



How do I get them to Submit?

Introduction;

1. Is this really the question we should be asking? I know we ask it a lot, but is it the right question to be asking?
2. If Jesus is the Head of His Church are we sure He has called us to control (exercise authority over) the flock?
3. Could it be that what He has called us to is an authority based on humility, service, example, love, grace, wisdom, and gifting?

Key verses: 1 Cor. 16:13-16; 1 Pet. 5:5; Eph. 5:21; Acts 5:29-32; 2 Thess. 3:13,14; Heb. 13:7,17; Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27; 1 Pet. 5:1-4

- 1. However our leadership is to function it must be completely void of “lording it over” the flock.**

Lord John Edward Emerich Acton was one of the most important British historians of the early 20th century and was quoted as saying "*Power tends to corrupt; absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely*"

Matthew 20:20-28 (NKJV)

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able."23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."24 And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that *the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over (Katakuriouo) them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.*26 "**Yet it shall not be so among you;** but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your *servant*.27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your *slave*—28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:35-45 (NKJV)

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"39 They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized;40 "but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared."41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John.42

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that *those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over (Katakuriouo) them*, and *their great ones exercise authority over them*.⁴³ “**Yet it shall not be so among you**; but whoever desires to become great among you *shall be your servant*.⁴⁴ “And whoever of you desires to be first *shall be slave of all*.⁴⁵ “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but *to serve*, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Luke 22:24-27 (NKJV)

24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.²⁵ And He said to them, “*The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over (Kurieo) them*, and *those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’*”²⁶ “**But not so among you**; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him *be as the younger*, and *he who governs as he who serves*.²⁷ “For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the *One who serves*.”

Lord it over:

The first word that we meet is the Greek word “*Katakuriouo*”, translated “**Lord it over.**” It also carries with it the idea of “*master, gain dominion over, subdue, rule over someone or something.*”

Foerster, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, has the following to say of this word: Its meaning is “*To exercise dominion **against** someone, i.e. to one's own advantage...for themselves and therewith against those entrusted to them.*”

Thus the concern is one of motivation. If the exercise of authority is ever for personal control so as to effectuate one's personal goals, rather than exclusively for the good of the one submitting to their authority, and the goals of Jesus Christ, then that authority has been corrupted.

The use of the preposition “*kata*” strongly suggests authority used “**against**” someone, rather than for them. How subtle is a leader's tendency to use authority in a way that is really an attack against the integrity of another individual by attempting to coerce them into accomplishing the leader's goals for their lives so as to protect the leader's personal agenda?

In Luke 22:25 Luke uses the word “*Kurieo*” - “*to exercise lordship over.*”

It is also used in a very graphic passage in:

Acts 19:15-16 (NKJV)

15 “And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, *overpowered (Kurieo) them*, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

How often do leadership lean towards overpowering their people by their knowledge, power and office, rather than by exposing the love of Christ? Too often I have counseled with those who have “*fled out of the house of God, naked and wounded.*” To be honest with you, in my less enlightened years I think I was the “*demon*” who caused some of that pain.

Finally, Peter uses this word “*Katakuriouo*” in his important passage on Church leadership:

1 Pet 5:1 (NKJV)

“The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as *being lords over (Katakuriouo)* those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 5 Likewise you younger

people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Let me make a point, that none of the apostles have anything stronger to say about leadership authority than what Jesus said. They simply amplify His words. How often when we come to such words as Rule or Obey or Submit, do we think that we are being given commands that look more like a slave to a master, than one servant to another, whose callings differ? Peter is very aware of the carnal tendency of leaders to use their authority to control and manipulate the flock.

Exercise Authority Over:

The next word in the Matthew 20 passage that we will take up is "*Katexousiadzo*".

Foerster, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, comments on this word's meaning: "Its primary sense is that they *"exercise power over them."* There is no earthly government without the use of force. But if the reference in *"those who are great"* is not merely to the political authorities, it is likely that the word implies the **tendency towards compulsion or oppression** which is immanent in all earthly power, and not merely in political."

Luke, in his parallel passage uses the word "*Exousiadzo*". Parallel in concept, but he chose not to use the "*kata*" preposition.

This word is not used anywhere else in the New Testament, but this one use alone speaks volumes. This is the danger in possessing authority in any dimension of life. To use that authority to compel others to fulfill the leader's agenda is clearly unethical. It is a violation of the integrity of the follower.

