the moment we feel we are not treated well, we are justified in mistreating them also. But in the church, we treat people not based on transactions or interactions we have with them but based on our relationship with God. Every Christian is a child of God so whether or not they treat us well, we treat them as a child of God. It is our relationship with God which defines how we act towards other Christians.

Submission may be manifested differently in every relationship (as discussed in Eph 5:22—6:9), but the expectation is the same. Submission is taking the posture of a servant in humility. We are to be like Jesus who made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant for us. In every Christian relationship we should set aside our own interest for the interest of another. We should therefore look at every relationship we have and see how we need to submit in that relationship. Is there a relationship where we could not practice submission? We need to pray to God for wisdom to know how and why God wants us to submit in every relationship.

Jesus was submissive. He set aside his own interest to serve people’s interests. But he still preached against sin and rebuked people when he had to. Submission is not timidity. Submission does not justify compromising our convictions. Submission does not mean tolerating another person’s sins. In submission we surrender our interest but not our convictions.

Every interaction we have at church can be a situation where we place the interest of others above our own. When we have conversations, we can focus on having the other person share what is in their hearts rather than focus on what we want to share. We can steer the conversation to what would benefit them rather than what would benefit us.

Submission can be hard teaching because there may be people we would have a hard time submitting to. In these situations we need to focus on what Jesus did for us on the cross. Remember that in order to follow Jesus, we need to deny ourselves and take up *our* cross daily. Furthermore, we can take comfort in the fact that God never asks us to do something we cannot do or anything that is not beneficial for us. We need to realize that the practice of submission in our relationships is for our benefit and not just for the person we are submitting to. The more we submit as God intends the more like Jesus we become.

Let us learn how to submit to one another and practice submission during this lock down.