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**OBHEY THEM**

Doesn't the Bible say, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them;" "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor;" "Remember them that had the rule over you;" "Salute all them that have the rule over you;" "Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder?"

These are the all-time favorite verses that church leaders love shoving down church member's throats and then stand there and watch their subjects shrivel up and cower in the dust.

If you are familiar with this website, particularly the "Institutional Church Series" section, you are aware that some English words found in our Bibles have been incorrectly translated such as the word "church" or the word "office" for example. You have also been made aware of the fact that these "mistranslations", "omissions," or "additions" have been made deliberately in order to mislead the people and to thereby further a hierarchical, ruling class of so-called church officials.

Into the same class of mistranslated words as "church" and "office," you can now throw in the words "obey," "rule over," and "submit to them."

Just as we have clearly shown you how the word "Ecclesia," meaning an assembly or community of God's people was deceitfully replaced with the word "church" (meaning a building or institution) by the KJV translators in order to maintain their control over the people; in like manner, by the help and aid of the Spirit, we will now clearly show you how the above verses of Scripture have also been maligned and perverted to further the agendas of power-hungry, sanctimonious control freaks who are bent on corraling unto themselves a pliant people of unquestioned servility.

We will begin with Hebrews 13:17 as our foundation and make our progression from there. This verse at first glance, seems to be loaded in favor of those who like to rule

over God's people, which is probably why it is perhaps the most favorite of "church leaders." It incorporates all of our three words together in one breath.

We will take a look at each word, and as we go along, it will become apparent not only as to what the true meanings are, but also as to the reason behind the translators substitution of an entirely different word to further their hierarchical/institutional agenda.

Here is Hebrews 13:17: **Obey** them that have the **rule over you**, and **submit** yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

First off, notice this. The word "over," is not in any way, shape, or form in the old manuscripts. This word was inserted in the text of Scripture by the translators. We will therefore dismiss it altogether and all that it implies.

Next, let's examine the word "Obey" or "Obey them." Anyone can check this out simply by using a Bible software program. When we go to the Strong's number for the word translated "obey," we find the Greek word "**peitho**"- Strong's number 3982. It appears about 60 times. By far the most common translation for this Greek word in the King James Version is "persuade," "persuaded," "persuadeth," etc.

Here is the first place this word appears in the New Testament:

Matthew 27:20 "But the chief priests and elders **persuaded** the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus."

The chief priests and elders had no authority to command the people to ask for Barabbas or to destroy Jesus. But they were able to persuade the multitude to "ask" Pilate to do so. And so it is in Hebrews 13:17.

From Vine's Expository Dictionary: "*Peitho: to persuade, to win over; to be persuaded, to listen to, as in Acts 5:40 (passive voice). The obedience suggested is not by submission to authority, but resulting from persuasion.*"

From Thayer's and Smith's Greek Lexicon: "*Peitho: To persuade; to induce one by words to believe; to make friends of, to win one's favor, gain one's good will, or to seek to win one, strive to please one. To be persuaded, to suffer one's self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe: to have faith in a thing; to believe.*"

There is a Greek word for "obey." It is "**hupakouo**." "**Hupakouo**" appears 21 times in the New Testament and is properly translated either as "obey," "obedience," or "obeyed." Here is the first time this word appears in the New Testament:

Matthew 8:27 "And the men marveled saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea **obey** him!"

Also, Ephesians 6:1 "*Children, **obey** your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*"

1st Peter 3:6 "*Even as Sara **obeyed** Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.*"

The winds and the sea obeyed Christ; children are admonished to obey their parents; and Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him lord. But nowhere in Scripture are we ever told that a "*pastor*" or any "*church leader*" has the right to rule over the people as Christ rules the wind and sea; as parents rule their children; or as wives ought to obey their husbands.

The Greek word "**hupakouo**" is never used in that way. Rather the Greek word "**peitho**" meaning "*persuaded*" is used instead.

Let's look at some more verses with the word "peitho."

*"Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded (peitho) them to continue in the grace of God." Acts 13:43*

*"And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing (dialegomai: discuss, to reason) and persuading (peitho) the things concerning the kingdom of God." Acts 19:8*

Here the apostle is "reasoning," he's having a discussion with the people in the synagogue. He is not commanding them; he is not beckoning them to look at his credentials and thereby render obedience. No. He reasoned with them, and they were *persuaded*. (**peitho**)

The apostle was not there to "*magnify his office*." He was not there to build his church. He was not there to make a name for himself. He was there for one purpose only, and that was to hold up Christ to the people.

