



HIGHER AUTHORITY

The basic principle is: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).
When man's and God's will differ, follow higher authority.

1. God's Law takes precedence over all human laws (Acts 5:29).
2. No one has a right to command you to act contrary to God's Word (Acts 4:19–20).
3. Do everything you can to resolve the conflict before you disobey (Dan. 1:8–16).
4. State your innocence (Dan. 6:22) and give an explanation for your disobedience (3:16–18).
This glorifies God.
5. Be willing to suffer the consequences of your disobedience (Dan. 3:17–18).
6. God may or may not protect you (Dan. 3:17–18, 28–29; 6:19–24).
7. God will bless you for your obedience to higher authority (Exod. 1:20–21; Dan. 3:28–30).
8. The following are some Biblical examples of rightly disobeying human authority:

a. Political Authority

• *Righteous civil disobedience is an exception to Prov. 24:21, Rom. 13:1, 1 Pet. 2:13–17.*

(1) The midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's command to murder Hebrew babies (Exod. 1:15–21).

(2) Moses' parents disobeyed Pharaoh's command to murder their own baby (Exod. 1:22–2:3; Heb. 11:23).

(3) Daniel refused to eat King Nebuchadnezzar's choice food and wine (Dan. 1:8–16).

The issue was keeping the dietary laws of Leviticus (11:1–47) and Deuteronomy (14:3–21).

(4) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Dan. 3:4–30). The issue was idolatry: "We are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image" (3:18).

(5) Daniel disobeyed King Darius' injunction to cease praying for thirty days (Dan. 6:6–13).

Concerning his disobedience Daniel later told Darius, "I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime" (6:22).

(6) The Magi disobeyed Herod the Great's command to report back (comp. Matt. 2:8 with 2:12). The angelic message from God was higher authority.

(7) An angel warns every nation, tribe, tongue, and people to defy the government issued mark of the beast in the Tribulation (Rev. 14:9–11; cf. 13:16–18; 19:20). In other words, this angel enjoins *worldwide* civil disobedience! Those who heed his warning are spared the grievous sores of the first bowl judgment in this life (16:2) and are rewarded in the life to come (20:4).

b. Religious Authority

• *Righteous disobedience to spiritual leaders is an exception to 1 Cor. 16:15–16, Heb. 13:17.*

(1) Peter and John disobeyed the Sanhedrin's order to stop teaching about Jesus (Acts 4:17–20).

(2) Peter and the apostles disobeyed the Sanhedrin's order to stop teaching about Jesus (Acts 5:27–29; cf. 5:42).

c. Parental Authority

• *Righteous disobedience of children to parents is an exception to Prov. 6:20, Eph. 6:1, Col. 3:20.*

(1) Jesus ignored the time of departure to stay for the half-holydays of Passover (Luke 2:41–51). It seems Mary and Joseph left on the third day of the Feast as permitted by the rabbis but not by the Law.

d. Marital Authority

• *Righteous disobedience of wives to husbands is an exception to Eph. 5:22–24, 1 Pet. 3:6.*

(1) Abigail ignored her husband Nabal's wishes and took supplies to David and his men (compare 1 Sam. 25:10–12 with 25:18–19, 25, 27, 37). The issue was almsgiving.