

If a man dies, shall he live again? If loved ones die, will you see them again?

Hope of the Resurrection, Part One

by Allen Stout

In loving memory of my dear wife

Waiting anxiously in the small private counseling room, my wife and I valiantly tried to suppress the fear of what we were about to hear. Finally, the door opened and the doctor entered, appearing calm and somewhat aloof of our anxiety. As he began to discuss the results of the biopsy, I wondered how many patients he had had to console as he presented them with the hopeless prognosis of their condition.



Many have felt the fear and anguish of facing a crisis of impending death or of having a loved one consumed by the pain and anxiety of a hopelessly terminal condition—whether it is due to illness, accident or malicious act of violence. I felt utterly helpless when I realized there was nothing I could do to protect or free my wife from the cause of her pain and anxiety.

What can you do when your loving wife of 29 years is diagnosed with an advanced

terminal condition and predicted to live only a few months? How do you tell your children?

I remembered all the good years and the wonderful intimate moments together. I thought of our plans to finish remodeling the house. Would she live to enjoy it? We had been looking forward to sharing our lives and many joys with our children and grandchildren; our first grandchild was to be born in four months. What more can a husband and father anticipate than to rejoice with the wife of his youth and see his children's children? (Proverbs 5:18, Psalms 127:3)

Fear of suffering and death

We all have a natural fear of suffering and death (Hebrews 2:15), but how does one plan for tragedy or handle emotional trauma when it comes? As we become caught up in our trials, it may seem as if the whole world is coming to an end, but that is not the end of all hope. There is a greater purpose in this life than most of us see—a hope that can help us overcome the pain and helplessness of the moment.

My wife was a thoughtful, gentle person, always busy serving her family and others: cooking, gardening, sewing, making clothes for the family, and many other nice things. She was very creative in providing activities for the children in our neighborhood. Not only did she take care of the needs of the family, she was also a great help to me in my work, frequently cooking for, serving and entertaining the many college students and others we had over when I was teaching, and the many business associates we entertained when I went into business. Truly, “He who finds a wife [like her] finds a good thing” (Proverbs 18:22).

But as with most of us there are also tough times that test our mettle. When I developed a health problem, more of the burden of responsibility shifted to her. In addition to carrying out her responsibilities in the family and home, she went into part-time business with a good friend to help support the family.

Then, in the fall of 1993, as we were preparing to leave on a trip to visit our oldest daughter and son-in-law, she began to notice a mild abdominal pain in the area of the appendix. A visit to a physician indicated intolerance to certain foods.

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Despite occasional discomfort, my wife carried on with her part-time house cleaning business with the same level of energy and enthusiasm. She enjoyed getting out on her own earning shopping money and working with her special clients: one, a retired doctor and his wife; another, a spry ninety-year-old lady who lived near us. She also cleaned the offices of a small welding design and manufacturing company, which our youngest daughter helped with on weekends, and several others. All of these clients liked to do special things for her to show their appreciation for her friendly and faithful service.

By late November, however, she began to tire more easily and noticed some swelling of the abdomen. Another visit to a physician gave cause for some concern. For more thorough diagnostic procedures his physician referred her to Oregon Health and Science University.

My mother, 90 years old, had just died. Shortly after her funeral, we went in for diagnostic tests. During the first visit, X-rays were taken, as well as blood and other samples. No determinations could be made from those tests, so she was scheduled for a CAT scan of the abdominal area. Results indicated a serious enlargement of the liver of undetermined cause, possibly cancer, so a biopsy was taken. The lab reports came back two days later and showed the cause to be rapidly growing adenocarcinoma, probably metastasized (migrated) from the colon. The cancer specialist (oncologist)

called us in to explain the outcome of the biopsy and the prognosis.

My wife, in her typical feisty manner, made it clear to the doctor before he spoke that she was not afraid to die; she just wanted to be at home with her family. I believe the doctor and nurse were more stunned by her spirit than we were by his hopeless prognosis. He explained the seriousness of the condition and the fact that there was nothing they could do for this type of cancer. At best they may be able to prolong her life three or four months with chemotherapy, but that would be a great risk as well as painful and expensive.

