

The Prime Directive (Obedience to Authority)

(appropriate for Mid-schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily March 2021

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

(Portions taken from Rev. John S. Mahon, Grace Community International, Houston, TX)

Happiness

Does God love you? Does God want you to be happy?

How important is your happiness to God? Let's take a vote (everyone has to vote):

Very Important

Important

Unimportant

Very Unimportant

Don't Know

Forgot to Vote (I told you everyone has to vote!)

How many of you are Christians, raise your hands. I have a question for the Christians, if you not a Christian this question is not for you so just the Christians should answer.

If happiness is God's top priority for you where is the best place for you to be to be happy? Heaven. Yet we are all still here. So why are we still here? Let them list some reasons (plan, unfinished work, evangelism, etc).

Tonight I am going to show you what the plan is, what the unfinished work is and guess what? It's the same for everyone. Since we are all still here that means that being happy is not the top priority. It also means that something else is. Tonight we will find out what God's top priority is.

We will answer the question, "What is the Prime Directive in regard to Christians living on Earth?"

prime: *first in rank, authority, or significance; most important, consequential, or influential*

directive: *an authoritative order or instrument issued by a high-level body or official*

The Prime Directive is the single most important authoritative order that supersedes all other orders.

Example: The Prime Directive in the Fictional Universe of Star Trek

*"As the right of each sentient species to live in accordance with its normal cultural evolution is considered sacred, no Starfleet personnel may interfere with the normal and healthy development of alien life and culture. Such interference includes introducing superior knowledge, strength, or technology to a world whose society is incapable of handling such advantages wisely. **Starfleet personnel may not violate this Prime Directive, even to save their lives and/or their ship, unless they are acting to right an earlier violation or an accidental contamination of said culture. This directive takes precedence over any and all other considerations, and carries with it the highest moral obligation**".*

Notice that the Prime Directive supersedes all other orders and is not to be violated even if it means the loss of their lives and/or their ship!

What is the Prime Directive In Regard To Christians Living on Earth?

Ephesians 4:13

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

- 1) Developing the Character of Christ.

I Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

- 2) Developing a Godly Faith.

Godly Faith and a Christlike Character are extremely valuable in eternity. They are like gold and God loves you so much he wants you to be as successful as possible in eternity – he wants you to have as much of these two things as possible. If God has to put you through some short term unhappiness occasionally on the Earth in order to build these two things into your life He is willing to do that because it is that important.

Key Point: *The Prime Directive regarding your life on Earth is the development of a Godly Faith and a Christlike Character!*

Does God want you to be happy? Of course He does. Is it His top priority? No.

Discipline

God uses discipline to help us grow in our Faith and Character.

Hebrews 12:11

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Discipline: *Training of mental, moral, & physical powers by instruction, control, practice*

What does discipline feel like? It is sorrowful or painful at the time. But what is the result? Righteousness.

Proverbs 6:23

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life.

God uses many things to develop our Faith and Character but the tool he uses most often day in and day out is discipline applied by human authority.

What's a reproof? It is correction – I don't like the way you did that – do it this way next time – authorities will be talking to you that way for the rest of your life. Its not personal, that's just the way life is.

Reproof: *criticism for a fault, an expression of strong disapproval*

Romans 13:1-2

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Human Authority – You Can't Escape

Authority: *The ability & legal right to punish & reward others within certain boundaries of life.*

All authority comes from and is established by God. When we resist authority we are opposing the ordinance of God himself. Because of this we need to think long and hard before resisting an authority that God has put in our life.

Most of the people who are going to have authority over us will be non-Christians. Why is that? Because most people are non-Christians. Do we still have to obey the authority if they are not Christians? Yes. They are being used as agents of God in our lives even if the authority themselves is unaware of that.

When these non-Christians who have authority over us reprove us will they always do it exactly perfectly? No. Will there be times when they are overly harsh or unfair or use cuss words? Yes. But God still wants us to submit to their reproofs.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.

Proverbs 15:5

A fool rejects his father's discipline, But he who regards reproof is sensible.

As you get older will you be under more authority or less? More, in fact you will be under human authority of one form or another until the day you die – you cannot escape.

Let's say you have a rebellious 18 year old young man. He graduates from high school and he says, "I'm not going to college, I'm tired of people making me go to school. I'm going to do whatever I want and I'm old enough now that there is nothing my parents can do about it. I'm going to have fun and just party every day!" What's going to happen to him? After a while he is going to run out of money. "Dude, I'm out of money. I got to have money to party, dude". So what does he do? He goes down to McDonald's or something and gets a job. What do you get when you get a job? You get a boss - "I don't like the way you made that burger, do it this way next time" – and there he is right back under authority.

