

Discipleship Questions

How did Jesus conduct Himself toward His earthly parents?

How did Jesus conduct Himself toward governmental authorities?

How did Jesus demonstrate submission even in difficult and unjust circumstances?

How did Jesus view submission to the Father's will?

How was coming to the earth a demonstration of Jesus's submission to the Father's will?

How was suffering a demonstration of Jesus's submission to the Father's will?

What does Jesus's example teach you about what your submission to earthly authority should look like?

What does Jesus's example teach you about what your submission to God should look like?



Those who desire to be Jesus's disciples must endeavor to learn Jesus's teachings and ways and imitate Him by walking as He walked (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:1). One aspect of Jesus's life that must be imitated is the way Jesus submitted. Therefore, we must consider the Scriptures that give us insight into the way Jesus submitted so we can learn how to walk in His footsteps in the way that we submit.

Luke 2:51-52

Although Jesus was God living on this earth, He also lived as a human Child under the Law of God, which required Him to honor and obey His earthly parents (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 21:18-21). For Jesus to be obedient to His parents involved submitting to them by placing Himself under their God-given authority (Ephesians 6:1-3). Thus, Jesus was not a rebellious and/or disrespectful Child, but rather respected and submitted to the authority of His earthly parents (as long as they led Him down the right paths). Furthermore, it should also be noted that Jesus continued showing honor to His mother throughout His life (John 2:1-12; 19:25-27; though we do not read about His earthly father after this). So, Jesus's disciples must also obey God's laws to be submissive to those God has given authority to on this earth (e.g. parents).

Matthew 22:15-22

Jesus was put to the test on this occasion by people who wanted to accuse and kill Him (e.g. as promoting rebellion against Rome). They wanted to see whether Jesus (who was/is King, John 18:33-40; 19:12-16, 19-22) would urge people to rebel against paying taxes to the pagan Roman kingdom. To the amazement of those who tested Jesus, He actually urged people to

submit to the tax Rome had imposed on the Jews. In this way, Jesus recognized earthly rulers as having God-given authority (John 19:10-11; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). Furthermore, Jesus also recognized God's authority and urged obedience to Him. In fact, the Scriptures plainly teach that God's authority is over all (Acts 5:29). Therefore, God's people must submit to God and to earthly authorities that do not violate God's authority.

1 Peter 2:18-25

As Peter encouraged enslaved Christians to submit to their earthly masters, he instructed them to do this even when the masters were cruel and unjust. Peter encouraged them through Jesus's example, who submitted even when it meant suffering unjustly. He submitted to doing the will of God to provide the sacrifice for sin, even though He had not committed any sin (Hebrews 5:7-8). Furthermore, He also submitted to the unrighteous decisions and punishments of the earthly authorities over Him (Matthew 26:47-56; John 18:36). Although the Scriptures demonstrate there are some appropriate ways to fight injustices (Acts 22:22-29; 25:9-12), Jesus's example demonstrates His willingness to peacefully yield even when it resulted in unjust suffering. Therefore, Christians are also taught not to conduct themselves in a way that would be viewed as dishonorable and rebellious, even if it means yielding and suffering unjustly to those with authority over us (1 Peter 2:11-12; Titus 2:6-10; 3:1-2).

John 6:38

Jesus saw His earthly life as having the distinct mission to do the will of the Father. Even the act of Jesus leaving Heaven and coming to earth was itself an act of submission to the Father. For, Jesus was living in the paradise of Heaven with the Father and came to this earth that is filled with sin, suffering, pain, and death. In fact, He knew what He would experience on this earth before He ever came to earth and experienced it (Isaiah 53; Ephesians 3:11; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Luke 9:21, 44; 18:31-33). Then, after coming to earth, Jesus lived every moment of every day focused on fulfilling the mission the Father had sent Him to accomplish. Although He would submit to other authorities (as we have seen), Jesus's foremost commitment was submission to the authority of His Heavenly Father! This focused determination and submission resulted in Jesus refusing earthly enticements offered to Him (Matthew 4:1-11), speaking whatever the Father commanded (John 12:48-50), enduring the sufferings He did not have to experience (Matthew 26:47-56), and completing the mission the Father sent Him to accomplish (John 19:30) so that the Father would be glorified through Him (John 17:3-5)!

John 4:34

Jesus's submission to the will of the Father was not a burdensome obligation to Him. Instead, it was quite the opposite! Jesus's submission to the Father in coming to the earth and living a sacrificial life to the glory of the Father was to demonstrate the love He had for His Father (John 14:30-31). Jesus's love and surrender to His Heavenly Father fueled every aspect of His earthly life. It was something that was accomplished in unity and the desire to accomplish the Father's purposes. Therefore, God's people must also see their earthly lives as being yielded to the will of our Heavenly Father rather than focused on our own wills (Romans 12:1-2)!

Philippians 2:3-11

The attitude (mind) of Christ is to be imitated by His disciples. In particular, this passage demonstrates the critical connection between Jesus's humility and His submission. For, to yield Himself to all that was in the Father's will for Him, He had to recognize His Father's authority over Him (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3). Even though Jesus possessed all the nature of being God (John 1:1; Colossians 2:9), Jesus did not hold onto this nature to the point of refusing to come to the earth, becoming a servant, and obeying the Father. In fact, Jesus's submission to the Father knew no limits – as He was even willing to obey the Father to the point of an agonizing death on the cross. Yet, the Father rewarded Jesus's humble submission by highly exalting Him as King! Now, His name alone offers salvation to this sin-filled world (Acts 4:12). People must, then, confess His name and bow themselves before Him if they want to be saved and will do so on the day He comes again (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10)! Jesus's example of submission, therefore, demonstrates that true glory and exaltation only comes when there is first humble submission to God.

Conclusion

Imitating Jesus requires that you submit like Jesus submitted. Although there is much more that could be discussed, we have seen Jesus's submission in different contexts throughout His earthly life. Ultimately, Jesus submitted Himself fully to the will of the Heavenly Father and then submitted to others with authority on this earth. Therefore, disciples of Jesus must learn to submit themselves to God above all and then to those who are in earthly positions of authority!

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