I asked the doctor if he knew of any alternative not-toxic therapies and what kind of a nutrition program we should put her on that might be beneficial. As a specialist in chemotherapy, he said he did not know of anything that would be helpful.

That was our last visit to the hospital. My dear wife did not want her last days to be confined to the cold, impersonal, intimidating surroundings of a strange hospital room being subjected to painful treatments with toxic chemicals to prolong a hopeless and miserable existence. Her faith was in God!

In all our years together, she had never been in a hospital. Our three children were born at home and she had never had any serious illness that needed medical care. She took good care of the family health. Why was this happening to her now? Why did it seem that God had let her down?

God's perfect work

At home, she struggled to remain active, insisting on getting up and preparing breakfast for our youngest daughter before school every day, up until the last couple of weeks when

her legs began to swell. She spent more time in Bible study. I brought her sermon tapes, which she would listen to, sometimes many times. In her illness, she expressed her joy of having lived a very fulfilling life with her family, for her many friends, and for the many opportunities we had to travel. As she began to focus more on God, her faith and love grew stronger and she grew closer to God. Her mind stayed clear to the very end. She bravely accepted her trial and was greatly encouraged by the many prayers, cards, helps and concerns of everyone. Her fear had turned to love—God's love in her. God had finished his perfect work in her.

We mourned our loss and miss her friendly, caring, giving and serving love and kindness. Now we take comfort in the hope of the resurrection, when we will be together again.

She knew and understood God's promise of the resurrections. That is what gave her the faith, hope and confidence to face death without fear.

What is the hope of the resurrection?

God inspired the apostle Paul to write for those who mourn, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

It was about 9:50 p.m., the last Sunday in January, as I sat at her side holding her hand, that she fell asleep, just a whisper of her former self. "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it... For man goes to his eternal home [place of concealment], and the mourners go about the streets" (Ecclesiastes 12:7, 5).

Is she now in heaven looking down on us? Although this is a comforting thought taught by most of traditional Christianity and is the theme of many emotionally uplifting movies, it is not biblical. God's inspired Word clearly reveals that man does not have an immortal soul that departs from the body at death to go either to heaven to live forever in eternal bliss or to hell in eternal torture. "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man [Jesus Christ] who is in heaven" (John 3:13). David, a man after God's own heart, "did not ascend into the heavens" (Acts 2:34; 13:22). Instead, the Bible compares death with a sleep (1 Thessalonians 4:13). When Christ returns, He will awaken them with a resurrection (John 5:25).

False belief not from our loving God

The Holy Bible teaches that man is made of the dust and, at death, returns to the dust (Genesis 2:7; 3:19; Ecclesiastes 3:19-21). It is the "spirit of man" that makes possible human life and human minds (Zechariah 12:1). At death, that spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 8:7-8; 12:7). "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished." (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6) The lie that man is an immortal soul began with Satan, the father of lies (Genesis 3:3-4; John 8:44).

If a lie gives false comfort to some, the truth gives real hope and comfort to all who understand it (John 8:32; 17:17). In the beginning, God instructed our first parents in the way to eternal life and gave them free access to the tree of life,

symbolic of His Holy Spirit—the promised guarantee of eternal life, which He gives to those who obey Him (Genesis 2:9,16; Acts 5:32; Ephesians 1:13-14). God also warned them of the results of deciding for themselves what was good and evil—taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). When Satan tempted them, however, they chose to believe Satan rather than God and were cut off from access to the tree of life (Genesis 3:6, 22-24).

As a result of their choice, "sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). Sin is the breaking of God's holy and righteous law (1 John 3:4; Romans 7:12). The penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Our sins cut us off from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). God works through and with those who diligently seek Him and rewards them. (Hebrews 11:6)

But that is not the end of the story. God revealed to mankind that a Savior would come to deliver man from the bondage of sin and death. Jesus Christ is that Savior! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... For...when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son..." (Romans 5:8,10).