One can almost hear the disciples speak up, "*But Lord, how do we get anyone to do what we want them to do if we don't use some compulsion or force to move them towards our goals.*" And if you look real closely at Jesus you will see that look that must have spread across His face so many times, "*You guys just don't get it do you?*" "*But Lord, it could take forever to get anything done. If we could just get them to give more money for missions we could harvest so many more people. If we could just get the deacons to do what we want done there would be so much more unity in the Church. If we could just get the people to stop certain behaviors they would grow so much faster in righteousness. Lord, at this rate, of just lovingly serving the people and refusing to use any coercion, it could take years to make any progress at all!*" And if we look again at Jesus we might see the look that says, "*True, and would you really want to get it done any other way? What do you gain if you steal the people's joy from them by manipulating and forcing them to do your will through preaching fear and intimidation? If you exercise a false form of authority that slowly but surely erode's the people's love and trust for you have you really gained anything? My way may not be as fast as yours but it regards the integrity of My people and expresses trust in My Holy Spirit to motivate My people to do what I want done. Your job is to love and serve, My job is to inwardly compel. There are just some things you can't do and get away with it. One of them is to use compulsion and oppression.*"

However we are to lead and get the job done it isn't to be any different than Jesus did when He was on earth. He didn't force any of His disciples to do anything. He didn't use compulsion or oppression or manipulation to accomplish anything. He didn't get much accomplished in His three year ministry, as some would count accomplishments. He barely kept 12 ragamuffin disciples from defecting, and one of them gave up before He left. But because He modeled the kind of loving service and non-coercive leadership that He did, they so loved Him that they went out from the upper room ready to give every ounce of their life's strength to building His

kingdom.

2. True authority is reflected authority.

The next word that we need to explore is the principal Greek word for Power or Authority - Exousia - similar to katexousiados, but missing the “kata” preposition. The absence of the “kata” removes the “against” element. It is authority, but it isn't authority in opposition to or against someone else.

Jesus Exemplified Reflected Authority

Foerster, comments once again, “*It is the right to do something or the right over something.*” It carries with it the sense of **reflected authority**. The right or freedom to accomplish a certain thing because of the power behind the one attempting to accomplish that act. In this sense Jesus' authority on earth was reflected authority. Jesus Himself even says so in John 5:

John 5:19 (NKJV)

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. 26 “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 “and has given Him **authority** to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 30 “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

It is the power to Decide, and as such reflects the invisible power of God whose Word is a creative power. It manifests itself in the authority of the State whose power is a reflection of God's divine power on earth amongst men, to create order and harmony. The word of the ruler is to reflect the Word of God and is to therefore be obeyed. We see Paul declare this relationship in Roman 13:

Rom 13:1 (NKJV)

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.

The Disciples Exemplified Reflected Authority

When Jesus commissions His disciples in Matthew 28:18 He takes His reflected authority and reflects it into them to be an expression of His authority in the earth. It was not their authority, but rather His, and was to be used with serious regard to its origin.

Mat 28:18 (NKJV)

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

When, in Acts 8 Simon wishes to obtain the power or authority that is working in Peter, Simon expresses his desire for such authority in verse 19 “that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit”, Peter reacted violently because he recognized the carnal desire of man to operate in the authority of Christ without being duly submitted to Him first. He resisted all manipulative use of the authority of Christ to accomplish one's own independent will.

Our Authority is Reflected

Jesus in Mark 13:34 makes it very clear in His parable that the authority we have is authority He has given us, and as such our use of it is always to reflect His will, His manner, and His

direction. Since we already know that He never uses it to manipulate or coerce people for selfish purposes, then we see once again the awesome responsibility to handle this reflected authority properly.

Mark 13:34 (NKJV)

“It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

When you connect the concepts of the authority or power in a declared Word, with the sense of reflected authority, you begin to see the danger that there is in an independent usage of power, apart from direct divine leading. People are brought into the bondage of false teaching by submission to false leadership authority, and are then unable to become free from such teaching when new and more accurate teaching comes along. When people place themselves under the authority of leaders who are using their authority in a way that is less than fully submitted to the will of God they teach people the commandments of men and make it very difficult for the people to come out from under that authority and accept or trust accurate doctrine that reflects the true Word of God's authority.

Only Obey Reflected Authority

We therefore note a very delicate balance that is necessary. On one hand all believers are to submit to the authority of their leadership, but only so as their authority reflects Christ's and not the leadership's position/office/title oriented authority. Thus Peter has a spirit of obedience in Acts 5:29, but it is first and foremost in submission to the authority of Christ.

Acts 5:29 (NKJV)

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

And Paul, in Galatians 2:1-10, while being willing to submit his teaching to the scrutiny of the leadership in Jerusalem, he was unwilling to do so to the degree that had they disagreed with the revelation he had received of Christ he would not have yielded to them and stopped teaching it. He would have submitted to their censorship of him and the resulting stigma it might have placed on him, but he would not yield the truth he had received.

