

****Bumper Video –**

Relationships are hard

They are often harder than they should be. We often look to the wrong examples to direct our relationships. We were raised in a broken home yet we use that as our example and live out what we know already doesn't work... But in this series we have challenged you to look at God as the example for your relationships.

Week 1 We told you about a love that motivates.

God's motivation is always love but we often let fear be our motivation.

Stop doing things out of fear.

Start doing things out of love.

Week 2 We told you about a love that is unbreakable.

We are a lot like the meatloaf song "I would do anything for love... but I won't do that." We make unbreakable promises but don't provide an unbreakable love.

But **God's love for us is Unbreakable!** It stays the same even when we do wrong.

We also talked about how God stepped down from his ideal and into our real – all in order to save the relationship. The healing of your relationship depends on humility – a willingness to step down from our ideal into the reality of the situation... and then from there we can love people back to our ideal.

Today we are going to talk about **A love you can Trust**

Is there a love that will conquer your trust issues? A love that won't stab you in the back... A love that will tell you the truth even when you don't want to hear it...? Does that love really exist?

Historian and Moralist, *John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton*, gave us this **great quote**.

"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men."

Lord Acton believes the more power someone has the less you can trust them. He says "Power tends to corrupt" and the more power someone has the quicker they are corrupted. "Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

More Power = Less Trust

Is this how you feel? It is logical to feel this way. **The world is filled with stories of people who used power to harm, power to steal, power to kill, power to serve themselves...**

Politicians, Abusive parents or spouses, dictators, the schoolyard bully... and don't forget religious leaders... These are all examples of people who use their power to do bad things.

Religion isn't exempt from this list. Religion has never done well with power. Religion stood by and watched the Holocaust happen. Some churches aligned themselves with Hitler. Religion has stories of priests abusing children. Religious leaders taking advantage of children who are taught to always trust the Priest.

In fact there have been times in History where Religion ruled over the kings that ruled over nations. What would religion do with that power? It would abuse with it's power... Religion saw people burnt at the stake, it saw Holy Wars, it took the money and clothed itself in wealth while people starved...

Even Religion shows that power tends to corrupt.

Is there anyone you can trust? You might have things that have happened in your past that have caused severe trust issues in your life. With the evil that is happening in the world... and could have happened to you... it's easy to understand why you feel that way.

Do you enter into relationships wondering when they will let you down? When are they going to lie to me and let me down? ...

And it's usually a self-fulfilling prophecy because they will eventually let you down on some level... and then you say... "I knew it!" ... all men women pastors are the same...

When we don't trust anyone in our life we won't let anyone have power in our life.

At the end of your life you will be all alone with a list of people who hurt you. God wants more for you than that. We want more for you than that.

great quote

Although we understand why Lord Acton feels the way he does about power and corruption... It isn't always true 100%.

When we look at God as our example we see a figure who has all power and authority... He speaks and the world is formed and he could just as easily speak us out of existence.

If absolute power corrupts absolutely then God must be the most evil creature ever.

Jesus said all power in heaven and earth is in his hand...

Jesus has absolute power, but was he absolutely corrupt?

Was He corrupt at all?

With the God of the Bible, Lord Acton's argument breaks down.

Where we see people abusing power... we see God giving it away.

Where we see people using their strength to take someone's life... we see Jesus give His own life.

Where we see people abusing their power in the name of self-interest... We see God stand up for the defenseless, free a group of slaves and make a mighty nation.

If there is an authority in this world you can trust, it is God!

Why? Why is it different with God? And if God is our example is there a way that it can be different with us?

This Love we have been talking about... This love that doesn't operate on fear, this love that is unbreakable and never changing... This love isn't corrupted by power.

With all due respect to Lord Acton I would like to amend his quote.

GREATER QUOTE

Power WITHOUT LOVE tends to corrupt, and absolute power WITHOUT LOVE corrupts absolutely. Great men WITHOUT LOVE are almost always bad men.

The problem isn't authority. The problem is the corruption... the problem is a lack of love. **We need Love**

We picked on religion earlier... we showed that even religion was corrupted by power... But let me give you a few examples of the Church walking in love & power... The Church of Acts took care of orphans & elderly widows.. in a society where they would have likely starved, the church through LOVE used it's resource & power to feed them.