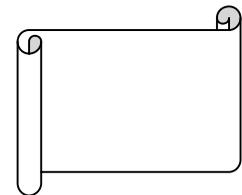
Why does God allow those like my wife, and especially innocent little children, to suffer and die? Consider God's mercy as explained by the prophet Isaiah: "The righteous perishes, and no one takes it to heart; merciful men are taken away, while no one considers that the righteous is taken away from evil. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds" (Isaiah 57:1-2). The apostle John wrote, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labors" (Revelation 14:13).

Clearly, we all suffer from the effects of sin: our own as well as the cumulative sins of the world since Adam's time. Broken physical and spiritual laws cause pollution, degeneration, disease, stress, mental anxiety, hate, murder, etc. God's purposes in allowing our suffering is that we should come to understand the effects of sin and learn to love and obey His truth and righteous laws (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Truly, the greatest hope that we human beings can have is the hope of the resurrection from the dead—the resurrection to eternal life! (Acts 24:15; Titus 1:2; 3:7).

In the next issue look for part two for more information about the resurrection.

For more information, read our free booklets *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* and *What Happens After Death?*



Sometimes taking instruction isn't as easy as it sounds.

Taking Instruction to Heart

by Katherine Rowland

When my sons were small, we often read Richard Scarry's *Pig Will and Pig Won't*. It's a story in contrasts, much like the *Highlights* magazine feature, "Goofus and Gallant." Pig Won't is given instructions, and he refuses to follow them; Pig Will, however, does the things he is told to do. Naturally, we emphasized Pig Will: life goes better when we recognize authority and respond appropriately.

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Virtual Christian Magazine
is published by the
United Church of God, *an
International Association*,
555 Technecenter Dr.,
Milford, OH 45150.

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Scriptural references are
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I was reminded of this story when I read Matthew 21:28 – 32, “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.”

Now, this parable had a very clear meaning in its day. Jesus Christ pointed out that the Jewish leaders had promised to obey God, and yet did not do so, while those who had chosen not to obey later changed their minds and

obeyed. As Barclay’s Commentary indicates, neither of these examples is necessarily one to entirely emulate—neither listened to their Father’s words, agreed to obey them, and then went out and completely did it.

As parents, we have tried to make sure that when we instruct our children to do things, the instructions make sense, take into account the child’s limitations (whether time, or strength, or height), and are not burdensome. In a sense, we try to create yokes for them that are easy, burdens that are light—as Christ has done for us (Matthew 11:30).

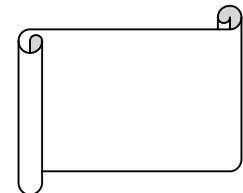
But in this relationship, there are two positions: that of the one giving instructions, and that of the one receiving them. We’ve seen both of the examples used by Christ in our children’s lives; sometimes, an instruction is accepted and then forgotten or rejected. Sometimes, the instruction is initially rejected, but then later receives follow-through. Both are frustrating to the parent!

I think that there is an additional lesson in this parable of Christ. We should, as those who have taken His name, strive to not just hear the instructions He gives, but to follow them—and not with half-hearted steps, or hearts that constantly flit from “yes” to “no” and back again. Instead, we should seek to be sons and daughters who, when being told to go work in

the vineyard, agree...and then do it.

How do we do this? First, we recognize that God has the authority to give us direction. Next, we recognize that since we are under His authority, we ought to do something about His directions. As part of this process, we must also recognize that His directions are given for a reason; God is not a fickle tyrant, setting up increasingly higher bars for us to leap over for His amusement. He is interested in our growth and development, even as we parents give instructions to our children that are designed to train them and help them grow in good traits and character. And finally, we must act, and do so with our whole hearts.

For more information on submitting to the will of God, request a free copy of *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.



Language is a useful tool for communicating, but used in the wrong way it can become useless or damaging.

