

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP – September 29, 2019

Announcements

- A property for a meeting hall has been identified in Fiji, but Fiji is a poor country and the saints there will have difficulty raising the total amount needed. Fiji is strategic and the Lord has used the church there to spread to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Tonga.
- We are reading chapter 12 of the Practical Lessons on the Experience of Life this week. We would like to encourage the reading groups to start again. If you were not in a reading group, we encourage you to join yourself to an existing group or start a new group.
- Registration for the high school retreat is due today. Final registration (with a late fee) is due by October 6th and will be closed after this date
- We are covering week 21 (Vol. 4) in the Holy Word for Morning Revival on Numbers. Copies are available in the bookroom.
- The Wednesday night ministry meeting webcast starts at 7:30 pm and will be shown at the following locations:
 - Smith - South Bellevue, (206) 914-3447, in English
 - Chang - Overlake, (425) 830-3900, in Korean
 - Wang - South Bellevue, (425) 653-2249, in Chinese

Burdens for Prayer

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany • Meeting hall modifications - finding contractor • District meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of the new school year -Children and YP meetings -College work coordination -Retreats |
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This Week: September 30 – October 6

Morning Revival: *Crystallization Study of Numbers*, week 21

Hall Cleaning: Downstairs – East Bellevue
Upstairs – Sammamish & Somerset

Tuesday	7:30pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	8:30am	Breakfast
Lord's Day	9:30am	Lord's Table

October	
11-13	JH Boys' Retreat, Double K (Easton, WA)
18-20	High School Retreat, Lakeside Bible Camp
25-27	JH Girls' Retreat, Double K (Easton, WA)
November	
15-17	Puget Sound Conference

CHAPTER EIGHT

AUTHORITY IN THE BODY

THE BODY BEING THE PLACE FOR THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF AUTHORITY

The highest expression of God's authority is in the Body of Christ, the church. Although God has established systems of authority in the world, none of the relationships with the government or between father and son, husband and wife, and master and servant can perfectly manifest authority. Although God has set up many authorities on earth, they are but systems of authority set up by God. Man can obey them outwardly without submitting to them inwardly. For example, if the government passes an edict, the people can obey it from their heart, or they can obey it, but not from the heart. There is no way to tell which kind of obedience is present. Likewise, there is no way to tell whether a child's submission to his parents is from the heart or if it is merely superficial or behavioral. Hence, submission to authority cannot be typified by a child's submission to his parents or a servant's submission to his master, much less a people's submission to its government. Without submission there is, of course, no establishment of God's authority. An outward submission that has no inward correspondence still does not establish God's authority. Moreover, many kinds of submission are based upon man's relationship with man—for example, a father with a son or a master with a servant. But master and servant can be separated, and so can father and son. Hence, we do not see absolute and perfect submission in these relationships.

Only Christ and the church have the highest expression of authority and submission. God has not established the church to make it an organization, but to make it the Body of Christ. We think that the church is the gathering together of believers of the same faith, or that it is a gathering together in love. But God sees it differently. The church is not only a convergence in faith or love; it is a body. The church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the

Head of the church. Father and son, master and servant, or even husband and wife can be separated, but the body and the head can never be separated. They are forever joined as one. In the same way Christ and the church can never be separated one from the other. With Christ and the church there is an absolute submission and an absolute authority which are far above all other authorities and submissions. Although the parents love their children, they may make mistakes. They may misuse their authority. Likewise, a government can also give wrong orders, and a master's authority can also be wrong. Not only is submission imperfect in the world, but authority is also imperfect. For this reason God has to establish a perfect authority and a perfect submission, which is Christ and the church, the Head and the Body. There are some parents who would harm their children; there are husbands who would harm their wives; there are masters who would harm their servants; and there are rulers who would harm their subjects. But there is no head that would harm its own body. Hence, the authority of the head cannot be wrong; it is perfect. Look at the submission of the body to the head; it is also perfect. As long as the head has any desire, the finger will move. There is no need for words; there is no need of force. Everything is so harmonious. God's will is that we submit perfectly. We must be brought by God to a condition that is like the body submitting to the head. Only then will God be satisfied. This cannot be represented by the husband and the wife and so forth. Authority is of Him, and submission is likewise of Him. Authority and submission are one thing. It is not like the world, where authority and submission are two different things. For a body to move, there is no need for the head to exert strength to give command. As soon as a thought arises, the body will move. There is perfect harmony in this. If we can only submit to the degree that the children are submissive to parents or wives are submissive to husbands, God will not be satisfied. God desires that our submission be like that of the body submitting to the head. It is not a submission by coercion, such as that which is seen in the nations. Rather, it is a submission of the body to the head. As soon as the head has a little intention, there is a harmonious submission.

If you have submitted yourself to God often, you realize that God's command and God's will are entirely different. His command is a word out of His mouth, and His will is an idea out of His heart. A command must be uttered, but a will need not be uttered. The Lord Jesus was submissive not only to God's word but also to His will. Whenever there was a will, the Lord moved and acted. God must wrought into Christ and the church a relationship like that between Christ and the Father. God must work in us until we can submit to Christ in the same way that Christ submits to God. In the first part of His work, God made Himself the Head of Christ. In the second part of His work, He made Christ the Head of the church. He has to work until there is submission even without the need of the dealing of the Holy Spirit. As soon as He has a desire, we will immediately obey. In the third part of God's work, God will make the kingdoms of the earth the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. The first part has already been accomplished, and the third part is yet to come. Today we are in the middle part. If the work in the second part is not complete, the third part cannot commence. Are we here to submit and give God a free way, or are we here to disobey and hinder God? God has never

secured authority in the universe. The place where His authority will see a complete success and the place where the tide is turned is the church. The church is the middle part; it is the turning point. For this reason God reserves the greatest glory for us. Without seeing authority there is no way to go on. If this matter is not resolved in us, it will not be resolved in others. We all bear the responsibility of expressing authority.

Watchman Nee, *Authority and Submission*, Published by Living Stream Ministry.
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Bible Reading Schedule with Footnotes	
Lord's Day, September 29 nd	1 John 1:3-4
Monday, September 30 rd	1 John 1:5
Tuesday, October 1 st	1 John 1:6
Wednesday, October 2 nd	1 John 1:7
Thursday, October 3 rd	1 John 1:8-10
Friday, October 4 th	1 John 2:1-2
Saturday, October 5 th	1 John 2:3-11