

The Father-Son Relationship (Part Five)

Christ's Submission to the Father, Cont'd

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In Part 4 of this series we covered very important territory in the explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son.

I think that you will recall that this series began as an instruction showing that there cannot possibly be a Trinity. It has somewhat deviated from the original purpose, but not entirely, because I am going to get back to it. The reason I am going to get back to it is because all this information regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son is actually one of the strongest proofs that there is no such thing as a third member of the Godhead called the Holy Spirit.

I showed you some very clear scriptures that reveal that the Son, though of the God-kind, both before and after His resurrection, nonetheless has a God, and that God is the One He called His Father. Later on we are going to turn to this scripture, but I will mention it to you right now: Matthew 27:46. In this case, as the only begotten Son, He cried out on the stake, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" It clearly shows that He had a God.

Remember that one of His titles, His names, was Immanuel. He *was* God with us. In John 20:17, following His resurrection, He stated to Mary Magdalene that He had to go to "My God and your God." In other words, He and Mary had exactly the same God. Furthermore, we saw in that sermon in I Corinthians 11:3 that God is the Head of Christ.

All of these scriptures clearly set the Father apart from the Son. Even though both are of the God-kind, they are not co-equal beings as the Trinity doctrine proclaims.

In addition to these scriptures Paul showed in Ephesians 1:15-23, and made it so clear that we are dealing with two distinct personalities in which the One is named as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then a little

bit later Paul says that He (the Father) appointed Jesus Christ to be the Head of all things to the church. The principle we see involved here is that the superior appointed the subordinate to that position; therefore that also shows that there is no equality there in regard to that authority.

I want you to understand that none of this diminishes Christ one iota, because Scripture clearly shows that His glory—that which brings Him honor and praise—lies in His absolute submission to the Father. Therein lies a major lesson for us in that since we are being created in the Son's image, all our responsibility lies in following the same path. Please do not forget that, because this becomes the main theme of this sermon. The path that Christ followed is the one we are to follow.

As that last sermon progressed, I think one of the conclusions we can reach from it is we need to redefine our understanding of the term "Godhead." As that sermon ended we were examining the mistranslation of the term "Godhead" in the King James Version. I read to you the definition of "Godhead" out of *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. It said right in there that it referred to the Trinity. When God inspired Luke to write the book of Acts, He had no such thing in mind. The Greek term that is translated "Godhead" in Acts 17:29 is rightly translated in modern versions as "divine nature" or "deity." Either one is correct. Not Godhead, but "divine nature" or "deity."

As the sermon was ending we spent a good deal of time in Colossians 2:9 where the term "Godhead" appears again. Mr. Armstrong made a clear distinction. He called the Father "the Supreme God." This is the same thing as "Absolute Deity." Jesus Christ, though not the Supreme God, is nonetheless the Absolute Deity's or Supreme God's perfect Complement, revealing the Father to us. Remember I spelled that word "complement" out for you. It is complement with an "e" in the middle, not an "i." Complement means something that fills up, completes, or makes perfect. Apply this to Christ. Remember I said, "That hat complements your dress." It sets it off. It makes it more perfect.

The synonyms for complement are words such as harmonization, counterpart, or match. Let us feed that back in to Colossians 2:9. Let us collect some of these things that Jesus Christ is shown to be in the Bible. The

Father has determined to make Himself known through an image. Remember that Paul said Jesus Christ is the image of God. John calls Him "the Word of God." Paul says that He is a Mediator between God and man. We are talking about one person—Christ, or a Complement. It is Christ who fulfills all of these functions perfectly. So the entire complement, counterpart, or match to the Father dwells in Christ perfectly.

This then leads to an inescapable, logical, and true conclusion. The Christ, who could be literally seen and heard, cannot be the complement of Himself as He would be if the three-in-one Trinity doctrine is true. But Christ was not primarily engaged in revealing Himself. He was acting *for* the Father. He is an entirely different being who nonetheless fills up, completes, and makes perfect the revelation of the Father. He carried out that responsibility so well that to human eyes He would appear to be the Absolute Deity.

The Bible—the written Word of God—explains that Christ clearly distinguished Himself from the Absolute Deity in many ways. Most easily grasped is when He said, "The Father is greater than I." He is saying, "We are not co-equal." The Father, though they are of the same kind, is greater than the Son. That is so clear. That immediately distinguishes Him from the greater One.