Do you want to see a picture of true leadership? Why was Paul so "*persuasive*?" Because Paul himself was absolutely and thoroughly persuaded. He knew altogether of what he spoke.

*"...This Paul hath persuaded (peitho) and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands." Acts 19:26*

When standing before King Agrippa, the King said to Paul, "*Almost thou persuadest (peitho) me to be a Christian.*" Acts 26:28

*“...To whom he (Paul) expounded the matter, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading (peitho) them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets...” Acts 28:23*

Here are some more Scriptures with the Greek word “**peitho**” meaning persuade or persuaded. Remember, we are still discussing Hebrews 13:17 where the word “**obey**” was substituted for the Greek word “**peitho**.”

*“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade (peitho) men...” 2 Corinthians 5:11*

*“For do I now persuade (peitho) men, or God; or do I seek to please men?” Galatians 1:10*

*“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded (peitho) that in thee also.” 2 Timothy 1:5*

*“...For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded (peitho) that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” 2 Timothy 1:12*

*“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded (peitho) of them, and embraced them.” Hebrews 11:13*

If a church leader, be he a pastor or an elder, is living and walking by the Spirit and is continually looking to Christ as his example, he will never be desirous or demanding obedience to his so-called office or authority. The point to be observed is that mindless obedience is not what is pictured in Hebrews 13:17.

Look at the Apostle Peter. In Acts 10, God caused Peter to fall into a trance and receive a vision through which he was later sent to Cornelius' house to bring the good news of the gospel to the Gentiles. In Acts 11, we read, “*Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, You went in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*” 11:1-3

What was Peter's response? Did he show them his badge, reminding them that he was an Apostle? Did he quote to them the verse of Scripture, “Touch not thou the Lord's Anointed?” Did he suggest that he ought not be questioned? Did he remind them of his ministerial dignity and awesome duties? Did he lash back at them in “*holy anger*?” No. There was absolutely nothing of this kind of grandstanding spectacle whatsoever.

Peter calmly rehearsed for them the entire incident from the beginning, right up until... *“as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.... And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.”*

He persuaded them, so much so that they were silent and glorified God. Peter did not demand obedience or uniformity. Peter’s handling of the situation with wisdom and grace caused God to be glorified. It showed how Peter carried himself and what his attitude was toward his brethren. He did not view himself as above questioning and criticism. Those who heard him were persuaded by his Godly character and walk. Remember back at the house, when Cornelius first met him and bowed down to him? What was Peter’s response? *“But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.”*

Do you see the example of Peter demanding submission, obedience, and respect to his sacred appointment? Do you detect an aura of pastoral dignity? Do you see a man standing in an *“office appointed by Christ and en clothed with the authority of Christ?”* Neither do I!

Now, we will look at the word *“rule”* or *“rule over.”* *“Obey them that have the rule over you...”* Hebrews 13:17

As with the word **“o-b-e-y,”** it is clear that the translator’s choice of the English word **“rule”** or **“rule over them”** was deliberately designed to not only benefit, but also to bolster the already embedded practice of institutional church control. (And yet again, the word *“over”* is no where present in the original text, and should be dismissed.)

When we check what the Greek word translated *“rule”* is in this verse and verses like it, we find that this is not a translation but a redefinition of one Greek word. The Greek word translated *“rule over you”* in Hebrews 13:7 and 17 and 24 is **“hegeomai,”** Strong’s #2233 and it is normally translated **“count,” “esteem,” “to lead”** or **“to go before.”** *“...Them that have the rule over...”* is a substitution by the translators. There is no connotation whatsoever of *“ruling over.”* True leadership is nothing more than going on ahead.

Here are some verses where this word is properly translated.

*“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each **esteem** other better than themselves.”* Philippians 2:3

*“Yea verily, and I **count** all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do **count** them but refuse, that I may gain Christ.”* Philippians 3:8

*"And to **esteem** them very highly in love..." 1 Thessalonians 5:13*

Hebrews 13:17 should read *"Be persuaded of those you highly esteem," **NOT** "Obey them that have the rule over you."* No church leader has "dominion over your faith."

2 Corinthians 1:24 *"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."*

Look again at Matthew Chapter 20. *"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

**"It is NOT so among"** church elders! True leaders in God's ecclesia use His word to **"persuade"** those in the assembly to humble themselves and be servants one of another. They never "exercise dominion" over anyone in their care. They are rather *"helpers of their joy."*

The dictionary's use of the word "rule" or "rule over" fits very nicely in today's local institutional church:

Control, dominion: 'under the rule of a dictator,' dominating power, authority, superior, preeminent, predominate, 'rule the roost,' command, regnancy, ascendancy, mastery.

