

# Obeying the Authority

by Chuck Smith

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*Pastor Chuck Smith's sermon explores God's authority, patience, and the importance of trusting Him amidst life's challenges.*

**Duration:** 25:04

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:6, Psalm 103:8, Proverbs 16:9, Ecclesiastes 8:11, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1, 2 Peter 3:9

**Topics:** "Authority"

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## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the nature and character of God. He emphasizes that God is patient and long-suffering, even when dealing with the sinful nature of humanity. Pastor Chuck uses the example of a parent's patience with a young child to illustrate God's patience with us. He also mentions that while nature can reveal certain aspects of God's character, it is difficult to fully understand God through nature alone. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to recognize and appreciate God's patience and to seek a deeper understanding of Him through His word.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole  
And now with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck. Now because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Talking about the nature and the character of God, we know that as God is described, His nature, there are aspects of the nature of God, such as He is long-suffering, He is slow to anger, He is plenteous in mercy, He's very patient.

That is, God puts up with an awful lot of guff. Look how He's put up with you. And it seems that we're so slow to learn.

And yet God is so patient in teaching us. My older daughter is just so patient. She's got a little one-year-old.

He's almost two. And you know how the saying goes, the terrible twos. But as far as she's concerned, it isn't terrible twos at all.

He was wanting a cookie. And as soon as he got it, he wanted down from her lap so he could walk around the house eating the cookie. Well, that's a no-no in grandma's house.

You sit at the table to eat your food. You don't walk around the house eating the food. So he was determined.

He wanted down to eat the cookie. But my daughter couldn't let him down because that's a no-no in our house. And so he was fussing, he was squealing, he was squirming to get down.

And so, finally, I took the cookie from him and he thought that he would get down and get the cookie back. And so he got down and then he wanted the cookie back. And I said, oh no.

And so he started this dancing and screaming, you know. And so I said, oh, I've seen Indians dance like that. And my daughter watching him do this little dance there in the kitchen and then he was really just red-faced and yelling and dancing.

And she said, isn't that cute? The way he expresses himself. And she said, sometimes he even gets on the floor and kicks and screams. She is so patient.

Now, we didn't let our kids do that. I mean, we'd say, straighten up. And you'll get swatted, you know.

But not her. And I think of how patient God is. I wonder if when we're going through our little tantrums, if God doesn't say, isn't that a cute way of expressing themselves.

You know, she just sort of ignored him. And I wonder if God just sort of ignores us sometimes when we're going through all these fits and all that we sometimes go through. God is patient.

God is long-suffering. God is slow to anger. But many times, people make a grave mistake in misinterpreting the patience of God as weakness.

God won't punish evil. That's a tragic mistake to make. God is slow to anger.

But God will not keep His patience forever. It is possible to step over the line. And God will judge righteously.

God is long-suffering. However, there is a limit. And in history, we see where people have gone over the limit.

In the time of Noah, God was extremely patient with those people who were, well, as the scripture said, the imagination of their hearts was nothing but wickedness continually. Every man was doing that which was right in his own eyes. The wickedness of the earth was exceedingly great.

And yet, God was so patient. And during the hundred years that Noah was building the ark, God was patient and long-suffering with those people. But God was not weak.

He gave them the opportunities to repent. And they're refusing to do so. The judgment of God ultimately came.

And when it did, it was awesome. And it was final. Some people mistake the patience of God as approval.

As though God doesn't really care what they are doing. You can do what you please, and God doesn't really care. God doesn't really know.

In Psalm 73, the psalmist spoke of the wicked, who seemed to prosper and get by with their evil. And they were saying, Doth God know? Is there any knowledge in the Most High? And because they were getting by with their wickedness, they were thinking that God didn't know. God didn't care.

It doesn't really matter to God how you live. But that again is a mistake. God is concerned.

And God does know. Now, because the sentence against the evil work is not executed speedily, the reason why God doesn't execute it speedily is because He is merciful, and He wants to give a man every chance in the world to repent. And because it isn't executed speedily, many times people take advantage by misinterpreting the patience of God, and they set themselves fully to do evil.

But Solomon declared, Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and he lives a long time, his days are prolonged, yet surely I know it will be well with those that fear God, which fear before Him, but it will not be well with the wicked. Now, they may live a long life. They may seem to prosper.

It may seem that God lets them get by with it, but I know that in the end, it will be well with those who live righteously, and it will not be well with the wicked. And neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he fears not before God. In Proverbs 29, he speaks of he that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed in that without remedy.

There comes that time. God is patient. He puts up with a lot.

He will reprove you. He will correct you. But if you harden yourself against God, then the judgment when it does come will be final and severe.

There is an emptiness or a vanity which is done upon the earth, and this is it. There are just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked. Again, there are wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.