A second comment He made to distinguish Himself from the Father is that the Father sent Him. That is another one that is so easily seen. In other words, an entirely different Being dispatched Him on His assignment.

A third one is that "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." It is utterly impossible to be both Father and Son at the same time. They are two different Beings, not two parts of a co-equal, three-in-one configuration. But Jesus is the Absolute Deity's perfect Complement, completing the picture the Father wishes to portray of Himself before man. Another way we can put it humanly is that He is the spitting image of the Father. This leads to another interesting proposition.

Also in that last message I asked, "Is Jesus divine?" The answer to this is "Yes," because the word divine means "to relate to and come directly from the Absolute Deity." Therefore calling Jesus divine is correct. However, in His case, using that as a descriptor is very inadequate when Colossians 2:9

describes Him as the Complement of the Absolute Deity bodily. Indeed Jesus was divine, but He was so superior to any others who might qualify to be called divine that the meaning of the word, when used as an adjective, does Him injustice.

The superiority of Christ is one of the major themes of the book of Hebrews. In fact the whole book of Hebrews is devoted to it; that Christ is superior to anybody who has ever walked on earth. The message that He brought is superior to any message that anybody has ever heard at any other time. No other divine can even begin to measure up to Him. So merely referring to Him as divine pulls Him down to the level of others who can rightly be called divine, rather than exalting Him towards the Father's level. We are going to spend a little bit of time on this, and we are going to do it by making a comparison of Jesus to another great man who was also divine.

Turn with me to verse 11 of Matthew 11. If you have a red-letter Bible you will see that this verse is in red letters. Jesus is speaking. He says:

Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

This scripture affirms to us of the greatness of John the Baptist. Now among men, according to the judgment of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist is one of the elite who have ever lived in all of the time man has been on earth. Remember, this is the man that Jesus is going to be compared to. There is nobody ever greater than John the Baptist. There may be some on the same level. We might say Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but nobody *greater* than John the Baptist, and he had a pretty good judge, and that judge was Jesus Christ. Nobody knew how to judge character like Him. Nobody knew how to judge faithfulness like Him.

Turn now to John 3. The speaker here is John the Baptist.

John 3:23-28 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a

question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with you beyond Jordan, to whom you bore witness, behold, the same baptizes, and all men come to Him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him.

In these few verses John acknowledges that he was sent by God. That is in verse 28: "but that I am sent before Him." He was sent by God. Remember that by definition of the term "divine," one who is sent by God, is considered divine though he is merely a man, because he relates directly to God. Therefore John then is, by definition, divine even though he was not of the God-kind. You might reflect back on the last sermon I showed that earlier in the history of the United States and in Great Britain especially, people habitually called ministers "divine." They were divine. They did it by definition that this person was sent by God. So here he is acknowledging his own unusual origin as to why he was representing God before the people of Judah as the "forerunner" of the Son of God.

Let us continue on, because John is going to add to this as he continues to answer their question.

John 3:30-31 He [referring to Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease. He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth: He that comes from heaven is above all.

John saw the handwriting on the wall. He understood. He clearly saw that the importance of Jesus' ministry was going to exceed his own finite years. In verse 31 he then proceeds to give evidence of Jesus' spiritual origin by stating that in contrast to himself, who was earthy, Jesus was from above; that is, "heavenly." What was he saying here? He was saying that his cousin, Jesus of Nazareth, was different. He was unique. Nobody else like Him ever existed. He is set apart from all men, and by so doing by this statement in verse 31, John is affirming Jesus' pre-existence as a spirit being. He came from heaven. As I stated earlier, He was of the God-kind.

Earlier in this same chapter in verses 12-13, Jesus said virtually the same thing.

John 3:12-13 If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man has ascended up to heaven but He [meaning Himself] that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

So *He* affirms His pre-existence there as well, saying that He came down from heaven.

Let us keep going backwards in the book to John 1. Remember that we are making a comparison between John the Baptist, who was a divine, and Jesus, who certainly was a divine.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Right off the bat he says that the Word *became* flesh, meaning He did not start out as flesh. He started out as spirit, but when He came to earth He became flesh.

John 1:15-16 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake. He that comes after me is preferred before me: for He was before me. And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

Let us go back to verse 14 again in thought. Verse 14 again separates Jesus from the Father. If the Father begets one, the begotten cannot be the Father. Simple logic. That same verse also gives further evidence that they cannot be equals. All you have to do is connect Jesus' own testimony: "The Father is greater than I."