Obviously the danger of becoming a “*lone ranger*” exists with this perspective of leadership authority, but it is a potential the Lord clearly prefers, over communicating a concept of authority that creates in the minds of men an “*absolute human authority*” mentality. God's exercise of authority amongst His anointed leaders is a precarious one because it acknowledges the possibility that followers will believe their leaders have not accurately heard from God or interpreted His Word accurately and will choose to make decisions of conscience and study that oppose their leaders. It is not that there won't be repercussions of such decisions, but to remove the possibility of such decisions is to encourage an abuse of authority that is far more dangerous.

However leadership is to function in the local Church, it must never be overbearing to the point where the people are intimidated into obeying the teaching and commands of the leadership when their own spirits tell them that the will of God is otherwise. Now certainly this can create precarious situations where immature saints believe God has told them one thing while the leadership believe another, but the leadership are not allowed to step over the line of gentle exhortation and teaching, into the sphere of intimidation and coercion. It may become necessary to take the issue to the body, if the matter becomes of sufficient effect on the body, but singular decision making authority, vested in a title or position, is no where present in the New

Testament.

2 Tim 2:24 (NKJV)

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

It needs to be said here, lest I be misunderstood, that I am not suggesting anarchy in the local Church. If a follower comes to a point where he believes the direction of his leadership is sufficiently incorrect, and he has been unable to change their thinking, rather than openly oppose the leadership rebelliously, within the context of the Church itself, he is wisest to leave that Church and identify with another less abusive form of leadership in another local fellowship, or to shelve his concern for a season and give God time to resolve it in His own way. The possibility of having to separate from that leadership and thus a given local Church exists, and is understood as a deterrent to emotional decisions or outright rebellion. To lose the relationships developed within that local fellowship will provide a good deterrent to quick and rebellious decisions to leave. When people have developed deep and enduring relationships in the context of their local gathering of believers they are not likely to walk away from those just because they are being asked to adhere to a biased opinion of a controversial passage of Scripture, or a pastoral agenda. But if that opinion turns out to be of a great enough concern, rather than remain and be seriously compromised, their leaving becomes necessitated at great personal cost.

“Yet it shall not be so among you!”:

The question is, “Has it been?” Where did hierarchical leadership come from? Where in Scripture do we derive the notion that leaders are anyone’s “Covering?” Where do we obtain the notion that our role is a “Position,” or “CEO,” or “Boss?” If it is not to be so among us has it become so? Where did we derive the idea of “Senior Pastor?” Where did we get the concept of “First Amongst Equals?” These sound nice but are they biblical? I find no support for any of these concepts. Do you? Please show me the Scriptures in the New Covenant.

I think if we want an official title we might take Jesus cue here - either “Servant (Diakonos - deacon, table waiter) or Slave (Doulos - “0” rights, “0” personal authority), take your pick.

Servant Leadership:

Jesus' style of leadership is one that creates a sense of equality, and if any other sense is created it is that the leader is beneath his follower as one called to humble himself and serve the followers' needs. Jesus' servant love and the power of His anointing created His following. He never resorted to demanding obedience of His followers. He spoke of the importance of their obedience, but He never directly commanded it.

Listen to Him in John 13, where He washes His disciples feet and forever blows away their concept of leadership as being ones to be served.

John 13:13 (NKJV)

“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 “Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

It is the job of every leader to so manifest and create this impression in the lives of those he leads that they are convinced that he really believes Jesus' words apply to him.

3. Peter goes further to describe true leadership authority.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NKJV)

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;³ ***nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples (Tupos)*** to the flock;⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

In contrast to being “lords” we are to be “examples.”

“*Be examples*” - “*Tupos*”, from which we get “*type*”. To be a pattern, example, model, or standard. It means to so portray the image of the Servant, the Lord Jesus, that others are drawn to follow your pattern or example and do the will of God. Peter had learned that Jesus didn't use any other means to secure His following so he simply passes on what he has seen modeled for him. It's so exciting to recognize that it works. Peter was so committed to serving Jesus that history records for us he followed Him to the point of being crucified upside down. It simply doesn't require manipulation, control and intimidation to move people together towards God's vision for their corporate or individual lives. True servant leadership, given time to germinate, will produce the will of God in the lives of those being led. If it doesn't then we should have a little more confidence in the sovereignty of God, recognizing that it may not have been in His ultimate plan for certain things to take place, rather than trying to make something happen which in the end will do more to alienate those who follow due to undue pressure placed upon them.