Many Words

By Lorelei Nettles

Language was first given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

We know this because the Bible tells us that God and Adam communicated with each other. We also know that later Eve spoke with God, her husband, and the serpent. Communicating with God and her husband was a very good thing. Having a conversation with the serpent (which was Satan) was not necessarily a bad thing in and of itself, but she let the serpent's words lead her (2 John 9-11). Eve's conversation with the serpent is our first glimpse into how words can be used for harm. The serpent was able to twist the truth and make Eve think in an improper way, causing her to lust and question God's word. Not only did she sin, but then led her husband to fall into that same snare with her (Genesis 3:1-6).

On occasion, our words can be troublesome for us. No one is completely immune; words often cause us problems in life. Talking too much can be an issue for some people, but stopping is sometimes easier "said" than done. On occasion, we can find ourselves rambling on and on all the while thinking, "Why can't I stop talking?" This can happen when a person has not had someone to talk to for a while or when the subject is especially interesting. They just get too excited and cannot control themselves.

Self-esteem issues, loneliness, fright, insecurity, or other problems may also cause someone to talk too much. It can also be culture—

some areas of the country and world are known to talk more than others. Often one isn't sure why they carry on or don't realize they talk too much to begin with. Whatever the reason for someone being a chatterbox, it is often better to curb that action. The Bible has much to say on the topic and can teach us how our words can get in our way, make us look foolish, and/or cause harm.

We saw that it began with Adam and Eve, but then we can read about their son Cain, who, after killing his brother, decided it was a good idea to lie to God about it. "And the LORD said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper" (Genesis 4:9 AKJV throughout unless noted)?

Careful speech

Another lesson on how we use our words is shown as Israel traveled from Egypt. Israel cried and whined about their travels, their discomfort, their food, and many other things. They were quick to blame Moses and just as quick to turn from God, ignoring the many miracles they had witnessed. Moses spent much of his time beseeching God on behalf of the people. The continual discontent from the people finally drove Moses to say something that sealed his destiny.

After listening to them complain about being thirsty and not having

faith in God, his anger gets the best of him. "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said to them, Hear now, you rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock" (Numbers 20:10)? Note that Moses said we (instead of God) and struck the rock.

Moses let his thoughts stray from God; he took partial credit for the miracle to follow, plus he struck the rock, which was not what God told him to do. Verse 11 "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." God was not pleased by Moses' actions or words and told Aaron and Moses, in verse 12 "And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, Because you believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Moses would not see the Promised Land; he died after viewing it from a mountain. His words had expressed his feelings instead of glorifying God, and his actions showed he had not listened to God's words.

God tells us to use our words for good. They should be used to teach others and to encourage, keeping the members of the church strong. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together

and edify one another, even as also ye do." And "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; see also Hebrews 10:24 KJV).

Our words (or tongue, as the Bible often states) can really cause us trouble. Proverbs 6:2 says, "You are snared with the words of your mouth, you are taken with the words of your mouth." If our words are continually used to promote ourselves or to make excuses for not getting involved, how can we edify others?

Using useful words

What we say can even turn a situation around. When someone confronts us in anger and we come back at him or her in the same fashion, the situation is bound to explode. Proverbs 15:1 warns us, "A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." And Proverbs 16:24, "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."

When someone damages us, we are told to go to that person in love and let him or her know that we are offended, but sometimes people twist this command (Matthew 5:24). Some people feel it is their right to tell us whatever bugs them about us. Sometimes they may even say damaging things to us about our family members or friends as well. This can be especially hurtful

because it is merely mean spirited, and not intended to correct us in our Godly walk or to encourage us.

Yet, there is a time to speak with wisdom. For example, when one of our brothers or sisters is in danger of hurting his or her relationship with God, or when we don't step up in defense of someone who has been wronged. It can also mean we may not be willing to defend God's way. This would be "holding our peace even from good" (Psalms 39:2). Words can be used for good or evil; to build up or to break down.