Who can forget Mother Theresa and her love for the sick and dying in India. She broke through the cast system of the poor & rich and served in love. She was asking nothing in return.

And today many Churches have built wells for clean water in Africa. People using the power of their wealth to help those in need. It's done out of love and it's beautiful.

Love makes all the difference! **We need Love!** Religion needs love. The government needs Love. Families, parents & children need love... Because Authority without love tends to corrupt.

We need authority

We may not realize it, but we need an authority in our lives.

We see this easily with Children... They need an authority to teach them right and wrong...

But beyond that we need an authority that will look us in the eye and tell us when we are wrong. Could be a friend or family member, a brother or sister in Christ, or the Lord... but we need that.

We need an authority that will not just fight with us when we are wrong, but one that will fight for us when we are right.

We need an authority that loves us... an authority we can trust. We don't need an authority that just seeks to control us. More on control in a moment... but first let's talk about..

Abusing, Abdicating or Avoiding

The subject of Authority is a really tense subject. Because if you are going to accept someone's authority you are going to need to submit to that authority.

Authority and submission always seem to be one sided *don't* they? Some of you cringed when I said the word submission... but stick with me. I have a feeling you are going to feel liberated by what I have to say.

Religious interpretation of scripture has often been one sided on the subject of authority and submission. It has been male driven and seems to devalue women. The culture of centuries past was male driven and the theologians where 100% male... so they seem to have leaned heavily towards their own gender...

Check out this quote I got from another pastor's teaching on submission...

"The Lord did not design men to have women rule over them. He designed men to rule over women. "The head of woman is man" (1 Corinthians 11:3) God has placed men as the authority (head) over women, and therefore they need to submit to this authority.

The reason women even exist is not so that they can be independent entities. The reason they exist is so that they can help men."

Talk about one sided. This is all too easy for this male pastor to present. And as we look closely at this it's clear to see that this view devalues women. It basically says because you are born a woman you are lesser than a man... it says women go find a man to follow because you have no other identity and purpose other than to follow a man.

This spreads further into Christianity as many denominations reject Women being used in ministry. Women can't be a part of the 5 fold

ministry... “You have heart to serve God and His kingdom but you can never minister to a room that might include men because you were born a woman.”

And this teaching has led to 3 choices... **Abusing, Abdicating or Avoiding**

#1 Abuse. Men have used this power to abuse. They have used this power without love to control and be the boss. And they point to a few strung together scriptures to say... see there God wants me to be boss.

#2 Abdicate. Men who have seen this abuse up close and have been sickened by it and know it isn't right have chosen to Abdicate their authority. They refuse to be an authority in the home because the only example they have seen was an abusive one.

#3 Avoid. Women in today's culture have come to a place where they refuse to need a man. No man is going to tell me what to do. I'm not going to have an abusive relationship like my parents. Given the option of being abused or avoiding... they say I will submit to no ones authority.

This is a broken messed up situation caused by a fallen nature theology.

Our theology needs to come out of God's ideal. And what is God's ideal? Jesus and the Garden of Eden we see in Genesis 1&2 is God's ideal.

Much of this view of man dominating over woman comes from Genesis 3:16 ...Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

This scripture is wrongly interpreted. It's often quoted at weddings. But this whole section of Scripture is about the curse of sin. It's wrongly presented as God's ideal.

God isn't saying this is what He wants from man and woman... He says this scenario will be a result of the curse of sin.

Let's take a look at this curse...

"Man will rule over woman..." This suggests that man will seek to control woman as a tyrant with his superior strength and musculature.

And history bears out that this has been the case. Men have used their power to rule women.

"And woman will desire the man..." It has been taught that the woman will simply be a supportive and submissive creature... but when we look into the Hebrew we see the exact phrase that is used when God warns Cain... Sin desire to have you. This phrase indicates a desire to control and manipulate.

And history bears out that women have tried to gain control through ways other than physical strength...