In verse 15 it quotes John the Baptist as saying that though Jesus was born "after him," (Jesus was born six months after John the Baptist.) "He is *preferred* before Him." The King James uses the word "preferred." If your

Bible has a marginal reference it will say, "He ranks above me." That is what it literally means. So here is one divine (John the Baptist) calling the other divine (Jesus Christ) superior to him. The one who said this was labeled by Jesus Christ as "among the greatest of all men who have ever lived;" and yet Jesus is greater.

At the end of verse 15 John the Baptist says, "for He *was* before me." Even though Jesus was born six months afterwards, John the Baptist is saying "He was alive before then." So again he is giving testimony of Jesus' pre-existence. Thus, by John the Baptist's testimony, Jesus is greater than the greatest divine among men. This again points to Jesus' uniqueness over and above all others who might be called divine.

We are going to go to verse 18. This is not John the Baptist speaking. This is John the apostle *writing*.

John 1:18 No man has seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.

John the apostle hastens to add this declaration in verse 18 that separates Jesus again from the Absolute Deity in His heavenly abode. I want you to turn to a verse by Paul that confirms this.

I Timothy 6:16 Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man has seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

Whom is Paul talking about here? You should be able to put two and two together. He is talking about the Father. The God of the Old Testament was clearly seen by others. These two verses, and another which we may see later, clearly confirm that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. He was God. He pre-existed before He was born as a human being (before His incarnation), and He was God, and He was worshipped. But He was not the Father. He had a God, and that God was the Supreme God.

There are other ways we can show that Jesus is superior to all others who might be called divine. I will just show you a couple of them and tell you what the principle involved here is, and that is by what He said, and what He did.

Mark 6:1-2 And He went out from thence, and came unto His own country; and His disciples follow him. And when the Sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence has this Man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands?

They saw what He did. They heard what He said. Now if we would go through the whole context, do you know what they did? They rejected Him. But the testimony is there.

John gives us a very interesting insight in the very last verse in the whole book of John.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

What must it have been like to have been around Him? I will tell you, it was intimidating. His apostles were impressed. You look in the book of Mark, when Jesus walked on the water and they got to shore, Peter prostrated himself on the ground and he said, "Get away from me! I am an unholy man." It must have been intimidating to know that you were in the presence of pure righteousness: "God with us." And yet He was just as approachable as a person could possibly be. The people saw something there, but the testimony of what they did is really impressive because they rejected Him anyway, showing that our calling is indeed a miracle, and I hope that you appreciate it.

So tolerant is Jesus of Nazareth that Paul in Colossians 2:9 did not have the words to express it, so he used the word "fullness." He could not do any

better than that word because the language does not contain a one-word expression that is adequate to describing Him as the Complement of the Deity, even though He was not the Absolute Deity. It is no wonder that when men were given some sort of vision of God on His throne, they passed out, and why the Bible warns us that "no man can look on the face of God and live." Seeing Him as a human being was bad enough.

It says that He was the "fullness," the complement, of the Deity. Now if He were *the* Deity, there could be no distinction between the two, and the Trinity would be more correct than the "one God" of the Bible the Bible proclaims, because they would have been identical; but they are not.

One of the strongest proofs that Jesus—though of the God-kind—is not the Absolute Deity of the Bible, lies in His role as the Son of God. This is another area in which the differences between the two are shown in a way that all of us should be able to understand, and this is very important to our spiritual well-being.

Earlier we saw that the way to tell them apart is to truly understand and perceive the differences between the two. For example: God is and always has been invisible, and inaudible to mankind. We just saw in I Timothy 6:16 Paul said no man *can* see Him. But the Bible declared Jesus as the Image of God, and He was clearly visible and audible; so they are separate beings. In addition, He has always been the Mediator between God and man. A mediator who could not be seen or heard between separated and disagreeing parties (that is often God), could not mediate if he could not be seen or heard.

You should recall that both in this sermon as well as in my previous one I had emphasized over and over again that Jesus Christ is unique in all the entire universe. Let us add to that. So is the Father. He too is unique. He is the Supreme God—the only Being in the entire universe who honestly and truly knows no God above Him. *He answers to no one.* By way of contrast, the Son clearly acknowledges that He has a God. Remember, He was the One who said, "Not My will, but Yours be done." Could the Father have said the same thing? The answer is absolutely, "No." You see, one is clearly supreme over the other, and so the Bible provides us with a clearly established hierarchy between the two. Let me show you an example of this which is one that is very easily passed over.