Even our prayers can be overtaken with meaningless words. We read in Matthew 6:7, "But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." If our prayers are nothing more than memorized verses or some sort of chant, are we really talking to God? God wants us to speak to him in conversation, not some memorized bunch of words that have little meaning to us. He wants to have a personal relationship with us—one that helps us grow even closer with Him and shows we also want that relationship. "He that has knowledge spares his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise: and he that shuts his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (Proverbs 17:27-28).

Gossip and lies



We should be known to be truthful and upstanding. Sometimes it is best to say nothing rather than speak. Carefully chosen words can save us from the embarrassment of being caught in a lie or from spilling out gossip about someone else.

Gossips tend to cover their hurtful words by saying things like, "I shouldn't really say this, but..." or "I don't mean to gossip, however..." Proverbs 18:8 tells us that, "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

Have you ever considered how easy it is to lie? It seems that opening our mouth to tell a lie takes very little thought; Satan is surely right there in our minds helping us find the right words instantly. A lie is a way in which we not only hurt others, but also hurt ourselves. Matthew 12:37 reads, "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."

Have you ever been around someone who is a known liar? It is difficult

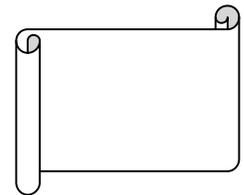
to believe anything they tell you. We always harbor a hint of doubt, especially if the story is in any way difficult to believe. It doesn't take long to be labeled a storyteller. A few lies can set us up as someone not to be trusted. The same can be true of a gossip. Do you really want to share anything with someone who is known to tell tales? "He that hides hatred with lying lips, and he that utters a slander, is a fool. In the multitude of words there wants not sin: but he that refrains his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom" (Proverbs 10:19-21).

Sometimes it isn't even that we are known as liars, but that the story we tell is just too unbelievable. This happened to the women who came to the apostles telling them of Christ's resurrection (Luke 24:10-11). Then Peter ran in to check. That seems to tell us he had some doubt, and wanted to be sure. Even when Christ returned, he had to remind them that they hadn't been listening to the words of the prophets (Verse 25). It's not only the words we speak, but also those we listen to. How can we say we are faithful if we are not willing to listen to the words the teachers (pastors) set before us?

Thoughtful and kind words show love. Angry and evil words express hate and impatience. It can sometimes be hard to keep them under control, but we must pay attention to our

words and we can ask God to help. Psalms 34:13-15 says, "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry."

For more reading that is useful request the booklet, *Making Life Work*



So, you want to be in charge? What does that mean? What does God say about leading and ruling over people?

Authority for the People

by Robert Berendt

All of my life, it seems, there have been people in authority over me. It started when I was a baby, and it has continued in various forms since that time. It started when I was a baby, and it has continued in various forms since that time. Authority figures include teachers, hockey coaches, policemen, tax collectors, elected officials and most of all, God the Creator. I always had the feeling that I was never alone--"Big Brother" was watching me--unseen angels if nothing else.

I recall a humorous incident at a Feast in Anchorage, Alaska. We were on the sixth floor of Hotel Cook, just visiting a couple, and as we glanced out of the window we could see the children of this couple coming down the sidewalk. All of a sudden, the boy gave his sister a push and she was off the sidewalk and into the street. There was no immediate danger, but there was traffic. You should have seen the look on the face of the boy when they arrived at the hotel room and his father took him to task for pushing his sister out into the street. We never did tell him that we saw it from the sixth floor; it is a position of power parents hold when they mysteriously “know” about some incident that was to be a secret.

Types of authority

I have come to realize that we can never fully escape having someone in authority over us. Our wonderful nation of Canada is led by officials who have the power to do things in spite of the opposition of the people. We are told that we can wait until the next election if we do not like the way things are run. Though we live in a democracy, all of us know that those running for office are first and foremost concerned about getting elected. There are some exceptions, to be sure, but we have witnessed many not-so-wonderful examples of elected authorities that had no time for the

average citizen, except when it came to voting and elections. In almost every case in which authority exists, it seems, people serve the authority; at least that has been my experience.

