

# GRACE & PEACE

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## MUTUAL SUBMISSION

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PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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# MUTUAL SUBMISSION

*By Nelson Thomas Mumbai*

**M**ore than any other period of time, today man is more concerned about their freedom and self-expression, and they even go to the extent of abusing these rights. The general attitude is that nobody is behind anybody; hence, submissiveness is a mark of weakness.

We know that man is basically selfish and rebellious because of their Fall (Tit. 1:6, 10). Moreover, education, wealth, status, position, etc., instead of reforming them, seem only to boost their inherent sinful nature.

In such a society, the word of God exhorts the followers of Christ to be characterized by mutual submissiveness and humility.

Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 5: 21: “...submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

Peter also wrote: “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility.” (1Peter 5:5b)

## THE MEANING:

There are many who reject the concept of mutual submission. For, they think that submission is always to a person with authority; therefore, it cannot be

reciprocal.

It is true that the scripture demands submissiveness particularly in certain spheres of life such as the following:

**a. At home** : wife to the husband and children to the parents, Eph. 5:22

**b. In the Church** : young believers to the elders, 1Pet 5:5; Heb. 13:17

**c. At the workplace** : servants to masters, Eph. 6: 5,6

**d. In the society** : public to the officers/governors, etc. 1Peter 2:13,14

Definitely, God has not put an end to any of these hierarchical orders in society. The absence of any such authority will lead to chaos among people.

However, a careful study of each of the above passages show that those with ‘authority’ are also instructed not to abuse their position, but to be considerate and gracious in their dealings with one another.

## ***Consider the following examples:***

a. A husband should lovingly give himself to his wife just as Christ gave Himself to the Church, Eph. 5:25, 26

b. Parents should not provoke their

children nor discourage them, Eph. 6: 4; Colo. 3:21

c. Masters should not threaten the workers or deal unjustly with them, Eph. 6:6; Colo. 4:1

d. Elders should not lord over the assembly members, 1Peter 5:3

Thus, all those who are in authority are clearly told to remember the One who has supreme authority over them and be careful in their relationships with people entrusted to their care. Any authority must be exercised only with love and kindness toward one another.

In fact, the meaning of submission itself refers to a functional order like in a military. Submissiveness does not make one inferior and the other superior; rather it's an arrangement for the smooth functioning of the institution whether family or society. It's not subjugation or slavery, rather each one coming under their own rank or place willingly for the benefit of all.

## The Examples:

### 1 Submissiveness of Christ.

The most appropriate example of such submissiveness is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even as a child, though He was conscious of His position, yet, willingly He submitted to His earthly parents (Luke 2:49, 51). During His public ministry, Christ submitted Himself to the Father's will and even yielded to a painful death

(John 5:19, 20, 30; 15:10; Matt. 26:38, 39). Scripture also reveals that though He is equal with God the Father, our Lord is subject to the Father even through eternity. (1Cori. 15:28).

### Apostle Paul poignantly puts it,

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”* (Phil. 2:5–9).

Paul exhorts believers to follow this example of the Lord Jesus, forsake selfish ambitions of any kind, and practice treating one another as superiors in all humility (Phil. 2:3, 4).

### 2 Mutual submission of the organs of our body.

Another example of mutual submission is the functioning of our body. In a healthy body, each member has a specific role and place, and accordingly, each member submits to the other too. Then only can the body function efficiently.

Paul applies this principle to the functioning of the local church in 1 Cor. 12:14–27. Without this mutual submissiveness, a congregation cannot continue successfully.

## The Basis:

In Ephesians chapter 5, Apostle Paul presents mutual submission as the highest evidence of a Spirit-filled life. Paul says that when a believer is controlled by the Holy Spirit, a number of things happen in his life:

- a. Their mouths speak of the Lord, v. 19a
- b. Their heart is joyful, singing unto the Lord, v. 19b
- c. They are grateful to the Lord, v. 20
- d. They submit to each other in the fear of God, v. 21

Notice each step here; mutual submission is not possible till one comes under the control of the Holy Spirit. In other words, as long as a believer is led by their carnal nature, reciprocal submissiveness is impossible for them. Such believers will be plagued by various troubles, like bitterness, irritation, complaining, criticism, and so on.

A believer who has wholeheartedly consecrated themselves to God will not find it difficult to yield to a fellow believer for the glory of God, in spite of their position or status (Rom. 12:1, 2).

