

A REBELLIOUS SPIRIT

Romans 13:1-2 ... "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. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."

Every person who ever lived was born into a set of circumstances in which someone else had some degree of authority over them. Parents have God-given authority over their children until the children become adults. Teachers and police officers, employers and traffic enforcers, government officials and coaches, will have periods in which they have some authority over other people. Plus, God has authority over everyone. Many of us, at some point in our lives, have rebelled against authority. We have shaken our fist at a father or mother, complained bitterly about a president, talked-back to a teacher, cursed a boss, or shouted silently at God. In some instances, our complaints were warranted. However, our dissent against those who proved unworthy of our trust, may not have been appropriate or productive. Our rebellion did not produce positive results; it only led to more distrust and frustration.

The funny thing about people who rebel against authority figures, is that they often turn right around and place themselves in submission to another authority. A man who rebels against the Philippine government, submits to the leader of a rebel group. A young person who rebels against his parents, will yield his will to a gang leader. A young lady who storms out of a classroom in anger toward her teacher, will give control of her life to a boyfriend who's only goal is to exploit her. A believer who turns away from God because the expectations of Christian living seem too restrictive, will turn to satan who promises to destroy him or her. The mistake we often make is to think that freedom exists only in the absence of authority, when in truth, submission to God and Godly authority is the most freeing exercise we can experience. All forms of ungodly authority produce bondage.

A rebellious spirit is sinful and can only lead to disillusionment and misery. 1 Samuel 15:23 reads: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft..." Now, you might ask, "What about government leaders who break the law and lie to us?" or "What about corrupt police officers?" or "What should we do when a boss cheats us?". In those instances, and others like them – when a person in authority abuses their leadership role – we are charged to obey God, instead of man. Acts 5:19 reads: "...We ought to obey God rather than men." While that may look to men like rebellion, in reality we are submitting to someone (God) who has greater authority.

The Bible instructs us to pray for those in authority, but it does not tell us we must support them. In fact, it is wrong for believers to support the unrighteous deeds of leaders. But you are required to pray for him or her and submit to their legal governance. Pray for your leaders' success, their submission to God, and the peace and harmony of the church, school, barangay, municipality, province or nation under that person's authority.

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