We are going to go to Romans 5. This is obvious, but we do not tend to think of it in this terminology.

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Let us just summarize this. We are reconciled by or through Jesus Christ to the One who is over Him, and what these verses are describing is that it is *Him*, the Father, with whom we have peace. It is to *Him* that we have been given access. It is before *Him* that we stand. Brethren, what an honor this is! Jesus deferred everything to the Father. The lesson for us is, so should we, only through Jesus Christ. You will notice in one simple example something that illustrates this. He said, "When you pray." To whom do you pray? To the Father. How do we do it? Through Jesus Christ. He is the means, the only access we have to the great Supreme Ruler of everything that is.

Again, none of this diminishes Jesus Christ one bit, because what He did is an example for us to follow, to emulate. It is failing to recognize the differences between the two that is one of the fundamental failings of even many of those who consider themselves to be religious. Paul is actually expounding on this in Romans 1.

Romans 1:21 Because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

An abundance of evidence exists from all over the world from the histories of mankind, regardless of the culture, that through all of the ages of men almost everybody believes that there is a God. What Paul is showing in this section here of Romans 1 is that it is the failure to acknowledge all that is implied in glorifying God that mankind goes astray. Mankind will say that God exists, but then turns away and does little or nothing about it, or, as Paul goes on to say, worships something that God has made rather than God Himself. Can you see the difference between the two?

The way has been opened up to us through Jesus Christ to go directly to the Father. He is the One that Jesus deferred to, and reconciled us to, not to Himself. When we become reconciled to the Father, we also become reconciled to the Son. But it is far more important that we become reconciled to the Father. That is Jesus' teaching. We then give evidence of that reconciliation by what we do with our lives.

I have said many times to you something that I learned by experience by being part of the church of God, and that is that the relationship we have with God—with the Father—is *everything*! By that I mean everything in terms of salvation itself, and growth toward that salvation, including the growth and strengthening of our faith, of holiness, of sound mindedness. It is in the relationship with Him that we begin to become fully aware that God is the Giver, even as Jesus said.

Do you fully realize you cannot give God one thing that He does not already have? I am going to show you where Paul said this directly. We think that maybe we give Him our life in conversion. Brethren, He already owns it.

Let us go to Acts 17. Paul was talking before the Athenians here. In verse 25 he is talking about this "unknown" God.

Acts 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

In his sermonette, David [Grabbe] read Psalm 104 where the psalmist listed some of the things we take for granted. It says in Hebrews 1 that "He upholds all things by the word of His power." We kind of think maybe that God just committed everything to laws, and then He walked off and just let everything keep moving. No, brethren. God is the Caretaker of His creation. He is upholding all things by the word of His power *daily*! He exhibits so much power day in and day out that it is mind-boggling.

Yes, things do work according to His law. He is there to constantly enforce a multitude of laws and to see that they do not run amok and upset the purpose of His creation. He is monitoring things constantly, so do not become a Deist and think that God has just walked off and left everything to run, including

you and me. He is keeping track of everything. What a mind we are dealing with! I cannot comprehend it. I know what I am saying is true, but I cannot comprehend it. Yet He is creating us in His image so that we can be like Him, but first we have to have character like Him.

I am going to read this verse to you from the New International Version.

Acts 17:25 [The New International Version] And He is not served by human hands as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

How can we put this? The One that Jesus deferred to is the Source. He is the Sender. God is not sent. He answers to no one. He is not subject to anybody or anything. His judgment is perfect. His will is invincible. He does not yield to the will of another. Unlike the Son, the Father has no God. He is totally, absolutely unique.

If God did yield to someone, His absolute Deity would be destroyed. God acknowledges no superior. No one who has a God is Absolute Deity, though one is divine.

Let us go to Matthew 27:46 that we read so frequently, especially around Passover time.

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

Can you see that in imploring God, as Jesus surely did here, that He restricted Himself to not being the Absolute Deity? The Supreme cannot appeal to a higher power for deliverance. The Supreme could not be left helpless before His enemies by another. He could not suffer the impending death because the Father is the Source of all life.

Let us look again at John 20:17.

John 20:17 Jesus said unto her, Touch me not: . . .