Parental authority includes a deep love for the child and is directed towards the well-being of the child, but even that is given from the point of view of the parent and is often abused. I recall the time when I decided I had enough of the low pay scale jobs and began to take steps to start attending university. My father told me to think seriously about this move because I already had two children for whom I was responsible. Of course, he was right, and I gladly accepted that responsibility, but they were one reason I strongly believed I needed to do something more with my life. It was for their sakes as well as my own.

Jesus had a lot to say about “masters” or those in authority. In Matthew 23, He began by telling His followers that they were to heed those who sit in the seat of authority (Matthew 23:3), but not to do as they did. Verses 4 to 7 describe the desire some in authority had to be greeted with great respect and honor. (I find within myself that I could never address the mayor of our city as “your worship” and I cringe at that title.) They expect the best seats and they make decisions that add burdens to the lives of those they control.

One example that comes to mind is the manner in which King Rehoboam rejected and discarded the advice of his counselors to lower the tax burden that his father King Solomon had placed upon the people of Israel (I Kings 12:10-14). This resulted in a revolt and the house of Israel was torn asunder and it has remained so ever since.

Democratic authority

We like to say that democracy is “by the people and for the people,” but all of us who live in a democracy realize that this is not true for all of the people. Winston Churchill, the great statesman of the preceding generation wrote, “Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” Will Rogers stated, “One of the evils of democracy is you have to put up with the man you elected whether you want him or not.” Jawaharlal Nehru stated, “Democracy is good. I say this because other systems are worse.”

All of these voices and more are stating the obvious. When there is human authority, the citizens (by and large) serve that authority, even in a democracy. Adlai E. Stevenson Jr. wrote,

“Since the beginning of time, governments have been mainly engaged in kicking people around. The astonishing achievement of modern times in the Western world is the idea that the citizens should do the kicking.” We who live in this democracy know all too well, though, that this is just an idea; we are still often kicked around.

Godly authority

Jesus Christ introduced a different idea to the world. Instead of people serving the authority, the authority was to serve the people. In Matthew 23, Jesus berated those in authority and told those who were about to be in authority to shun the titles of office. If they really wanted to be great (in the eyes of God and most of their fellow humans), they were to become the servants of all (Matthew 23:8-11). Jesus said we were all “brethren.” We play different roles in life, but not lesser or greater--just different. This area of life has long been the struggle of women, who are often the oppressed ones. We do state in our democracies that the government officials are the servants of the people, but we people know that for servants, they carry big sticks.

In God’s system, there is authority and we are to be subject to it. Paul wrote about the need to be subject to rulers and authorities and to obey them (Titus 3:1). That does not mean blind following. Obedience to God always takes precedence, and Paul was writing to converted people who had to live in this world and in its systems.

God does give roles of authority to His followers.

He designed parents to have authority over their children, for example, and commanded children to be obedient to their parents (Deuteronomy 5:16). He also placed people in positions of authority within the church (I Corinthians 12:4-11, 18; Ephesians 4:11). God selected certain people to write the books of the Bible. He designed people so that the very young are to learn from the older ones who ought to have grown in grace and knowledge to the point that they could be wise sages.

Authority is always present in God's realm. That is the one authority that we should all accept. Wonderfully enough, God is a loving Father and although the ever-supreme authority, He is the example of complete service to and for the people. He gave His only begotten Son so that we might be saved (John 3:16). His authority is for our good; His authority serves the people.

Jesus' followers strive to be like Him and like God (Matthew 5:48; I John 2:6). He gives us a guideline or beacon to zero in on as we live our lives. We, too, need to be on guard against that old adage, "Power tends to corrupt; and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Bishop Mandell Creighton).

Any human to whom God gives authority can fall back into the trap of misusing that authority so that it is no longer truly "for the people." Paul knew that (2 Corinthians 2:11; 12:7). Paul had great authority and power, and a thorn to remind him to stay humble. It is high time that authority began to serve the people instead of people serving the authority in this world. We pray, "Thy Kingdom come." It can be here on earth right now within God's people.