Or maybe he says, "I'm ready to get out of this town. I'm going to travel the world and make my own decisions, live my own life, get away from everyone who knows me. I'm tired of people telling me what to do. I know, I'll join the Army!" Its not long before he meets the First Sergeant. Better do what he says or you'll be in the brig. Or maybe the Marines, then he'll meet the Gunnery Sergeant – "I don't like the way you dug that trench, do it this way next time". The young man says, "yes sir". The sergeant says, "Do not call me sir! I am not an officer! You will call me Gunny. You will say, 'Yes, Gunny'." "Yes Gunny"

Or maybe we have a rebellious 18 year old girl. "I'm tired of my parents telling me what to do. I'm going to do what I want and be free. I know, I'll get married", and there she is back under authority - of her husband.

Human authority – you can't escape, its impossible.

Rebellion – A Direct Threat to the Prime Directive

What happens if we rebel against these authorities God puts in our lives?

1 Samuel 15:22-23

Samuel said, Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.

In the eyes of God a spirit of rebellion is on the same moral plane as witchcraft, sorcery, and the occult.

divination: *the art or practice that seeks to foresee or foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge (i.e. the occult) usually by the interpretation of omens or by the aid of supernatural powers*

We need to remember that rebellion is extremely nasty stuff and will cost us. Why is it so nasty? Because if you are in rebellion it is not possible to grow in character and faith. Since it is a direct threat to the main reason you are still on the Earth, God is committed to dealing with it.

Proverbs 3:11-12

My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His reproof, ¹² For whom the Lord loves He improves, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

In fact he has a four step plan.

God's 4 Step Plan to Deal with Rebellion And Protect The Prime Directive

1) Discipline By Parents

Proverbs 13:24

He who spares his rod hates his son but he who loves him disciplines him diligently,

Until age 12 or so, parents are God's primary tool to deal with rebellion. What does the word "rod" mean in this verse? The Hebrew word used here means "a wooden stick". This verse says that parents who love their children will spank them to teach them not to rebel against authority. When done properly (not in anger), spanking uses physical pain to drive rebellion out of the child's heart and helps them be more receptive to receiving wisdom. **note:** in Proverbs the word, "foolishness" is a reference to rebellion.

Proverbs 22:15

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

Proverbs 29:15

The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

After age 12 the rules start to transition to adult rules. Hopefully, most of the work in learning to submit to authority will have been accomplished. If not, then step 2.

2) Discipline By Officials

Proverbs 17:11

A rebellious man seeks only evil, so a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

Some Bible translations describe the cruel messenger as a "merciless official". If for some reason the discipline by parents was ineffective and the person continues in rebellion outside the control of the parents, God will use officials from human institutions to discipline them. These officials can be somewhat cruel or merciless if resisted. But they can also reward you and honor you if you respond well to their reproof.

Proverbs 13:18

Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored.

These can include teachers, bosses, the military, police, justice system, etc. Unlike parents these people do not care about you. They are not concerned with how you feel about the matter. They want you to do what they say. Because God is patient He will continue to use this method for many years to get the attention of the rebellious person so that they might repent. But if after some time a person continues to resist authority even though disciplined by these officials, eventually God will move to step 3.

3) Discipline Through Permanent Loss

Proverbs 29:1

A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

If a person still refuses to turn away from rebellion after discipline by these officials, God will eventually elect to permanently destroy part of the person's life and will leave some element of pain in their life until they die.

Proverbs 15:32

He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.

The purpose for doing this is not punishment. God is attempting to get the person's attention so that they will change their mind and repent. Remember the Prime Directive!

Examples

Moses did not enter the Promised Land because of his rebellion (anger) in the desert (**Deuteronomy 32:48-52**). Paul had a thorn in the flesh, a disability that was very painful and that he lived with everyday until the day he died (**II Corinthians 12:7-9**). Pride was his issue.

In the vast majority of cases people will come to their senses and stop rebelling after either steps 2 or 3. In the few cases where they continue to rebel after all of this God will eventually move to step 4.

4) Premature Death

Proverbs 30:17

The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it.

Birds do not pick at the eyes of living people. So, if a bird is eating someone's eye what does that mean? The person is dead. What else? They are not buried. So if a person continues in rebellion against parents, officials, and even after God has permanently afflicted them, God moves to the last step.

The person is laying in a ditch by the side of the road, alone, dead, and unburied.....and after a while, the birds come, and they start pecking at their eyes.

