



Spiritual Disciplines

SESSION 8: SUBMISSION

Based on *Celebration of Discipline*
by Richard Foster

A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.
A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

Martin Luther, *Father of the Protestant Reformation*

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS:

What do you think, hear, and feel when you hear the word "submission"? What about "self-denial"?

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:21

In your relations with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:5-7

THE CROSS-LIFE

The most radical social teaching of Jesus was his total reversal of the contemporary notion of greatness. Leadership is found in becoming a servant of all. Power is discovered in submission. The foremost symbol of this radical servanthood is the cross.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Mark 8:34

THE FREEDOM OF SUBMISSION

- "Lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get our own way." (Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*)
- Self-denial
- Give way to others

WHY DO WE SUBMIT?

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

Matthew 5:44

If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

Matthew 5:39



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ANSWERING THE CALL OF SUBMISSION

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.

Mark 9:35

BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS OF SUBMISSION

- Loving neighbor means we love ourself.
 - If love of self does not accompany love of neighbor, we are being self-destructive.
- If in submission we cease to love God, love neighbor, or love self, then our submission is destructive.
- This does not mean we put ourselves first.
- Submission is about not putting another under our authority.
- Submission may be to our own detriment.
- Love the one who is being taken advantage of.

THE 7 ACTS OF SUBMISSION

1. **Triune God.** Yield our body, mind, and spirit for God's purposes. Continually seek God in how we are to submit. The Spirit will help us know when to submit, and well as what the limits on submission.
2. **Scripture.** Hear the Word, receive the Word, and obey the Word
3. **Family.** Listen, share, and make allowances for each other.
4. **Neighbors.** Perform small acts of kindness and ordinary neighborliness.
5. **Believing Community.** How we serve and minister to our church and the church universal.
6. **Broken and Despised.** How we serve, love, and life up the marginalized, disabled, helpless, and undefended.
7. **World.** How we live as a responsible member of an increasingly irresponsible world.

Submission gives us (1) the ability to lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get our own way and (2) the freedom to love people unconditionally.

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

1 John 3:16-17