Actually it says "Do not cling to Me." It gives the impression that she was already touching Him. She probably threw herself prostrate on the ground and was holding onto His ankles.

John 20:17 Jesus said unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father: and to My God, and your God.

Is it not becoming clearer and clearer with each message that there cannot be a trinity of co-equal beings when the Son Himself makes it clear—though His very name and title says that "He is God with us"—that He Himself has a God; a God that sent Him, that He submits to, and appeals to for deliverance?

Let us string a number of verses together. We will go first to II Corinthians 1. These are all salutations of Paul's epistles.

II Corinthians 1:1-3 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

Ephesians 1:1-3 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Colossians 1:1-3 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.

In all three letters Paul refers to Jesus' Father as God, meaning the Supreme Deity. That was very purposeful. Paul is drawing a distinction between the two of them so that we can see clearly that we are dealing with two distinct personalities, two distinct beings. This becomes very important later on, because who raised Jesus from the dead? Jesus did not raise Himself. There was another God—the Supreme God.

Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

The statement—"at the right hand of God"—is one of exaltation, of praise, of honor, showing Jesus' power and His authority. But at the same time, because He is on the right hand of God, it also indicates a secondary-helper position to His God. In other words, He is not the main one on the throne. It is a deduction that is true and right, and that is what Paul intended.

Let us notice a place in the book of Matthew that shows a measure of Jesus' submission to the Father in a rather unexpected way.

Matthew 11:25-26 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in your sight.

There is something here that is somewhat puzzling because of what it says in verse 25. Right out of the blue it says that Jesus answered when there does not seem to be any question. However, there *was* a question. Do you know where it was? It was in Jesus' own mind. That question resulted from what happened in the context preceding.

This episode happened fairly early in Jesus' ministry. In fact, if you are aware of some of the flow of the book of Matthew, you will know that it was not until Matthew 10 that Jesus sent out the disciples. Let me give you some sort of an idea of the time element. It was early in Christ's ministry.

If we would go back about a dozen verses from where we started here in Matthew 11:25, we would find that Jesus was preaching in the general area of Galilee where He grew up. He was well-known there. He had done many mighty works there. Despite that, He was soundly rejected by His fellow Galileans. Now beginning with the thought in verse 20 it says:

Matthew 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.

Jesus then begins to pronounce judgment against those cities where He had been rejected. Jesus felt pain. He felt discouragement, because right here in the very first phase of His ministry we find something occurring that He did not expect to occur, and so this is why He had the question. He was contemplating a number of questions, asking "Why did this happen?" He was turning things over in His mind, and then suddenly in verse 25 He answered Himself. He answered the whys of the rejection questions that He Himself had, and He came to the conclusion that His Father had overruled Him, not granting repentance in those cities, at least at that time. So then we find in verse 27 part of the answer.

Matthew 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knows the Son but the Father: neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.

What can we conclude? I think that we can say that in one sense Jesus was working somewhat at cross purposes with His Father and God. The important lesson for us here is that He very quickly submitted to God through understanding that at that point in time God was concealing the revelation of Himself from these people while Jesus was attempting to reveal it. Jesus was beginning to get upset. He expected these very people would turn to Him after all of the things that He had done in their presence—the sermons, the healings, and whatever.

He caught the flow of things that were right. The important thing to me and you is that He looked to God as being the absolute Master of His destiny, and He would accept whatever the Father said. Very early in His ministry He

was giving demonstration that it is "Not My will be done, but Yours be done."

Brethren, I know that we get frustrated and become impatient very easily, and we have questions just like Jesus did. We ask "Why?" Sometimes we can get to the place where we are bitter at God because He is not doing things with us the way we would like. What we have got to understand about Jesus submitting is that in His uniqueness nobody was ever gifted like He was. What a mind He had! What powers He had at His fingertips!

The Father would respond to Him because of the closeness of their relationship and the assignment that the Father gave to Jesus Christ. Oh! Could that work on a man's pride! And boy! Could a man like that get a big head in very short order. That is the importance of that little incident. He was wondering, "Why didn't it go right?" He came to the answer. It *did* go right. It went the way the Father wanted, and not the way He wanted. This is so important for us to learn. We can only come to this if we really believe that God is with us.

