



*"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:7-8).*

**Introduction** Submission to the Lord in a family life goes through three stages. First, the family members must attain the virtues preceding the life of submission. Second, they must lead a life that is characteristic of the life of submission. Such a family will receive the blessings of the life of submission as the third and final stage.

A family is the sum of its individual members. Individual members collectively make up the family as do their actions make up the actions of the family.

A. ***Virtues that Precede the Life of Submission:***

1. Surrender to God vs. Surrender to Earthly Desires

*"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things*

*which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:7-9).*

The Lord Jesus Christ learned obedience in His Human will, which He freely surrendered to the Divine will. Even within the agony and injustice of the world around our Lord Jesus, He submitted to the will of the Father thereby denying Himself of His fleshly desires.

*"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, his is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things" (II Timothy 2:3-7).*

Faithful family submission requires effort and disciplined behaviors. Discipline may

include self-denial and struggle in order to surrender to God.

B.

1. Humility vs. Arguments and Prideful Thoughts

It is not possible to live the life of submission without humility. A family must be sure of God, lean on God's Word, and depend on the Lord in times of unrest. A puffed up family that lean on their own thinking, and on the truths they believe to be self evident cannot submit their lives to God in humility.

*"But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).*

The Lord Jesus Christ's humbling death has exalted Him. The Holy Cross purpose was to bring about suffering and shame but for the Lord Jesus Christ brought glory and honor.

*"Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not*

*pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (Titus 2:9-10).*

Feelings of the ego cannot take priority over feelings of humility. Lactantius (c. 304) wrote, "There is need of humility, fear, and devotion in the greatest degree—lest anyone should put his confidence in his integrity and innocence. For in doing this, he may incur the charge of pride and arrogance."

C.

1. Faith vs. Doubt

If a person doubts God's love and care, such a person will not be able to submit his life to such a wavering trust. A family cannot be obedient to a luke-warm relationship with God.

*"Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:5).*

Obedience to the faith is acceptance of the Holy Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is

the virtue of obedience in action.

Cyprian (c. 250) said, "Abraham believed in God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. Assuredly, then, when whoever believes in God and lives in faith is found righteous and is already blessed in faithful Abraham."

D. Characteristics of the Life of Submission:

1. Submission of One's Strong Will

When a family submits their will it means that the family has no other will which differs from that of God's.

*"When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore knowing all things that would come*

*upon Him went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking.' They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, 'I am He.'" (John 18:1-6).*

The Lord Jesus Christ intentionally came to the place known to Judas. This shows the Lord Jesus was willing to go to His Passion and He voluntarily and humbly did so. The Lord Jesus Christ submitted to the will of His Father.

Saul of Tarsus asked God when He appeared to him near Damascus: "*Lord what do You want me to do?*" (Acts 9:6). From that point in time onward, Saul of Tarsus complete submission to God was the turning point in the life of this great apostle, then St. Paul.

E.

#### 1. Behavior Will Match the Will of God

*"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water*

*into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, 'Lord, are You washing my feet?'" (John 13:3-6).*



The foot washing was an act of humility. This act of hospitality was normally performed in Biblical days by servants. St. Peter is shocked at the sight of seeing the Lord Jesus Christ performing such a menial task.

King David would exclaim, "*I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart*" (Psalm 40:8). King David was willing to obey God.

*"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will" (Acts 13:22).*

## 2. God will Guide the Thoughts of the Submissive:

*"Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36).*

Although the Son asks the Father a heart wrenching request, the Son also submits to the will of the Father.

St. Paul who lived an active life of submission said, "*But we have the mind of Christ*" (I Corinthians 2:16). God will guide the thoughts of those submissive to Him.

## F. Blessings in the Life of Submission

What does a person gain from a life of submission? The answer is joy, peace, and no eternal condemnation.

### 1. True Joy

True joy means an absence of grief, anxiety, and fear. Joy is a fruit of the spirit.

*"But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You" (Psalm 5:11).*

Hermas (c. 150) states, "He will bestow on them the blessing which He has promised them, with much glory and joy, if only they



will keep the commandments of God, which they have received in great faith."

G.

1. Peacefulness

A person who experiences total peace is someone who is sure that his life is in the very hands of God. He feels such peace in his heart that nothing and no one can take away. A person realizes that God loves Him and is able to take him from the midst of hard times and tribulations.

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. Though an entire army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident" (Psalm 27:1-3).*

H.

1. No Eternal Condemnation

Being sure of the final judgment is the end

point on the path way to the life of submission.

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).*

If you strive to keep the Lord's commandments you can rest assured of the blessings of the life of submission.

*"Not everyone who say to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven" (Matthew 7:21).*

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death" (John 8:51).*

## **Summary**

The family unit is recognized throughout the Holy Bible. Biblical influence a care and teachings are paramount in a family life. Submissiveness to God is essential.

Joshua said, *"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15).

Moses who *"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,*

*choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:24-25).*

Clement of Rome (c. 96) advises, "Let your children be partakers of true Christian training. Let them learn that humility is of great avail with God."

The submissive family is a successful family. To be submissive a family must practice humility. Humility is being aware of your weaknesses and knowing your failings and your sins and treating yourself accordingly.



His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, teaches, "Humility and submissiveness lies in the fact that you should not feel that you are great and try to appear to be small or to hide your greatness. The mere feeling that you are great implies a kind of pride, and your feeling that you are hiding your greatness includes a feeling of greatness that you hide from people which is obvious to you."

With one mind and one accord a family must be submissive to the Lord.

St. Clement of Rome (c. 96) said, "Take heed, beloved, lest His many kindnesses lead to the

condemnation of us all. For thus it must be unless we walk worthy of Him and with one mind do those things which are good and well-pleasing in His sight."

Let it be according to Your mercy O Lord, and not according to our sins.

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