



**Week Seven**  
March 25 - 31

*Following Christ Together Through the Prayer Action Plan*

## **THE STRENGTH OF SUBMISSION**

Americans love individualism. We are driven to ‘find ourselves’, doing it our way, and becoming all that we can be. Even as Christians, we tend to think the first thing to do to ‘find ourselves’ is to look inward to find our own gifting, intellect, and creativity. When we have to submit to anyone, how often do we consider it a weakness? How often do we resent submission seeking to minimize or escape it?

Since the Garden of Eden, the enemy has been at work seducing us into thinking we will gain all kinds of knowledge, experience, and worth if we would just do it our way. The enemy is ravenous and desires us to believe that submission is an inferior position displaying incapability. In fact, when we do it our way, people will recognize us and we will receive praise, honor, and glory for what we have done. Yet the praise is only temporary, leaves us empty again, hungry and thirsty for more, enslaving us to work tirelessly toward the next self-gain.

However, God calls us, in Romans 8:29b “to be conformed to the image of his Son” (ESV). We are to submit and obediently follow Him. Submission to Christ is where we find peace, joy, and delight in relationship with Him. Submitting is not an inferior position. It does not display incapability. Submission is what Christ displayed to us in how He submits to the Father (see John 6:38; 1 Corinthians 15:28). Furthermore, when believers submit to Christ, we display the likeness of Him, which brings Him glory.

Christ has given pastors to act as His shepherds, as part

of the gifts He has given His Church, to equip Christians to reach full maturity in Him (see Hebrews 13:17-18; Ephesians 4:7-16). Pastors are for our protection watching against everything that could be hurtful, warning against destructive errors that can entangle, and watching over our souls. In gratitude for their self-sacrifice and care over us, we are to respond and submit in joyful service and pray for them. We should not consider ourselves too wise, too good, or too great to be able to learn from them.

## **APPLY THE WORD**

Based on Hebrews 13:17, we learn that one day our pastors will give an account as our leaders. What do you want your pastor to say about you to God as He prays for you? How can you display the likeness of Christ in submission? How can you be a joyful encouragement to your pastor as he protects you from harmful entanglements and watches over your soul? Consider how so much of Hebrews is about vigilance concerning our souls and endurance in faith (Hebrews 2:1; 3:6,12; 4:1,11,16; 6:1,11-12,18; 10:14,22-31,35-39; 12:1-2,12-17,28; 13:13). The enemy rages against us with temptations and unbelief, while we are called to not shrink back, but rather continue in faithful perseverance (see Hebrews 10:39). Our leaders are given as gifts to believers to care for our souls.

## **PRAY**

In prayer, ask the Lord how He is leading you to submit and be a joyful encouragement to our pastors as they lead us by God's Word, helps keep your eyes focused on Jesus (see Hebrews 12:2), perseveres in his own faith and conduct (see Hebrews 13:7), and watches over your soul (see Hebrews 13:17).