If rebellion continues then God will cut a person's life short. This does not mean that everyone who dies young was rebellious – people die for many reasons. But it does mean that if a person continues in rebellion it eventually will lead to his life being shorter than God had originally intended.

Proverbs 15:10

Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.

Proverbs 15:31

He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise.

Why would God do this? Because the Prime Directive has been thwarted. The person is not going to repent. There is no longer any hope that their Faith and Character are going to be developed.

Therefore, there is no longer any reason for them to remain on the Earth.

But as a Christian they would still go to heaven.

What Makes Submission to Authority So Difficult?

Fear. The fear of abuse, of being taken advantage of, a fear of being unprotected.

What is required for us to be able to overcome this fear and submit as God tells us to? We must have confidence that God will protect us. **note:** when reading the book of Proverbs, the term “the king” is referring to anyone who is in a position of authority over you.

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Rarely will an authority ask you to do something illegal or immoral. If they do you should, of course, reluctantly decline (with humility and respect) but you should be able to point to the specific biblical verse whose principle they are asking you to violate. If you cannot do this you should try to obey.

However, what authorities will ask us to do a lot is stuff we don't want to do. Learning how to obey when we don't feel like it develops our faith and character and results in an eternal weight of gold. You can't do it unless you fully trust God to be in control and take care of you and that is what it comes down to.

I Peter 2:18

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

Do you have enough faith to believe that God really is in control of the people who have authority over you?

Conclusion

The Prime Directive regarding your life on Earth is the development of a Godly Faith and a Christlike Character!

The tool God uses most frequently to develop our Faith & Character is discipline applied by human authority.

Discipline by human authorities usually shows up in the form of reproofs (**reproof:** *criticism for a fault, an expression of strong disapproval*) – authorities will be reproofing you for the rest of your life. Its not personal, that's just the way life is.

When we resist human authority we are opposing the ordinance of God himself. Because of this we need to think long and hard before resisting an authority that God has put in our life.

When these non-christians who have authority over us reprove us will they always do it exactly perfectly? No. But God still wants us to submit to their reproofs.

Rebellion is extremely nasty stuff because if a person is in rebellion it is not possible to grow in character and faith. Since it is a direct threat to the main reason you, a Christian, are still on the Earth God is committed to dealing with it using a four step plan – discipline by parents, discipline by officials, permanent loss, premature death.

Rarely will authorities ask you to do things that are illegal or immoral but what authorities will ask us to do a lot is stuff we don't want to do.

Learning how to obey when we don't feel like it develops our faith and character.

Appendix – Common Questions

What about the Revolutionary War when America rebelled against England?

In the case of the Revolutionary War the men that led that effort had to convince a majority of Americans to follow them in rebelling against an unjust government and they had to be willing to die, be maimed for life, and/or be financially ruined because it provided benefits for their descendants more so than for them personally. In fact, almost all of the signers of the Declaration of Independence experienced one or more of these consequences. If you do decide to go to war there will be a price to pay so make sure it is really worth the cost.

Proverbs 24:6

For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory.

These situations are transitory – as soon as the war was over what was the first thing they did? They set up a new government and there they were right back under authority again.

What about a boss that is unethical?

In the case of the unethical boss you can quit your job. You will have to be willing to go without income during the transition period which will be a hardship for you and your family. When the transition is over you will have a new job and a new boss and there you are right back under authority again!

How does protesting fit into this study?

If you live in a country where the government does not allow protesting then, as Christians, we can't protest (the exception being something similar to the Revolutionary War situation). If you live in a country where the government does allow protesting as long as you follow certain rules then you can protest but must stay within the limits that the government has defined for an acceptable protest. If people are throwing things, hurting people, or damaging property they have violated the government's rules for an allowable protest. As Christians we would not participate in a protest of that nature.

Romans 13:1-7

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Prime Directive (Obedience To Authority)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 4:13, I Peter 1:6-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 12:11, Proverbs 6:23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 13:1-2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Prime Directive (Obedience To Authority)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 12:1, Proverbs 15:5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Samuel 15:22-23, Proverbs 3:11-12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 22:15, Proverbs 29:15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Prime Directive (Obedience To Authority)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 17:11, Proverbs 13:18*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 29:1, Proverbs 15:32*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Deuteronomy 32:48-52, II Corinthians 12:7-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *The Prime Directive (Obedience To Authority)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 30:17, Proverbs 15:10, Proverbs 15:31*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 21:1, I Peter 2:18*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 13:1-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?