Paul frequently challenged the flock to follow his example - 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7,9.

If leaders were far more concerned about having an example worth following, than demanding obedience, they would find that those who hunger for Christ will follow them.

Listen to Jesus in John 13, where He washes His disciples feet and forever blows away their concept of leadership as being ones to be served.

John 13:13 (NKJV)

“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴ “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ “For ***I have given you an example***, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ “Most assuredly, I say to you, ***a servant is not greater than his master***; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Is Jesus telling His disciples that they are to think of those they serve as being their “Masters?” Is Jesus telling them that He is posturing himself before his disciples as a servant to His masters? This fits pretty well with everything else Jesus has said about true leadership doesn't it?

It is the job of every leader to so manifest and create this impression in the lives of those he leads that they are convinced that he really believes Jesus' words apply to him.

4. Submission and obedience may be different things.

Acts 5:29-32 (NKJV)

29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “***We ought to obey God rather than men.***”³⁰ “The

God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree.³¹ “Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.³² “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those *who obey Him.*”

When leaders call their followers to do things that violate their consciences or the Word of God then those followers must not obey their leaders. However, they maintain a submissive attitude.

5. In the Church submission is to The Word - Jesus, never just a man.

2 Thessalonians 3:13,14 (NKJV)

13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.¹⁴ *And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him*, that he may be ashamed.

If we believe in biblical inspiration, then the phrase “our word in this epistle” is equivalent to saying “if anyone does not obey Scripture...”. Paul is not demanding strict submission to himself.

6. Authority that encourages and does not dominate.

We see Paul's gentle use of his power, and his awareness of the danger of abuse in this area. In 1 Cor.9:12 & 18 he could have tried to coerce them into paying him a salary, but he chose not to, so as to in no way be able to be accused of misusing his authority. Paul had such a gentle approach to his authority.

1 Cor 9:12 (NKJV)

If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

1 Cor 9:18 (NKJV)

What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

In 2 Cor.10:8 Paul makes it clear that his concept of his authority is that it is to be used for edification, not destruction.

2 Cor 10:8 (NKJV)

For even if I should boast somewhat more about our *authority*, which the Lord gave us *for edification and not for your destruction*, I shall not be ashamed;

He realizes that if he wields his authority too imperiously, with this Corinthian Church, that he is going to hurt them. They simply can't take too strong of a leadership approach. He is willing to use extreme gentleness even though he is so deeply concerned that how they are handling themselves is greatly endangering them. When you realize how seriously messed up this Church was and then see the beautiful spirit of gentleness that Paul exhibits it is clear that he knew how to handle authority like Christ. Leaders must be patient. If they let their agendas and their concerns override their sensitivity to the body's ability to respond to their leadership they will end up losing far more than if they had just been willing to love their flock and wait for the Lord to change the people. He quotes what appears to be his pet leadership authority phrase again.

2 Cor.13:10 (NKJV)

“Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the *authority* which the Lord has given me *for edification and not for destruction.*”

Misuse of authority doesn't just hurt some people, it destroys them. What a thought! Over the years I have observed countless Church members who have experienced heavy handed authority

from their Church leaders and have become enough disillusioned that in some cases it has been years before they were willing to return to Church. In other cases it has just left them with a deep distrust for any form of Church leadership and as such exposed them to the danger of self will with its tendency to deception and fruitlessness.

7. Ruling = To protect, to care for, to help.

Our first word is Prohistami - This is probably the preeminent word used in the New Testament for Church leadership.

According to Reicke, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, it means to preside, in the sense "to lead, conduct, direct, and govern." There is also the thought of "standing or going before someone or something in protection." Out of this comes the sense "to assist, to join with, more precisely defined as to **protect, to represent, to care for, to help, to further.**"

It was used in reference to a woman being given to her husband in marriage as to one who would look after her and care for her.

The sense of "protection" arises again and again in ancient non-biblical usage.

It is a compound word made up of two words "pro" and "histami". "Pro" means to be before, and "histami" means to stand. Thus this is **one who stands before the people to provide care and protection**. Reicke goes on to say "The sense of overbearing power or authority is entirely absent in this word's meaning." Yet in the minds of many leaders it seems as though this word gives them just this right, and in the minds of many followers it seems to them that leaders believe they have the right to use overbearing authority.

In Rom.12:8 the meaning is "to care with zeal".

Rom 12:8 (NKJV)
he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who **leads, with diligence**; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

A leadership that is zealous to care. The whole passage is speaking of the gifts of grace imparted to different giftings, so that these leaders are a special group separated by the Spirit for the primary task of caring for others.