## The Application:

The practical application of this principle is in our interpersonal relationships. Even as we respect the divinely ordered authority and institutions, our one-to-one dealings must be governed by the principle of mutual submission. Notice the possible outcomes of having such a mindset:

### **i. Humility, with no show of power or authority, 1Peter 5:5**

It's noteworthy, that Peter while exhorting saints to submit to each other connects it with humility and pride. Haughty and arrogant people naturally make a show of themselves even to the extent of putting others down. This is not an exemplary trait for a believer (3John v.9).

### **ii. Respecting and preferring one over another, Rom. 12:10**

We are aware of the value of each member in the Body of Christ because they complement each other without competing. For the same reason, we are not threatened by the other's wellbeing and progress.

### **iii. Listening and cooperating**

We need to pay attention to the views of another person even if they are different and gladly collaborate wherever we can. Refuse to argue and fight over simple matters.

### **iv. Development and productivity**

There could be many more positive results of such mutual submissiveness. Instead of divisions among ourselves over petty issues and preferences, when we are united together for the ultimate aim of glorifying the Lord, we shall be more productive and successful. On the contrary, bitterness, criticism, grumbling, etc., cannot take us forward.

## The Limitations:

As with any other biblical truth, we should never forget the balance we are to maintain even in this aspect. Even the Lord Jesus Himself warned, “Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” (Matt. 10:16b).

There may be occasions when we cannot submit to even authorities. At one such instance, the apostles were very stern in their decision, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29b cf. 4:19). We should never violate the explicitly revealed Word of God for the sake of association or accommodation.

Similarly, the divinely designed institutions where authority needs to be exercised, it must be respected and maintained.

Paul states, “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” (1Cor. 11:3). Certainly, God has set an order in creation that must be appreciated by all.

## The Blessing:

Nevertheless, humbleness and submissiveness must be our general disposition as we interact with one another. This is what the Lord demands from His followers: an attitude of self-denial and self-effacement (Luke 9:23; 14:27).

Not only that, it is to the humble that God gives grace and He exalts them at the right time. At the same time, He resists the proud and puts them down at the appropriate occasion (1Peter 5:5; James 4:6; Dan. 4:33).

Finally, mutual submissiveness is ultimately benefiting to all. After all, none of us can survive independently, nor are we perfect in all aspects; we need the wholehearted loving support of one another to progress and be fruitful.

All of us gratefully remember such humble brethren who selflessly contributed to our growth. It's in such a situation that even God showers His choicest blessings.

# MUTUAL



# SUBMISSION

*“Such attitudes as submission, understanding, love, kindness, patience are not manufactured; they are the fruit of the Spirit”*

*-Warren W. Wiersbe*

# ISRAEL - PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

*By Bro. David Manchala, Hyderabad*

The Israel-Gaza conflict began on 7 October, 2023, when militants invaded Israel from the Gaza Strip. The attack was met with an Israeli counter offensive, and Israel formally declared war on Hamas a day later. The war is part of the decades-long Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Since then, print media, electronic and social media have all been breaking news every day. However, for believers this all is not a surprise. Israel is a geographical centre as well as a centre for prophetic events.



**Zechariah 12: 2, 3** – *“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”*

In the past, Haman, the Herods, Hitler, Hussain of Iraq, Hassan of Iran have all tried to wipe out Israel from history; now in our times, Hamas of Palestine, Hezbollah of Lebanon, Houthis of Yemen are all trying to do the same. In near future, little Horn also would join the list. But they will not prevail against this nation.

God has a purpose for this nation, and it will not fail, but will be fulfilled. Israel is the only nation in the history that has a Past, Present, and Future.

To understand the program of Israel, we will look into some features:

To understand the program of Israel, we will look into some features:

## 1. Israel Past: Abraham to Jesus Christ

A. **Selected** – God in His sovereign will, selected a weak vessel named Abraham and built a mighty nation (Genesis 12:1-3). Through Abraham, families generated, and out of 70 families a nation was built!

B. **Saved** – By the Passover blood, God saved them from the mighty empire of Egypt. God raised up a slave child Moses to deliver this nation!

C. **Specialized** – God specialised this nation with so many privileges – (Refer to Deuteronomy 4:7; Numbers 29:3; 2 Samuel 7:23; Psalm 147:19,20; Amos 3:2; Romans 3:1-2; 9:4); however, they were...

