**LIVING UNDER AUTHORITY**

Law and Order. That seems to be anathema these days. Watching all the rioting, demonstrating, looting, killing and statue destructions is appalling to any and all who respect authority and believe in God and the Bible.

Our U. S. Constitution states in the Bill of Rights as the very First Amendment:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

God gave civil government a special place in His rulership on earth. Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13-17 states that government is a “*minister of God*” and that all Christians should “*submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors… for this is the will of God… Fear God, honor the king*.” And yet our own founding fathers saw fit to include in our constitution the Right to “*freedom of speech*” and “*the right of the people peaceably to assemble*” and “*petition the government for a redress of grievances*.” Very few governments in history have given its citizens such a Bill of Rights. For this we thank God.

But to violently violate this freedom is called by God “*lawlessness*.” Another way to describe that is the three-letter word S-I-N. *“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (I John 3:4).*

God, through our government’s incredible belief in the dignity and sanctity of human life, gives us the lawful right to assemble and ask for a redress of grievances. We have the right to speak our minds and hearts when we feel wronged. If something seems unfair we have a right to speak up and say so, and even do it with other citizens in a lawful, peaceful assembly (i.e. demonstration). Whether it is before a town council, at the state capitol, or at the National Mall in Washington D.C., we can let our voices be heard. We can also let our votes be counted if we choose to peacefully, and lawfully, remove a leader from office, whether it is a dog catcher, school board member, mayor, county sheriff, state legislator, congressman, or President. What an incredible country we live in! Try doing that in any other country that does not support a “*We The People*” government that has a Bill of Rights.

Lawlessness is when any individual or collection of individuals treads on the law by breaking it. I have worked in the both the Federal and State prison systems for many years, giving scriptural counsel to prisoners who are there because they broke the law. The vast majority of men I have worked with are there because they came from dysfunctional homes where authority was either terribly abused or non-existent. These broken homes led that person to disrespect authority, which then led to a life of crime. It breaks my heart to watch these men try to figure out how to get back on track and live in society, but so often fail and return to prison. The recidivism rate in the Federal Department of Corrections is a staggering 83% over a nine-year period! That means 8 in 10 prisoners released will be re-arrested in the next decade. Why? The #1 reason found in the DOJ study released in May of 2018 is a bad home life where authority is not taught or respected.

What I see on the news as people destroy property, protest violently, and disrespect every form of authority is a commentary on the home and family. Those who would break the law with such impunity can likely be traced back to their home life. Why do I say that?

First, my study of the prison system and my years of working with prisoners have taught me both statistically and anecdotally that a bad home life leads to lawlessness.

Second, God said so if you understand what Ephesians 6:1-4 is saying.

*1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”* Colossians 3:21 adds these words: *“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”*

When children learn obedience and honor in the home it leads to a promise from God – “*it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth*.” In other words, you will be blessed with a peaceful life, avoiding crime and violence which often leads to a premature death. In the home you learn the training of the Lord which prevents an attitude of anger, which comes from a life of discouragement due to a father provoking the child by inconsistent parenting or being absent altogether (no structure of authority).

I obviously don’t know the home life of all these protesters who think they have the “right” to break both God’s laws and governments laws, but my educated guess, based on my study and work with the prison system, tells me the vast majority of them did not come from families that taught respect for authority.

Which leads me to the purpose of this writing. God has a plan for the home. He has put in place a system of authority. Even Jesus, and the Spirit, are under this order. *“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God”* (I Cor. 11:3). Father, Son, (Holy Spirit implied – Jn. 14:25), Man, Woman, (Children implied – Prov 30:17). Is that taught in your home?

Likewise, our prayers are to “*be made for … all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”* (I Tim. 2:1-2). Christians live by the rule of law, both God’s and man’s, so that we may lead a quiet, peaceable life. We must teach that, both in word and deed, to our children and grandchildren. The very thought of seeing my child, or grandchild, desecrating property, stealing or destroying what others have worked hard to build, and disrespecting those God has placed in authority over us, would bring shame to me, and more importantly to God.

Until tomorrow… Parents, raise your children to love God with all their hearts, and their neighbor as themselves. On these two commands hang all the law and prophets (Matt. 22:37-39).

I love you. Rick