

Resolving Rebellion

An important element to marriage oneness is submission to God-ordained authority. We live in a time when everyone wants to be independent of all types of authority. People want to make their own decisions and direct their own lives. Submission to authority is not respected. This tendency has caused serious spiritual problems in people's lives and is destroying many marriages.

In Ephesians 5:21, the Apostle Paul writes under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*" Paul then outlines God's ordained structures of authority in the marriage relationship, in the home, and in the work place. In Romans 13, Paul addresses the believers responsibility to government as an authority ordained by God in our lives. Hebrews 13:7 challenges us to submit to our pastors as our spiritual authorities. Ultimately, every individual is in a place of accountability to his Creator, God Almighty.

Rebellion in any of these scopes makes a marriage very vulnerable to enemy attack. In 1 Samuel 15:23, we find this strong statement: "*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...*" The one thing rebellion and witchcraft have in common is that both open the door for overpowering enemy influence and destruction.

Notice the following:

A rebellious attitude toward authority produces negative consequences. Rebellion causes people to resent and reject correction. Anytime a directive is received, it triggers an internal reaction to do the opposite of what should be done. If rebellion is not dealt with, decisions will be made based on a reaction to being told what to do. An adult who responds in this way may still be reacting to negative feelings from childhood.

Rebellion gives ground to the enemy. In the same way that a person gives ground to the enemy through participating in witchcraft or occult activities (1 Samuel 15:23), ground is given to the enemy through rebellion. It opens the door for the enemy to control our lives.

Rebellion leads to unmet needs. In Psalm 68:6, David describes the rebellious as living in a dry land. Those with rebellious hearts will always have unmet needs. They are constantly reacting to others and are never able to enjoy life or relationships. When a rebellious couple marries, the rebellion is turned toward each other and each partner reacts to the control of the other like opposite poles of a magnet. It is essential that an engaged couple resolve any rebellion prior to the wedding. A couple having unresolved rebellion toward parents will begin reacting to each other within the first two weeks of marriage.

God exerts pressure on us to break our rebellion. 1 Samuel 12:15 states, “*If you rebel against the Lord...then the hand of the Lord will be against you.*” Because God cannot use someone who exhibits a rebellious spirit, He seeks to uproot it and will often use calamity (Proverbs 1:24-25) or other measures to bring that person to a place of usefulness to Himself. A reaction against the authority of others is an indication of rebellion against God’s authority.

God has established boundaries to protect us. The principles in God’s Word are given to protect us and to lead us into lives of fulfillment and joy. God designed the world to operate smoothly according to His rules, but if these rules are violated, life becomes chaotic. In the same way, a basketball game would be chaotic if each player made up his own rules. Respecting and submitting to the rules actually makes it more enjoyable.

Adapted from *Biblical Concepts Counseling Workbook*, p. 53

Submission

In contrast to rebellion, submission to God-ordained authorities prepares the way for divine blessing. In Ephesians 6:3, Paul specifically points out the long-term impact of choosing to honor parents based on God’s promise at Mount Sinai. “*Honor your father and mother...that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.*” Many marriages suffer great conflicts because of one or both spouses have never resolved the authority conflicts with their parents. Resolution of past rebellion is integral to future success.

Submission brings peace and fulfillment in relationships. Submission means yielding my personal rights. It is a lie of Satan that we have the right to be independent of authority. God designed authority to be exercised in our relationship to the family, to church and to government. Our responsibility is to submit with a proper attitude unless the authority violates the principles in God’s Word. Humbly submitting to God and to those He places over us leads us to experience the peace, joy and fulfillment of His design.

The list *Symptoms of Rebellion* and the following prayer is designed to help you identify and resolve those areas of rebellion hindering freedom in your own life and marriage.

Symptoms of Rebellion

Check the ways you have demonstrated rebellion toward each of the following:

Toward Government

- Failing to be honest in paying taxes
- Engaging in illegal activities
- Disregarding traffic laws
- Disrespecting police officers and elected officials
- Other_____

Toward Husband

- Taking control of the leadership of the home and children
- Highlighting the husband's faults to the children
- Being critical of any suggestion or positive direction given by the husband
- Not supporting his vision and leadership
- Other_____

Toward Parents

- Leaving home against parents' wishes
- Participating in activities that parents did/do not approve of
- Resisting discipline
- Communicating disrespectful toward them through attitude and behavior
- Other_____

Toward Employers

- Bad-mouthing employer to other employees
- Not following instructions as directed
- Always suggesting an alternative to the direction given
- Other_____

Toward Spiritual Leaders

- Reacting to spiritual leaders over petty differences of individual preference
- Being critical of the pastor to other members of the congregation
- Participating in cliques within the congregation that cause division
- Other_____

Toward God

- Disregarding the promptings of the Holy Spirit and conscience
- Engaging in activities that you know did/do not honor God
- Neglecting God-given responsibilities in not loving my wife and leading my children
- Refusing to be a part of a local church and group of believers
- Other_____

Prayer

“Lord, I acknowledge my rebellious attitude toward _____ by responding with (area of rebellion). I ask Your forgiveness for my rebellion. I choose to submit to the authority of (Area of rebellion). Take back the ground I gave to Satan. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.”

Rev. Jeffrey Pokone, has been a Biblical counselor and Center Director with the Indiana Biblical Counseling Center since 1998. He counsels in the following areas; marriage, trauma and abuse, sexual addictions, spiritual conflicts, and relationships. Jeff has been married for over 30 years to his wife Suzette and has five adult children.

© The Indiana Biblical Counseling Center <https://www.indianabcc.com/>