D. **Sinned and Sentenced** - The Old Testament narrates that whenever they sinned and violated God's law they were sentenced and punished, starting from the times of Judges and further taken away as captives to Assyria and Babylon.

## 2. Israel Present: Jesus Christ to the present

A. **Scattered** – When Jesus Christ came to them as the Son of David, the Prince of Peace, they rejected and crucified Him. They accepted Caesar as their King, but rejected the True King. As a result, they were scattered around the world in A.D. 70.

B. **Suffering** – During all these 2000 years, they were continuously suffering in various forms around the globe like in Anti-Semitism, Holocaust, and Ghettos, but they are...

C. **Surviving** – Despite all these terrible sufferings, they survived. Many races and nations have disappeared from world history, but this race is still surviving.

D. **Stablising** – Since 1948, after the establishment, this nation is thriving in all areas.

## 3. Israel Future: Jesus Christ's Return to Millennium

A. **Sanctified** – According to the New Covenant, they will be sanctified (refer to Ezekiel 36:22-29; Jeremiah 31:32-34; Romans 11:25-27)

B. **Settled** – According to the Abrahamic covenant they will be settled in the Land. Then, there will be no wars and no woes (refer to, Genesis 15; Micah 4:4,5)

C. **Sovereign** – According to the Davidic Covenant, they will become the head of the nations (refer to Deuteronomy 28:13; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 31:7)

D. **Spiritual** – Once again, they will worship the Lord (refer to Zechariah 14, Zephaniah 3:19,20).

**Consider the three dispensations of Israel History as follows:**

1. Israel as a Nation out of Egypt – the **Vine** (Isaiah 5:1-7)

2. Israel after the Babylonian captivity – the **Fig** tree (Matthew 24:32-35; Luke 13:6-8)

3. Israel inheriting the Promised Land during Millennium – the **Olive** tree (Jeremiah 11:16; Romans 9:25, 26; 11:24).

**God is faithful; He will never fail in His program for the Nation of Israel and for the Church – Rom. 11:33-36**



## Notes on Tabernacle - 24:

# THE GOLDEN ALTAR -2

*By Charles E. Wigg TASMANIA.*

### The Rim:

Exodus chapter 30: 3 tells us that the altar had a rim or crown around its top. As with the golden table, its purpose was to prevent the censer from falling. Censer contained fire upon which the incense was placed. This connects with the verse already quoted in Heb 7: 25, where we are told that He is able to save to the uttermost, those who come unto God by Him.

### The Horns:

As with the brazen altar there were four horns, showing us that wherever we may be, or may come from, no matter what point of the compass, we may come there and cling to those horns. There we can plead the promises of God, which He has made to us in His word. When we do so, God is both pleased and honoured, because when we expect Him to keep His promises, we affirm that

God is true, and thus honour Him, John, 3:33.



### The Rings and Staves:

The purpose of these was for the carrying of the altar. It was never to be carried on a cart or wagon, but carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites. It would teach us that all that the altar represents; we are to carry with us wherever we go on our wilderness journey. We are to carry ever in our hearts a deep and flowing appreciation of the matchless worth of the One through whom we approach to God, and by whom we are to offer continually the sacrifice of praise, the incense of adoration and worship.

Aaron was to burn incense

on it morning and evening, reminding us once more of the service of our Great High Priest. We have an example of this in John chapter 17, where we are privileged to hear our blessed Saviour praying for us. There He reveals His hearts deepest longings for us. He does not pray about our health, about our financial or temporal needs, but asks for things so much more wonderful than those things - things that relate to the Father's pleasure and glory.

He does not ask for us to be taken out of the world that was about to crucify Him, but He does pray for us to be kept from the evil that abounds. He prays that we might be one, thus expressing in our personal and collective testimony, the very nature of God. He asks that we may each enjoy a sweet sense of nearness to Him, to enjoy the bliss of His Company in the glory of the Father's presence.

## SUBMISSION – A REASONABLE COMMAND

*By Stephen P. Beck.*

**D**riving down a country road, I came to a very narrow bridge. In front of the bridge, a sign was posted: “YIELD.” Seeing no oncoming cars, I continued across the bridge and to my destination. On my way back, I came to the same one-lane bridge, now from the other direction. To my surprise, I saw another YIELD sign posted.