Did you ever stop to think that from birth Jesus, just like us, had to learn everything? At age one He did not have the mind of a 30-year old. In Luke 2, it tells us that at age 12 He was questioning the doctors of the law and so forth, and doing a bit of answering here and there. There in the last verse of that chapter it reads, "He increased [grew]." Here is a little lesson. God tested Him to see whether or not He really trusted His Father by slamming the door shut on any conversions and actually letting the people persecute Him. It would stand Him in good stead later on. But He learned His lessons quickly.

What we can learn from Jesus Christ's example is that we have very little justification for frustration and depression. The reason for His success in life in understanding something like this is that Jesus Christ unreservedly acknowledged God's sovereignty over Him. With Him, submitting to God's will was not something you did just before you were about to die. It was a moment-by-moment submitting to the will of God: "Not My will be done, but Thine."

There is a second part of this that is important to you and me. It is not just bearing the knowledge that God wants us to submit. There is a good reason why He wants us to submit, and of course we could say, "Well, it's good for us." Indeed it is good for us. It is good for us within the parameters of God's purpose for us, and that is that all progress, growth, power, wisdom, and truth expressed through Christ for completing God's purpose for Him was coming from God.

This is an expression, a further expansion on the principle that John the Baptist gave in John 3 when he stated that no man can have anything except it be given him of God. John was not including everything for a person to have, because we have to limit that expression to those things that were according to the will of God within the framework of God's calling of a person. With free moral agency it is often quite easy to make wrong choices and to receive things that have nothing at all to do with God's purpose for us.

John 14:9-10 Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father: and how say you then, Show us the Father? Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself but the Father that dwells in Me He does the works.

This declaration encapsulates Jesus' understanding. Jesus indeed had a will of His own even as we do, but He never ever allowed His will to move Him to the point of sin. He never insisted that His own will was supreme over God in contrast to prideful men who want to do whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it. That Jesus had a will of His own is clearly stated in the Scriptures, but He did not claim nor show by His conduct that His will was sovereign. God's will was sovereign.

The Almighty was always the One that He followed. This is the direction that we must go in, and for us this is not easy. But I have to add at this point that it was not easy for Jesus either. The reason it was not easy for Him is because He was so gifted. "To whom much is given, from him much is required." The challenges that He faced were far greater than what God puts in front of us. Do you think that thing with Satan happened only once? Read

it again. It says in Matthew 4 and in Luke 4 "that Satan left off for a little while." He was on Jesus' tail constantly. You and I do not have to face Satan directly, but I think Jesus did many, many times. Satan threw the book at Him constantly. He wanted to trip Him up. He threw every bag of tricks in his big bag at Jesus to move Him to subject His will to Satan.

Let us look at a couple more scriptures. These do not require a great deal of explanation.

John 5:30 I can of My own self do nothing: As I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just because I seek not My own will, but the will of the Father which has sent Me.

Mark these down in your mind because I am giving you the secret of success in God's calling. If we would look at this in its wider context, Jesus was in effect saying here, "I am not the God who decides the course of history."

John 6:37-40 All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which has sent Me, that of all which He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

This appears in the midst of this long discourse of His being the true manna from heaven that we must eat of. It then goes on to Passover, and the giving of His life in sacrifice.

Turn now to John 4. This one is so important. If you remember the episode of when the disciples left Him to go into the city to buy some food, Jesus appeared to them to be exhausted. When they came back He was bouncing around there with all kinds of energy. In verse 33 it says that they thought somebody brought Him something to eat.

John 4:34 Jesus said unto them, My meat [what energizes Me, what strengthens Me, what gives Me vitality] is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.

This is a hugely important principle to understand, because here Jesus declares that submitting to the will of God was what energizes, strengthens, and produces growth to complete the assignment.

That Jesus had His own will independent of the Father's is evident, but the time eventually came when His will did not coincide with His God to a degree greater than ever before, and because He had to face the pulls of human nature there may have been other times not mentioned in Scripture, because He never gave into them. Clearly we see, at a crucial time, came His crucifixion. One of the two of Them had to yield. The result: the Lesser yielded to the Greater. If He, the Lesser, had not, all of Their plans would have failed. The whole purpose of the creation would have ended right there. The sacrifice had to be made, and as always as He had done, He submerged His will, preferring the Father.

As we can see, it was not always easy. There is a whole string of scriptures that we could put together here, which we will. I think that we have reached a good place to break off again because services are just about over. We will close here, but God willing, I will pick this up and continue on because there is still very much to learn from Jesus' submission to the Father. It is so important to you and me to understand that this is the key to *our* success in God's calling.