

## THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

### CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

**DATE:** January 13, 2019

**SUBJECT:** HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS: GOVERNMENT (2 of 2)—A Proper Attitude Toward the Government

**SCRIPTURES:** 1 Samuel 24; Romans 13:1-7; Daniel 2:21; 4:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 2 Peter 2:10; Matthew 22:17, 21

**AIM:** Because God Himself is the One who establishes our human governments and their leaders, we should subject ourselves to the government and its laws and not resist or oppose them. We should not only support our government and its leaders by our attitude of respect, we also should support it by paying taxes faithfully and praying for those who rule over us.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** 1 Peter 2:13-15a (**13** Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as being supreme, **14** Or to governors as being sent by him for vengeance on evildoers and praise of those who do good. **15** For so is the will of God...); Romans 13:1-2 (**1** Let every person be subject to the authorities over *him*, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are ordained by God. **2** So then he who resists the authority opposes God's ordination, and those who oppose will receive judgment to themselves.); 1 Timothy 2:1-3 (**1** I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men; **2** On behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity. **3** This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God,)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 9211 *Bible Story Songs David Song 11* (Can You Say How Do You Do?); 9215 *BSS David Song 15* (Round and Round the Mountain); 9219 *BSS David Song 19* (I'd Like to Honor You); 8205 (You Are the Salt of the Earth); 2829 (Honor and Respect for Authority); 65 (God's Word)

**CRAFT IDEA:** On a large sheet of paper, make a mural showing neighborhood scenes where we can show our respect to government authorities (e.g. police station, police officers, fire department, government leaders, school crossing guard, traffic police, etc.)

#### **CONTENT:**

**Being ordained by God.** In order to have a proper attitude toward the government, we must understand and recognize God's involvement with government. The Bible reveals to us that the authorities that rule are *ordained* by God; they are God's *servants* and *officers* (Rom. 13:1, 4, 6). Therefore, just as toward God, our attitude must also be the same toward the government—we should *subject ourselves*. This means we should not resist authority; to resist authority is to oppose what God has ordained (Rom. 13:2). We should have an attitude of respect toward those who are in authority. Toward some, we should have an attitude of more than respect; we should have respect with fear (as toward police officers), or with honor (as toward judges, governors, and presidents). A lawless person not only opposes government and law, he also opposes God. To speak evil of those in authority does not honor God nor does it help establish righteousness (Titus 3:1-2a). It only causes more lawlessness (2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8). (*Suggestion: Read aloud to the children Romans 13:1-7.*)

**Example of David submitting to King Saul.** David is a good example of one who submitted to authority. He knew that if he sinned against God's authority (King Saul), he sinned against God Himself, the source of all authority. Saul had disobeyed God and knew he was going to lose his kingship. Because of Saul's disobedience, David had been chosen by God and anointed as the next king. This change in kingship did not happen right away. David did not know *when* he would become king. Yet David did not take matters into his own hands and try to hasten his kingship and make it happen faster. Instead, he waited on the Lord's timing.

Saul, however, did not accept God's decision. He tried to kill David multiple times. When Saul and his army were pursuing David and trying to kill him, David and his men were hiding in the innermost part of a cave. At one point Saul entered into the very same cave to rest, not knowing that David was inside. This seemed like a perfect opportunity for David to get rid of Saul once and for all. David's men even urged him to take the opportunity to kill Saul. After all, Saul was trying to kill David.

But David did not dare to do such a thing. He realized that Saul had been anointed king and represented God's authority. So, he was very careful in how he dealt with Saul. He did not dare take his life. David did, however, cut off a corner of Saul's cloak as evidence that he could have done something more to Saul. Later, David was troubled that he had even been so bold as to do that. David said to his men, "Jehovah forbid that I should do such a thing to my lord, Jehovah's anointed, as stretch out my hand against him; for he is Jehovah's anointed." (1 Sam. 24:6). Not only did David spare Saul's life, but David also forbid his men from rising up against Saul.

When Saul found out that David had spared his life, Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me with good, while I have repaid you with evil. And you have declared today how you did good to me, because Jehovah delivered me up into your hand, but you would not kill me. For if a man finds his enemy, will he send him away safely? May Jehovah therefore reward you with good for what you have done to me this day." (1 Sam. 24:17-19) Saul even acknowledged openly that David would definitely become king. "And now I indeed know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand." (1 Sam. 24:20) King Saul wanted David to swear by Jehovah that David would not kill off Saul's his seed, meaning his children, grandchildren and descendants. David swore to Saul as he requested, and David later kept this word to preserve Saul's descendants.

Although Saul was unrighteous and even evil at times in pursuing David, David still honored and respected him because he was Jehovah's anointed one and represented God's authority.

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just **one or two applications** which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

- We must realize that all in authority around us is ordained by God Himself. This includes parents, relatives, teachers, principals, policemen, elected government officials, and in the future, our bosses at work. Because they are ordained by God, submitting to them is submitting to God. Speaking disrespectfully or evilly against them is rebelling against God.
- The principle in the Bible is that when we submit to God's authority, we have His blessing (Ephesians 6:1). On the contrary, when we resist the authority ordained by God, we may receive judgment to ourselves (Romans 13:2).
- It does not matter if the person in authority over us is likeable or not, capable or not capable, error-free or makes a lot of mistakes. We should not look at the person, because actually we are not just submitting to the person, but to the Lord Himself who appointed that person. We can ask the Lord to help us to be subject to the authorities over us, not only to the good and forbearing but also to the crooked (Ephesians 6:5-7; 1 Peter 2:18b-19a).
- While we are young, we should learn to recognize and acknowledge God's ordination. There will always be some in authority over us, even when we grow up; this is God's arrangement.

- We should not only support our government and its leaders by our attitude of respect; we should also support them by:
  1. **Paying our taxes faithfully** (Matt. 22:17-21; Rom. 13:6-7). This was taught by both the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul. Although, as children, we may not pay taxes directly, our parents do and, eventually, we will. Taxes are needed to support all the services that our government provides, including schools, roads, parks, sanitation services, police, etc. When we pay taxes we should not try to cheat, nor should we even complain.
  2. We should obey the laws of our government (Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-15a). We should not think we are an exception. We also are citizens under the government's laws unless the law of the government is against God's higher law. (For example, Daniel and his three companions were very respectful and submitted to the king's authority, but they made clear they would not eat food that was offered to idols.)
  3. **Praying for those who rule over us.** We should pray for those in authority—our parents, our teachers, and even for our president that God would give them wisdom and understanding that we may all live a peaceful and tranquil life to carry out God's purpose (1 Tim. 2:1-3). If someone in authority acts poorly or even unrighteously, we should pray for them rather than rebel against them.

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God's Economy—Human Relationships*, Vol. 3, Lesson 20, and the Church in New York City Children's Meeting lessons: 12/28/97; 1/6/02; 11/1/13; 1/19/14