Curious, I thought, “I’m sure there was one posted on the other side.” When I reached the other side of the bridge I looked back. Sure enough, yield signs had been placed at both ends of the bridge. Drivers from both directions were requested to give right of way.

It was a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision. When the Bible commands Christians to “be subject to one another” (Ephesians 5:21) it is simply a reasonable and gracious command to let the other have the right of way and avoid interpersonal head-on collisions.



## GOSPEL :

## THE HARMONY OF WILLS

*By Aby Kuruvilla Mumbai*

**A**t the seat of all the decisions we make, is our will. While our circumstances might influence our decisions, we are ultimately responsible for the exercise of our will. We are not puppets without a will of our own. We are morally capable of having a will of our own and will be held accountable for our decisions since we are created in God’s

own image.

When parents ask their children to obey them, they are actually asking the child to align his or her will with theirs. When the child does this willingly, we may well call that submission. Submission is not so much one’s bending of knees as one’s bending of will.

### *Our Example:*

We see a perfect example of submission in the Lord Jesus Christ. He, though being God Himself, submitted to the will of His Father. He said, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30). He also said in another place, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work” (John 4:34). He always sought and did the will of the Father.

In the hours before he was arrested and crucified, we see Him in exceeding sorrow, praying to His Father saying, “Thy will be done” (Matt. 26:42). He fully knew beforehand the horrendous way in which He would suffer. Yet, His will was in complete harmony with the Father’s will! There was no trace of resistance in Him. He finished the work, died on the cross, and rose again on the third day.

### *Man’s Will:*

In contrast to the perfect submission of the Son, we see a failure in mankind to submit to God. We are at enmity with God due to our sins. In an inharmonious relationship, one cannot please the other until the issue causing the separation is dealt with.

Today, mankind has devised many ways to try to please God; they bring their religion and good works thinking that these will give them salvation. However, these are nothing than getting them further from the will of God.

### *God’s Will:*

“God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). He has perfected the way of salvation through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). God’s will is that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation.

God’s will is good, perfect, and supreme for all mankind. It is therefore required of man to submit themselves to the will of God in order to be in a harmonious relationship with Him.

### *Our Destiny*

When we do not do that, we are found living in rebellion. God does not coerce us nor does He force us into submitting to His will. He instead solemnly exhorts us, “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”. He warns us to put away unbelief, “lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:7, 8, 13).

A day of judgment is approaching when God will hold us accountable for all our decisions. If we have rejected His plan of salvation, we will receive the wages of our sins, which is eternal damnation. Nevertheless, those who have submitted to His will by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ have peace with God and enjoy a harmonious relationship with Him leading even unto eternity.

# Exhortation: SUBMISSIVENESS IN THE FAMILY

By Dr. Joel Albert, Aurangabad

Submission is a word disliked by many in today's post-modern times. It is a word that generates a lot of controversy. In times like these, words like freedom and liberty are misconstrued to a point where a person thinks, "I can and I will do what I want". In a predominantly 'free world', this is a word that is often overlooked in several spheres of our lives such as our family, workplace, society, and even assembly.

As we look into the topic of submissiveness in the family, it is important for us to revisit the Greek word for submission- 'hupotasso' - which means, "To put under or arrange under." Of course, there is a military connotation when we look into its meaning, but through a general perspective, there is the idea of acknowledging authority and being in order under the same authority, so as to fulfill God's will in our lives and glorify His name. In the family, it is clearly evident that ideally and scripturally there is submission at the following levels:

## A. Submissiveness within the family:

1. The children submit to their parents (Eph. 6:1-3)
2. The wife submits to her husband (Eph. 5:22-24; 32-33)
3. The husband submits to Christ (Eph. 5:25-33)

## B. Submissiveness with the family

1. Mutual submission (Eph. 5:21)
2. Submission to Authority (Eph 6:5-9)
3. Submission to the Lord

## A. Submissiveness within the family:

### 1. Children

Ephesians 6:1 may be one of the most common verses that children learn in Sunday school, but as believers, we need to understand that we mirror Christ when we as children remain submissive to our parents. If we want to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29), we should

first walk in His footsteps, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, eventually demonstrating His obedience even to the point of death on the cross.

There is a common notion among the young generation of all times that their decision-making capabilities are much better than their parents. It is when they become

parents themselves that they realize how ignorant they are no matter the vastness of their knowledge, the degree of their understanding, or simply their education which is never a substitute for experience.