Is this what we see in the Scriptures concerning leaders in the assembly, or is this what we see in today's religious institutions? The English definition of the word "rule" or "rule over" is totally devoid of any meaning or even suggestion of service, of ministering, of servanthood, of being an example. Shouldn't this by itself open your eyes? This alone should arouse our suspicions, considering that Christ-like leadership is servanthood.

*"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you turn and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3-4*

*"...Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matthew 20:28*

*"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Matthew 23:12*

*"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.*

*...If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."* John 13:14-17

The same is true in regards to 1 Timothy 5:17: *"Let the elders that rule (**proistemi**) well be counted worthy of double honor."* The Greek word **proistemi**, rendered "rule," bears no association at all with authority, power, or control. It merely meant that elders (older men) are to stand with zeal; maintain themselves; should be foremost in knowledge and quality of life; a quality which rightfully should be embodied in all saints. "**Proistemi**" is not therefore for the few, but the duty of all.

*"Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life."* Acts 5:20

*"...when I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day."* Acts 24:20-21

*"...to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works."* Titus 3:8

*"And let our people also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."* Titus 3:14

How did the word *rule* or *rule over*, which in the mind of the English reader conveys control and mastery over the people, find its way into the text when Paul himself wrote: *"Not that we are trying to dictate to you what you must believe; but are fellow workers and helpers of your joy, for by your faith you stand."* 2 Corinthians 1:24

Even Paul counted himself as a fellow worker, not as one who "*ruled over*" Christ's Ecclesia, knowing that one stands by faith in God, not by men throwing their weight around demanding submission and obedience to their sacred office!

Hebrews 13:17, and verses similar to it, should be translated thus: *"Be persuaded by your leaders, and be deferring to them, for they are vigilant for the sake of your souls, as having to render an account, that they may be doing this with joy, and not with groaning, for this is disadvantageous for you."* CLV

In Hebrews 13:7, we have another instance of "*ruling over*."

*"Remember them which have the **rule over you**, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."*

Please notice that this verse should be in the past tense, but in the KJV it was translated to read as though it were in the present tense. It is referring to those who have died in the faith; not to current “church leaders.” As with Hebrews 13:17, the phrase, “*them which have the rule over*” is a substitution of one Greek word – “**hegeomai**” (2233) meaning to esteem, to lead, to go before as a guide. **Hegeomai** pictures the act of guiding, going on ahead, leading the way, being an example to the assembly, not sitting and ruling over the assembly. (And as usual, the phrase “over you” is NOT in the original text.)

The previous two chapters leading up to Hebrews 13 speaks of those who have gone before as examples. We are to remember such; imitate their faith; and recall the “*end of their conversation.*” The “**hegeomai**” of the early New Testament truly followed Christ and His disciples in their example of hardship and suffering. Should we not remember and follow them?

The Lord Jesus is our only King; our Sovereign; our Lord. Our English words, rule, rule over, ruler, should only refer to Him! I suspect that even the most lethal, authoritarian leader in today’s local institutional church knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that the prevailing practice of ruling over God’s people is totally contrary to the example and teachings of Christ and His Word. I suspect that many know that “**r-u-l-e-r**” ought not to be worn across the forehead of a Christian. Some of these so-called “church leaders” are so arrogant; so pompous; so big-headed when they refer to themselves as rulers. Some who are assigning to themselves *ministerial dignity*, honors, titles, headships, not to mention huge salaries and perks, should be ashamed. But don’t hold your breath.

Along with the phrases “*obey them*” and “*rule over them*” is the phrase “*submit to them.*”

Hebrews 13:17: “*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them.*”

Rightly so, the word “*submit*” is a horrible pill to swallow for many Christians because of the spiritual abuse and unbiblical authoritarianism that is rampant in the local institutional church.

The Greek word that was translated submit in Hebrews 13:17 is “**hupeiko.**” It simply means to yield or to surrender. It is closely related to “**hupotasso**” in 1 Peter 5:5 which says, “*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.*”

**Hupeiko** in no way infers any kind of outward force being placed on the person yielding. It is voluntarily yielding to someone else in Godly love. In Christ’s ecclesia, you do not demand that someone submit to your authority. If you do, it proves that you really do not have any authority. You are not fit to lead if you are not capable of guiding.