This thought carries nicely into 1 Thess.5:12

"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are **over you (Prohistami - are leaders in caring for you)** in the Lord and admonish you."

The idea is that of being responsible to watch and care over them. Reicke comments again, "The emphasis is not on their rank or authority but on their efforts for the eternal salvation of believers."

This word is used in 1 Tim.3:4 when referring to the qualifications of an Elder, he is to be one who knows how to care for his family. This is clearly seen in vs.5 where Paul goes on to say :

"for if a man does not know how to rule (Prohistami - care for) his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God?"

So also it is used in 1 Tim.3:12 for the deacon's responsibility to care for his family.

When we recognize that excellent leadership is composed of a zealous caring ministry, rather than oppressive authority, then we can see why a congregation will be willing to extend extra provision to those who manifest such leadership.

1 Tim.5:17 (NKJV)

“Let the elders who rule (*prohistami*) well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”

Just holding an office, and just teaching, are not the qualifications for this double honor. Double honor results from double caring, and this double caring is to be a caring that the people recognize as caring. It's amazing how easily the flock identifies such people. It will never be those who are work-a-holics and drive the flock; self impressed with all that they do for the Church. It will always be those who with gentleness and a clear servant humility serve the flock tirelessly with a gracious diet of the Word of God.

Reicke goes on to say, “The context shows that the reference is not merely to elders who rule well but especially to those who exercise *a sincere care of souls*. This is not to deny that here, too, the leaders have a special dignity and play a leading role as elders. In all instances however, the verb has in the New Testament the primary senses of both “*to lead*” and “*to care for*,” and this agrees with the distinctive nature of the office in the New Testament, since according to Luke 22:26 the one who is chief is to be as he who serves.”

If leaders could just come to the place of recognizing that their leadership would be far more fruitful when administered sensitively, transparently and graciously, they might be more inclined to set aside manipulation and fear as their means of controlling their flocks.

8. Ruling = Being one worthy of esteem.

Our next word for Ruling is “*Hegeomai*” - It means to lead, to think, to believe, to regard as, to esteem, to value highly.

It carries with it the sense of appropriate respect and appreciation for those called to lead the flock.

It is significant that Jesus has earlier framed the attitudes of those who would wear this title “*Hegeomai - Governor- Leader*”. In Luke 22:26 he is to be one who serves. A servant leader. Not a power leader, but a servant leader. So that when we come to the passages in Pauline literature where the flock is called to submit to these men, the men they are to submit to are to be those whom Jesus described in Luke 22. If they aren't, then it is questionable if they should be leaders in the first place, and secondly if the people should submit to them. Paul assumes that the leaders who will be chosen will be Luke 22 types, but unfortunately this is not always the case. All too often we raise up to leadership those who manifest valued giftings, before we have allowed them to learn to love serving and caring for the body of Christ. We do not do them a service by doing so, and we certainly don't help the body. Authority to lead is not in the title only, but in the character. Individuals are only representatives of Jesus Christ, and if their representation is not congruent with Christ then their leadership is null and void by virtue of their lack of character. Certainly perfection of character is not implied, but a solidity of godly character must mark those who would lead.

Anyone who would disagree with the above statement would do so because of the potential door it might leave open to rebellion. But, consider the concern from the opposite end of the spectrum. If a leader was clearly evil in his leadership and was obviously abusing the flock one would certainly not be expected to obey such leadership.

I am not suggesting that those who lead in the body of Christ have no authority. This word clearly indicates they do. The question is “When do they have authority?” Not, “Do they have authority?” Certainly they do, but only as they function as “Servant” leaders. Their authority is derived from the evidence of their love, wisdom, humility, example, and servant’s heart. Nothing about this word implies that leaders have authority simply by virtue of some hierarchical position. No hierarchical positions are indicated in the New Testament. Rather, they derive their authority by virtue of their Christlikeness. If this be absent, then though they have a title of “elder” they have no authority. In fact, they should not have a title of “elder” if they lack the character requisite for such a function. Jesus is very careful to define this word, as it relates to those who lead. May we be so careful who lead.

New Testament submission is a heart attitude before it is manifested in acts of obedience. While a follower may not be able to obey a given leader, they are still to maintain an attitude of submission. Again this is clear from the apostles themselves.

Acts 5:29 (NKJV)

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

It is used to refer to people of “*renown*” in Acts 7:10; 14:12; 15:22.