A boy, until he leaves his parents and cleaves to his wife and until in the new role, is supposed to be in complete submission to his parents, and a girl until she forgets her father's house and takes up her new role as a wife needs to submit to the decisions and directions as children in the family. Only then do they fulfill the purpose of their calling by confirming themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## ***2. The wife***

One of the main tenets of modern-day feminism is not equality with men in the family context but the power to make independent choices in the family and to be the decision-maker.

Let us be clear that when a man and a woman cleave to each other, irrespective of their roles, they are not independent decision-makers, rather they are interdependent entities of one unit, that is, a godly family. When we see the Lord Jesus Christ, being God the Son, is positionally equal with the Father (John 5:18), but in his role as the Son, He submitted to Father's will completely, (Lk. 22:42).

Being submissive does not mean being a mute spectator; rather it is to align oneself with their husband's decision after a mutual conversation regarding any

decisions pertaining to the family.

Dear sisters, the Lord has made us equal positionally. Nevertheless, in our roles as husbands and wives, the wife submits to her husband, thereby mirroring Christ and the church and also glorifying the Lord by maintaining the order set by Him.

Yes, she is in a position of authority in relation to her children, but at the same time, she ought to be submissive to her husband even in situations where she may think she would make better decisions than him!

It may not be as easy as it seems, especially when the husband is not godly. That is why a submissive wife needs to be a prayerful wife because the Lord who is in authority over her husband can give him the wisdom to take the right decision as an answer to her prayers.

## ***3. The Husband***

The words 'chauvinism' and 'patriarchy' are thrown around frequently these days and for good reason. The man is the head of the family for sure but the extreme misappropriation of that role has been very rampant in many families.

Man's authority as the head of the family does not mean he can be dictatorial, abusive, and overly controlling the minutest of things. Instead, authority is intertwined with love as we read in Ephesians 5, that the husband fulfills his role by loving, nourishing, and cherishing

his wife.

Loving her as he loves himself shows us how a husband should let down his pride and replace the selfish thoughts with love towards their spouse and be a decision-maker and caretaker instead.

The important part of the husband's role is that he is not the ultimate authority in the family. He has to be submissive to the will

of God for every single decision made in the family. A godly husband always goes out of his way to take care of his family by leading them in the ways, the word, and the worship of the true and living God. He is answerable to God for every decision as well and that completes the perfect order in the family where everybody fulfills their role and the ultimate authority of God is acknowledged.

## B. SUBMISSIVENESS WITH THE FAMILY

### 1. Mutual Submission:

What does it mean to be mutually submissive? You see if we are all believers in a family then as the church which is the body of Christ, we need to show a submissive attitude in our service as individuals no matter what our roles and responsibilities are.

When we are individually submissive to the word and the will of God, we find it easier to be submissive in our roles in the family. When we esteem fellow brethren more than ourselves we learn submission in the family sphere as well.

### 2. Submission to authority:

As a family, we need to learn submission to authority in society as well as in the local assembly. Our dining and our driving especially should not be filled with rants against authorities but rather a submissive and healthy attitude should be seen and heard through our attitude and words.

Our children mimic our behavior towards authority in their own lives as well. 1 Peter 2:13-25 beautifully explains to us with the example of Christ at the forefront, how we should even be ready to suffer for Christ's sake and be in submission to authorities over us knowing that He is the ultimate authority.

### 3. Submission to the Lord:

Finally, when we individually align ourselves by submitting to the Lord as believers we fulfill our service. When we are submissive in our respective roles in the family, we show forth our standing in the order created by God and by submitting to the authorities we show our readiness to suffer for the sake of the glory of God

***When we fulfill all these levels of submissiveness in the family we ultimately glorify God and then He being the ultimate authority fulfills His will through our lives by using us as vessels for the Master's use.***

By Tom Jacob, Mumbai

**Submission** – the word in itself sounds so intimidating to the flesh (the sinful nature) in a saint. Our instincts cry out aloud that we are born to be free and not to live under anyone’s control.

### Importance

Before our salvation, we hated to yield when anyone tried to influence us to change our decisions. We were so hard-hearted and stubborn even to bend our head to the Holy and Almighty God!

Nevertheless, God who is rich in mercy, by the great love with which He loved us, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved! (Ephesians 2:4, 5).