God is telling us that in our fallen state, because of the curse of sin, Man and Woman would be fighting each other over control. This is

Genesis 3 – It is not God’s ideal for our relationships. It is not the example we should look to... Our example is found in Genesis 1&2...

Genesis 2:23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; (NIV)

When Adam looks at Eve for the 1st time he declares – Flesh of my Flesh Bone of my Bone. He looks at her and doesn’t point out the difference between them. He looks at her and doesn’t declare “I’m the boss.” He looks at her and declares an equality. Even though women and men are obviously different... physically different, functionally different with different roles... Adam looks at her and sees himself.

This is God’s ideal for your relationships. That you look at others and don’t see differences. You see yourself. You see someone else that was created by God.

Then God makes both man and woman rulers over the garden. Man and Woman share an equal dominion and authority over the garden. God doesn’t say Adam you have more right to rule than Eve...

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.(NIV)

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."(NIV)

In God’s ideal we see a man and woman with authority. They both have an authority and yet they don’t fight. The man doesn’t use his strength and the woman doesn’t try to manipulate to gain control.

Love was present in the Garden and this is God's ideal. There was no Abuse, no Abdicating, and no Avoiding.

God created you to have authority. **We need authority.**

Your family needs your authority... So don't abdicate it. You need an authority to speak into your life... so don't avoid it. Your children need you to be an authority in their life. Your friends need you to be an authority...

One trouble we have is that we have incorrectly thought that only 1 person can have authority... One person's authority must control and trump the authority of others. But that's not the example of God's ideal in Genesis 1&2.

We have made statements like "The man needs to be the Priest of the home." But that's not even in the Bible.

Revelation 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."(NIV)

What the Bible does say is that we are a Kingdom of Priests who serve God & reign. #SharedAuthority regardless of gender!

The Bible says Galatians 3:28 there is no male nor female in Christ. We aren't defined by our gender but by the authority we have in Christ.

But check out what Ephesians 5 says about submission concerning marriage.

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.(NIV)

This is an earth shattering comment by Paul. It is counter cultural to the time. This scripture suggests that men and women should submit one to another in marriage. That is a picture of Genesis 1&2. That is God's ideal.

If you never submit to your spouse you are doing something wrong. That isn't God's ideal. If you stomp around like you are the boss...

What a mess we have made. We have been **Abusing, Abdicating or Avoiding** our authority and it's all because we have had Power WITHOUT LOVE.

We need a love that can trusted. A love that can be trusted with power.

There is a word for this – **Meekness**

Many people think that Meekness is weakness – It is far from it. Meekness is Strength under control.

I get this analogy from Pastor David Fuller... "Strength is like a Jack Hammer being started up and driving through concrete and everything in its path. With its brute strength it destroys.

Meekness is if you could take all the power of that jack hammer and control it to precisely remove a hang nail from your little toe."

Meekness isn't a loss of strength & Submission isn't a loss of power. It is power under control.

Meekness is a love that can be trusted.

We need meekness in our relationships. Have you been acting out meekness?

It's a love that can be trusted.

MUSICIAN

I understand that this teaching is different from what is usually taught. I'd like you to prayerfully consider it.

You might be listening and wanting to say... but man is the head of the woman. He is the Leader! The woman needs to do what the man says.

Let me say the following...

Christ is our example. He is the picture of meekness and submission, and yet he is the head and leader of our faith.

So if the man is the leader... let him lead in meekness. Let him lead in submission. When there is a disagreement between man & wife let the man lead by showing submission... submission to God and to his marriage covenant.

Christ is our example and He always showed us how to come under...

Coming under

Christ always came under the will of the father. He submitted.

But He didn't just stop there...

Christ the greatest of all became the servant of all. He came under his disciples as a servant and washed their feet.

He bore the weight of the cross... he came under the weight of our sin...

Even now Scripture says He ever lives to make intercession... He is serving us even right now... interceding on our behalf.

Christ shows us coming under. He didn't lose his authority by doing this... he served us in love by doing this.

Can you in meekness and love come under your spouse as a servant? Your children – Can you use your authority not to control them but to serve them?

Can you show your relationships a love that can be trusted?