Nowhere in the Scriptures is the Ecclesia referred to as an army. The picture of a drill sergeant barking out orders to a marching platoon is nowhere to be found in Scripture, but IS found in the church organizations of men. Many “*church leaders*” of various institutions have thought that this is the kind of authority that they are to possess in order for them to “*rule*” over God’s people. Their teachers, their seminaries, along with their carnal hearts told them to rule this way. The need to “*keep people in line*” by force or by ranking as in a military system, is not a Scriptural principle.

Again, look at 1 Peter 5:5: “*Likewise, ye younger, submit (**hupotasso**) yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.*”

Concerning hupotasso, Strong says, “A Greek military term meaning, to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader. In non-military use, it was a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.”

The Greek word hupotasso has a military and a non-military usage. They are as different as night and day. The one speaks of submission to a commander, while the other speaks of the willing deference of a loving family. Mindless slave-like obedience is not the relationship presented in the New Testament between elders (older men) and their brethren.

The word proud (**huperephanos**) in 1 Peter 5:5 is the translation of a Greek word which means literally to show above, that is, a proud person who shows himself above others. The word humble (**tapeinos**) is the same word that is translated lowly in Matthew 11:29, where it describes the Lord's character.

In the early secular documents, the word is found referring to the Nile River in its low stage in the words, “*it runs low.*” The word means “*not rising far from the ground,*” describing the Christian who follows in the *humble* and *lowly* steps of his Lord.

In one translation, 1 Peter 5:5 is as follows: “*Likewise, younger men may be subject to the elder; Moreover, all of you, bind about yourselves as a girdle, humility toward one another, because God opposes himself to those who set themselves above others, but gives grace to those who are lowly.*”

Contrary to popular “*church doctrine,*” Peter is not telling the believers to submit to a chain-of-command type ranking in the assembly. Neither is he accusing those who refuse to submit to their “*church leaders*” of being rebellious or proud! Pride is NOT the act of being un-submissive to so-called church rulers.

It is the act of ignoring Christ's lowly example and exalting one's self above others!

Pride is not the refusal to “*place yourself under*” some church official. It is the desired result to rise above others!

Even though Jesus was God, He did not seek to rise above men. “*But he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.*” Philippians 2:7

Pride is the act of setting oneself above others, not the refusal to submit to those who have wrongfully done so. Humility then is embracing the lowliness of Christ, who although He was God, humbled himself and made Himself of no reputation. If humility is to make oneself of no reputation, what then is pride?

This is the unholy place into which the doctrines and commandments of men has led people. This is what institutional religion will do and necessitates. This is the result that “*the local Church*” as an organization, brings upon the Lord's people. It follows Rome, not the Lord Jesus.

It is apparent that many church leaders, while viewing Christ in his glorified ruling position, seated next to the Father, have forgotten his earthly example as a servant. Church leaders are not czars. They are not the Head of the Ecclesia. All authority is His, not theirs. Any “authority” that is given is not an authority to rule and command, but to serve others, just as He did.

“*Be not deceived my beloved brethren.*” James 1:16

“**Obey them; Rule over them; Submit to them**” are terms that have been twisted and distorted for a long, long time by men who love to command and control their fellow humans. Christ's sheep have been corralled, mistreated and imprisoned by thieves and robbers for many, many centuries. Many have been deeply scarred through these false teachings and misapplications of men.

It is almost frightening to see how few “*church leaders*” truly believe and understand God's Scriptures, and how fewer yet, obey them!

If an older man (an Elder in the true meaning of the word) is above suspicion, spiritually matured, a good teacher, and truly interested in the genuine welfare of people, HE DOESN'T HAVE TO HAVE ONE OUNCE OF AUTHORITY to be of service to others and to advance the cause of Christ. **He will never have to demand that people respect and listen to him**, for they will do that gladly. If he is Christ-like in every area of his life, showing the same quality of love for others as did Jesus, people will be persuaded by his teaching and example and will yield to his wisdom.

The example of Jesus is the most powerful argument against the idea of a ruling clergy. Did He model one thing, only to build another? Did He come serving, only to elevate His people's status later down the road? We think not!

If it is not His doing, reflecting His image, portraying His character, it is then NOT of His workmanship, neither is it His Ecclesia!

**You might also be interested in:**

- 1) [The Eldership Cookbook](#)
- 2) [The False Teaching of "\*Delegated Authority\*"](#)

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