It is used for political and military leaders. *Hegoumenoi* can also be leaders outside the community, e.g., military leaders in 1 Macc. 9:30, national leaders in Ezek. 43:7, princes in 1 Clem. 5.7, leading priests in the papyri. Quoting Mic. 5:1ff., Mt. 2:6 has the term for a national ruler, and Acts 7:10 has it for Joseph as the governor of Egypt. Thus this term is capable of expressing hierarchical leadership, but is never used as such in any context within the New Testament. Jesus and the Apostles never refer to Church leadership in hierarchical forms.

It is used to refer to expressing “*esteem*” in Phil.2:3; 1 Thess.5:13; Heb.11:26.

It is used to refer to “*careful consideration*” in Acts 26:2; 2 Cor.9:5; Phil.2:6, 25; 3:7,8; 2 Thess.3:15; 1 Tim.1:12; 6:1; Heb.10:29; 11:11; Ja.1:2; 2 Pet.1:13; 2:13; 3:9,15.

It is used to refer to those in “*leadership capacity*” in Heb.13:7, 17, 24. In each of these cases proper esteem is to be placed on those who lead with the type of character described in Luke 22.

Heb 13:7 (NKJV)

Remember those who **rule over you**, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV)

Obey those who **rule over you**, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Heb 13:24 (NKJV)

Greet all those who **rule over you**, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

Therefore, we have discovered that ruling leadership is more indicative of responsibility to convey the character of Christ, than it is a mandate on those following to obey every whim of their leadership. Leaders who would be followed will gain such a following by consistently exhibiting caring concern and appropriate protection of their flock, not by manipulation and

intimidation.

9. Submission is a voluntary matter rather than compulsive.

Then Peter goes on, in verse 5, to encourage the younger members of the flock to “submit” themselves to their eldership. The word submit - “*hupotasso*”, is a significant choice of words to use. It means “*to lose or surrender one's own rights or will voluntarily, rather than as a result of compulsion.*” While followers are admonished to submit voluntarily, leaders are not given the authority to coerce, manipulate or seek through any means to control those under their rule, or secure their submission. Their only means of obtaining such a following is by humble service and love.

It is composed of two words “*Hupo*” and “*Tasso*”. “*Hupo*” means to “*come under*” and “*Tasso*” means “*to arrange in an orderly and respectful fashion*”. Add to this the voluntary dimension and it becomes clear that the implication is that the believer is to willingly and voluntarily (not by constraint) arrange his life in an orderly fashion under the leadership authority of servant leaders.

In the home, young children are to obey their parents by compulsion if necessary, and in the work place employees are to obey their employers by compulsion at times, if they wish to maintain their jobs, and in the military soldiers are to obey their commanders by compulsion, but when we come to the local fellowship and marriage this is not the case. The local Church is composed of those who have voluntarily chosen to identify with a local expression of the body of Christ. As such their voluntary participation is to be respected and guarded and not treated as though their unqualified obedience was expected. This mutual respect and consideration is to mark this voluntary fellowship of saints. Nothing prohibits a believer from leaving one fellowship to join another less abusive form of Church leadership. There are no Scriptures that treat leaving one local fellowship in favor of another fellowship that is more grace oriented, as if that leaving were equivalent to divorce, yet to listen to some leadership you would get the impression that they thought it was.

I believe Jesus purposely refrained from speaking such a thing, either Himself, or by inspiration through His apostles, because He knew there would be immature Church leadership that would rise up, and men and women who would abuse their authority, and He didn't want the experience with local Church to become something more akin to bondage than to life.

Church is a Voluntary Association

Because the local Church is a voluntary association no believer should be made to feel less committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ for feeling the need to disengage from a leadership that they are concerned about. Certainly there are right ways and wrong ways to leave a local fellowship of believers, but leaders must not treat their flocks as though they owned them or as if they were expected to live and die in one local Church. Leaving a local Church is not equivalent to divorcing a mate.

Because this word is used in a variety of contexts, we will limit our discussion of it to passages dealing with leadership.

Everyone Submits to One Another

It is significant to note that whatever Paul & Peter thought about submission it went far beyond submission to just elders. Their use of this word clearly indicates that this concept of submission relates to everyone in the body of Christ. If we were to ask them, “*Are we to submit to the elders in our local Churches?*” They would undoubtedly have answered, “*Yes, and to everyone else who walks according to the commandments of Christ.*” If it be recognized that whatever this submission principle is all about it is much more a submission to Christ in one another than it is to a specific class of individuals. This is why it is such an arrogant thing for leaders to demand submission of their followers as though because they held a specific office it conferred to them a unique power and authority over the lives of their followers. Thus, leaders will at times submit to those they are leading, simply because they may evidence having the Word of the Lord for a given issue at hand. To fail to portray a willingness towards this fluid form of submission is to evidence a false authority.