When we were struggling under sin’s bondage, He reached out to us with His general call, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Further, to those who positively responded to this general call, His specific call is, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Therefore, submission is required in not just the first step of our spiritual life (salvation)

rather it is also a crucial component of our subsequent spiritual growth. The Lord is inviting every child of God to bend their necks to His yoke. When we do so He transforms us each day more into His likeness, thereby fulfilling His ultimate purpose in saving us (refer to Romans 8:29).

All this shows to us the importance of submission. And if it is so critical in a believer’s life, how much more would submission be crucial for the proper functioning of an assembly, which is actually a body of such believing ones!

### Illustrated

The Lord Jesus uses the analogy of the relationship between a flock of sheep and their shepherd in John chapter 10 to explain the relationship between the Head of the Church and His blood-bought children and that between the Spirit-appointed elders of an assembly and the believers.

He says, “Most assuredly, I say to you... he who enters by the door **is the shepherd of the sheep**. To **him** the doorkeeper opens, and **the sheep hear his voice**; and **he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out**. And when **he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them**; and **the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.**” (v.1-5).

Let’s compare this passage with a verse from

Psalms: “Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, Otherwise they will not come near to you.” Psalm 32:9 [NASB].

A sheep, unlike a horse or mule, does not need a bit or bridle to be brought under submission, rather, it gets familiar with the shepherd as the shepherd spends quality time with the sheep, understanding the sheep and its needs and catering to all its needs – big and small.

The shepherd and the sheep are so well-acquainted that the Lord goes on to say in verses 14-15 of John 10, ***“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father;”***

We are presented here with such intimacy that there is no secret of the sheep that the shepherd does not know. However, what needs to be noted here is that this level of intimacy between the sheep and the shepherd is only possible when the sheep willingly submits to the shepherd’s voice and lovingly responds and follows him as he goes before it.

### *The Under-Shepherds*

It is good to remember here that the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd has assigned His purchased possession (the Church) into the trust of under-shepherds (the elders) whom He appointed over them. He considers the elders to remain faithful to Him and His Word.

Therefore, the Lord expects that in His church we (every believer) submit to the elders whom He has appointed, as we do to the Lord. Moreover, when He expects the elders to know the flock so intimately that there is nothing that the sheep needs to hide from them, it is understood that the sheep has to be open with the elders to allow them to do so faithfully. This helps the elders intercede specifically for each before the Throne of grace.

Furthermore, when the Lord expects the under-shepherds (elders) to lead the flock beside the still waters and green pastures, the sheep should be willing to allow the elders to lead them and not be stubborn like the horse or mule.

In addition, if the elders should feed the flock in a timely manner and with proper food (of sound doctrine from the Word), the sheep (believers) need to have the appetite for the pure Word (refer to 1 Pet. 2:1, 2). In short, submission in the assembly is very crucial for a local assembly to function well.

### *A word of caution:*

There is always a tendency for us (due to the old sinful nature in us) to act like the horse and mule instead of sheep and continue in rebellion and stubbornness against God and His under-shepherds like Israel’s first king Saul did (1 Samuel 15:22, 23). If we persist in such an attitude without repenting, we will only incur God’s wrath and lose the blessings that He



has prepared for us, as it happened in the case of Saul.

Moreover, we need to note here that when we are not willing to submit to the God-ordained elders, they are not losing anything, rather we will be at loss. Observe what the writer to the Hebrews mentions in his concluding words, “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.* Hebrews 3:17.

### *Ponder*

Are we like the sheep or are we like the horse or mule in sheep’s clothing, not willing to yield or submit? Notice what the Lord was grieving about regarding Israel.

He shares his thoughts of grief through the Weeping Prophet,

“For My people are foolish, They do not know Me; They are foolish children And have no understanding. They are skillful at doing evil, But they do not know how to do good.” Jeremiah 4:22 [NASB]

“Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.” Jeremiah 8:7  
Beware! Not submitting would result in our ultimate destruction only, and this can digress into closing down of assembly testimonies as it happened with the church at Ephesus. May God grant us grace to always be like sheep, ready to yield to Him and the elders to whom He entrusted our souls with.

“*Every well-ordered society rests on two supporting pillars—authority and submission.*”

- *William MacDonald*



“*The first test of a really great man is his humility*”

- *John Ruskin*

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