



Spiritual Disciplines: Submission

Mark 8:34-37; Ephesians 5:17-21

[based on the sermon preached on 19-03.23 – available on the [church app](#) or at <https://lwac.org.au/sermons>]

KEY IDEAS

1. Self-denial and submission are connected.
2. Being led by the Spirit and being thankful enable us to more easily submit to others and to God.
3. Submitting to others shows reverence for Christ and is an expression of our commitment to him.

CONNECT

- Sometimes we struggle with submission. Talk about a time when you should have submitted to someone (or to God) but struggled to do so. What was that like? Share as you are able.

STUDY

Read Mark 8:34-37

- It would seem many people wanted to become disciples of Jesus, so in v. 34 Jesus lays down a major condition: that of self-denial. Self-denial ought to be a healthy subjection of our own interests and desires to those of others, but some take it to the extreme of becoming a proverbial door-mat, allowing people to walk all over them. In your own words, explain the difference between healthy self-denial and being a doormat. If it helps, give examples (hypothetical or real, if appropriate).

- Though most of us don't literally have to take up our cross these days and face death for following Jesus and submitting to him, we all still face costs. What is one cost you have paid, one sacrifice you have made, for submitting to Jesus?
- What are some of the things we do to try to "save our own lives"? What is it about all the things we do to try to save our own lives which actually results, as Jesus declares, in our losing them instead?
- Is this denial of self or "losing of our lives for Jesus and for the gospel" (v. 35) spiritual and other-worldly? Or is it existential, real in this life, too? Give some examples of losing your life for Jesus and the gospel, denial of self, if you can.
- How is this self-denial related to the spiritual discipline of submission? If you don't ever deny yourself, will you ever really submit to others, or to God?

Read Ephesians 5:17-20

- One focus of these verses is an emphasis on being filled with and led by the Holy Spirit. How is being led by the Spirit connected to our willingness and ability to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ?"
- Notice the order here: first we are to be filled with the Spirit, then we are to make music in/from our hearts to the Lord, which leads to continuously giving thanks to God for everything, which culminates in our submitting to one another. Do you think these are just random Christian virtues and actions Paul lists, or are they connected in a logical progression? Explain your answer.
- How important is giving thanks and having a thankful heart for our ability and willingness to submit to others? Do ungrateful people find it more difficult to submit to others?
- What is one thing for which you are thankful to God, about which other people may not be aware?

Read Ephesians 5:21

- Paul writes that our motivation for submitting to others should be to glorify God in Christ. How does submitting to others demonstrate reverence for Christ or glorify God?
- In his message this past weekend, Shane explained submission as "permission to let go." What do you think we need to let go of?

- What are some synonyms for “submission” which may help us understand it (for example, surrender)? On the contrary, identify some synonyms for people who struggle with or refuse to submit to others (for example, stubborn).
- If healthy submission without completely losing yourself is the goal, do you tend towards submitting too little or too much? Do you struggle with being obstinate, stubborn and self-absorbed or with being a door-mat and losing yourself? Or does it depend on the context?
- Do you find it easy to submit to others? Which is easier for you: submitting to other people or submitting to God? Is there a connection between submitting to people and to God? If so, what is it?
- Have you ever been in a situation or relationship where you submitted but the other person took advantage of or abused that submission? Share about this as you are able.

APPLY

- What can we learn about submission from Jesus? In what ways did he submit and to whom?
- Is God calling you to greater submission to him or to others? If so, what might this look like?
- Which other aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?
- Identify one or more truths from this study which speak to and can be applied in your life.

1.

2.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER

- According to need.