1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV)

5 Likewise you *younger people, submit yourselves to your elders*. Yes, all of you *be submissive to one another*, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

It is interesting to note that in the first part of this verse Peter’s emphasis is not clearly on flock to leadership, but younger to older and wiser. Then he states “be submissive to one another.” Could this mean that elder leadership should submit to the flock? Could Paul also be saying the same thing in Ephesians 5:21.

Ephesians 5:21 (NKJV)

21 *submitting to one another* in the fear of God.

Who are the flock to submit to?

Those who devote themselves to the ministry of the saints.

1 Corinthians 16:13-16 (NKJV)

13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done with love. 15 I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—16 *that you also submit to such*, and to everyone who works and labors with us.

It is Jesus we are Submitting to

Submission is something we do when we realize that someone is obviously and convincingly speaking in behalf of God. If it becomes obvious that what is being said represents the mind of Christ, then no matter who it is they are to be submitted to as if they were Christ. The responsibility of leaders is to consistently speak the mind of Christ, by virtue of their calling and gifting. As such we would anticipate submitting to their leadership more than perhaps to others, simply because their role in the body of Christ is to bring the mind of Christ to bear on every facet of life. But if their character calls their words into question, or if their communication of the Word is mixed with arrogance or error then their authority to lead has been diminished, since their authority rests in their character and accurate communication of the Word of Christ, and not in their office alone.

It is used of believers submitting to the leadership of God in Heb.12:9; Ja.4:7.

Heb 12:9 (NKJV)

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not

much more readily be in *subjection* to the Father of spirits and live?

James 4:7 (NKJV)

Therefore *submit* to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

It is used of wives submitting to their husband's leadership. Eph.5:22; Col.3:18; 1 Pet.3:1,5.

Eph 5:22 (NKJV)

Wives, *submit* to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Notice, "*As to the Lord.*" This is always behind every apostolic discussion of the subject of submission. They never think of submission without it being "*As to the Lord.*" In this way people are protected from following just anyone who commands their obedience. Otherwise utter chaos would be the norm in the lives of those submitting to their Church leaders. This is the acid test, the fail safe principle, the measuring rod for all who would see themselves as leaders and all those who would follow them.

If husbands or Church leaders ask or expect some obedience from their followers, that compromises the follower's conscience or sense of the will of God, they are not required to submit to that expectation. Of course if the counsel had been correct and the one following had rejected it, then their failure to follow the Word of Christ will likely have its negative effect, and leaders must learn to step aside and allow such negative effects to take place. Leaders cannot allow their desire to protect their sheep compel them to use force or coercion to protect that sheep. If a sheep is bound and determined to walk with the wolves then all the godly leader can do is stand back and allow it to happen, and be there to heal that sheep when it comes to its senses and desires healing.

Col 3:18 (NKJV)

Wives, *submit* to your own husbands, *as is fitting in the Lord.*

1 Pet 3:1 (NKJV)

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being *submissive* to their own husbands,

It is used of Christ being in submission to the Father's leadership. 1 Cor.15:28

1 Cor 15:28 (NKJV)

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.

Everything comes back to this. All submission is ultimately to God alone, and only man secondarily, as he reflects the will of God.

Church is not another term for Military Barracks

Another word that we come into contact with in the New Testament is the word "*Hupakouo,*" and the word "*Hupakoa*". These words are compound words made up of "*Hupo*" and "*Akouo*". "*Hupo*" means to come under, and "*Akouo*" means to hear a voice, so the two in combination mean to "*Hear a command and come under that command.*"

It is interesting to note that this word is **never used in a context of a believer hearing the verbal commands of leadership and coming under those commands.**

It is apparently just too strong of a term for the apostles to use in this context. However, even if were used it would still have to mean “*to come under the authority of the spoken Word as it reflects the Word of Christ.*”

It is used for children and slaves, but not followers of Church leadership or spouses to one another.

This undoubtedly provides an insight on leadership and their attitudes towards their own authority. So often leaders have felt that it was their role to give commands and the people's role to listen and obey, but apparently the Holy Spirit missed an opportunity to agree with them and inspire the apostles to use this word to convey that thought. Leaders are not to think of their flocks as their children or slaves to command. Not that abusive leadership is allowed towards children and slaves, but certainly it is a stronger form of leadership than is appropriate for the flock. The flock are not my children or my slaves, they are my friends, my fellow sojourners, and those I submit to as well, on the way to a heavenly city. They are not my personal army that I have the authority to command as if they were my soldiers to order about. The shepherd is not the drill sergeant, the commanding officer or the General of the Allied Forces. He is to be a Gentle Servant Leader.

A Closer Look at Hebrews 13

We will conclude this section with a combined look at Hebrews 13:17. Because it is the most frequently misunderstood passage on this whole subject of submission to Church leadership we will expand the translation of this verse to expose the writer of Hebrews real intent.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV)

Obey those who **rule over** you, and **be submissive**, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

We will begin with the word “*Obey*”. It is derived from the Greek word *Pathometha* - which means to obey as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness of what is being said.

This word does not command blind obedience. In connection with Hupako “*be submissive*”, this verse is teaching that the believer is to yield and obey as a result of being **convinced and confident** in the correctness of what is being counseled or taught.

Leadership are not allowed to command absolute obedience just because they are leaders. They are responsible to present their character and their wisdom in such a manner that they inspire confidence in those they lead.

This is the only place where this word is used in relationship to leadership. In every other case it is always referring to either persuasion or confidence. It is used 30 times in these ways. The following are just samples - Mt.27:20; 28:14; Acts 19:8; Rom.8:38; Phil.1:6; 3:3; 2 Thess.3:4 and would be worth the readers time reading and considering.

It also carries the strong idea of “*Trust*”, in such passages as Mt.27:43; Phil.2:24; Heb.2:13.

Every other place this word is used for “*obey*,” the element of obedience as a result of being convinced by something or someone is clearly evident - Acts 5:36,37; Rom.2:8; Gal.3:1; 5:7.

For leaders to think they can lead without first having established trust and confidence in those they lead is nothing short of arrogance. It takes time for people to trust. It takes repetition of gentle serving behavior to relax the sheep enough to follow peacefully. Those who violate this principle in favor of “*getting something done*,” ultimately lose much more than they ever gain.

Our next phrase “*be submissive*” comes from the word Hupako - a compound of “*Hupo*” and “*Ako*”. Again “*Hupo*” means to come under, and “*Ako*” means to *yield*. The two in combination mean to yield under the authority of someone else.

It is only used in Heb.13:17, and carries the idea of *yielding to the servant authority* of those over you in the Lord. And this will only take place, when properly applied, in situations where leaders inspire their followers to follow them as a result of having used confidence inspiring wisdom and a spirit of humility expressed in service and mutual submission.

We have already looked at the phrase “*Rule over*”, so we won't repeat that study. Now notice a combined translation taking into account the study presented on each of the key words in this verse:

Heb 13:17 (NKJV)

Obey (as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness and spirit of what is being counseled or taught) those who **rule over** you (who are esteemed due to manifesting a gentle non-coercive servant's heart), and **be submissive** (yield to the servant authority of those over you in the Lord, as unto the Lord), for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”

All too often leaders have read the phrase “*those who must give account*” and have felt an undue weight of responsibility put upon them. It is not the leader's responsibility to secure the obedience of those he leads. It is the leader's responsibility to lead his flock in such a servant and grace oriented manner that when the Chief Shepherd appears and asks the under shepherd for an accounting of his leadership he can in all honesty of conscience reply that he had consistently led his flock with gentleness and humility, skillfully ministering the Word while attempting to inspire confidence and trust in those he led. He will not be held to account for those who messed up their lives while properly shepherded, but he will certainly be held to account for having abused his leadership and caused his flock to wander off into the wolves due to attempting to escape abusive leadership. A simple study of Ezekiel, chapter 34, will make this quite clear.

As is so often the case with New Testament Greek words, they come out of a culture and a pool of meanings, rather than being easily reduced to one simple word. Each word carries with it an expanded meaning. These three words, as defined, indicate a far different meaning than is generally ascribed to this verse.

This is not blind obedience to power hungry leaders, but rather it represents the type of obedience and submission based on the kind of leaders they are to obey. Far from allowing for abusive and coercive leadership it calls for those who can only anticipate obedience as they have been successful in being gentle teachers of truth, having convinced and created confidence in those they desire to lead. They must be leaders who clearly manifest a humble servant's heart and whose leadership inspires confidence and yielding on the part of those who follow. If the people are not convinced, and if the leadership have not inspired their followers by their conduct and character then in effect their leadership is null and void and their only recourse is to take the time to create such confidence and yielding in their flocks by so lovingly serving them and setting an example of a gentle servant that the people in time

relax and follow their lead. To use any other means or technique, whether it be salesmanship or abusive authoritarianism, is to disqualify the leader in the eyes of God and his flock. Not a permanent disqualification, but an evidence that time and growth is needed to adjust the leader's concepts and character.