And so I saw that this is vanity. Now, what he is saying is that there are just men who suffer, and there are wicked men who prosper. A difficult thing for us to understand, because if we were God, we could really mess things up, and we would just bless everybody who is good and prosper everybody who is good, and we would really take care of those that were bad, speedily.

But if you are looking for people to love you and fellowship with you for who you are, how would you know that they loved you for who you are rather than for the perks that you're giving them? You see, if God just blessed the socks off of all the good people, then people would be good because they want their socks blessed off. And if God swiftly punished all the evil people, then people would be afraid of doing evil, but they would not cease doing evil because they love God. God wants you to love Him for who He is, for His grace and for His mercy and for His goodness.

And He wants to draw you into this loving relationship, but He wants it to be a meaningful thing, and so He doesn't always bless the good people. Sometimes good people suffer. Job suffered tremendously, and in the midst of all of that suffering, he said, the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. And in all of the losses, he did not curse God nor charge God foolishly. That's why God bragged on Job.

Have you considered my servant Job? He's a good man, he's upright, he loves good, he hates evil, and he didn't turn against me in spite of all that you did. But that's the kind of devotion that God is looking for. Now, He wants us to serve Him out of the motive of the pure heart of love towards Him.

Lord, I love you and I will serve you if you strip me of everything I have, or if you bless me. For my love to God is not related to my physical well-being. It's just because He first loved me.

I love Him. Knowing Him, knowing how gracious and good and kind He is, I love Him. And so Solomon, looking at this, couldn't figure it out.

This is wrong. This is an emptiness. It's something I just see as an incongruous thing.

Good men, who things happen to them that should happen to the wicked. Wicked men, things happen to them that should happen to the good. And so, as a result, I just commended fun.

Because a man has no better thing under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be merry. For that shall abide with him of his labor the days of his life which God gives him under the sun. So, this is a false conclusion that Solomon is drawing because he's looking at the whole scene from a purely worldly standpoint, a jaded old man who has lost his relationship with God.

And so, hey, party it up, man. Eat, drink, and be merry. For tomorrow you'll die.

So you might as well just go for it and grab what fun and pleasure out of life that you can exact from it. Wrong. So when I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on the earth, for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes, then I beheld the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun, because though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it, yea, farther.

Though a wise man think to know it, yet he shall not be able to find it. So he concluded, you can't really understand God, that's true. You can't understand the ways of God, that's true.

God said, my ways are not your ways. My ways are beyond your finding out. One of the problems that we have in our Christian life is seeking to understand the ways of God.

How many times have we said, why God? Lord, I don't understand. Why did you allow this to happen? Why didn't you do that, Lord? And we don't understand the ways of God. As a result, we're forced to just trust the Lord.

And that's what God answers. You say, why God? He just says, trust me, son. Just trust me.

And God is pleased when you just trust Him, though you don't understand. So for all of this, I considered in my heart, even to declare all of this, that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God, and no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. In nature, you can't get a clear revelation of God because you look at fallen nature.

So Solomon says, as I'm trying to observe life, I can't really understand if he's a God of love or a God of hatred. I see inequities. I see problems.

I see cruelty in nature. And it is true that nature can reveal a certain part of God. The vastness of the universe can declare to you the glory of God.

The heavens declare the glory. The life forms on the earth can declare to you the infinite wisdom of God. The earth shows His handiwork.

And day into day, they are speaking to us. Night into night, their voice is going forth. And it is a universal language.

There is not a speech nor a language where the voice is not heard. So in nature, we come to understand that God exists. But to try to get a clear understanding of God from nature is difficult.

I look at that beautiful gazelle with all of the grace with which it can run. And I see a lion pouncing on it and tearing it to pieces. And I sort of cringe at the cruelty that I see in nature.

But you see, I am looking at fallen nature. I'm not looking at the world as God created it. I see the world as it is in a fallen state from that original creation.

There will be a day when the earth will be restored to its original purpose and intent. And we read in that day, the lion will lie down with the lamb and a little child shall lead them. So a lion will make an excellent pet for your children in those days.

They'll put a leash on it and lead it around. Maybe even ride the thing. But it couldn't happen today because of the fallen condition of the earth.

And thus, we need to really know God, a revelation of God apart from nature. And that's what the Bible gives to us. And so Solomon just speaking of his seeking to understand the works that are in the hand of God.

No man knows either love or hatred by what he sees before him. For all things come alike to all. The rain falls on the just and on the unjust.

All things come alike unto all. And there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. To the good and to the clean.

And to the unclean. To him that sacrifices and to him that does not sacrifice. As is the good, so is the sinner.

And he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. It seems like it doesn't really matter if you live a good life or a wicked life. You can have problems or you can have prosperity.

And it doesn't seem to be related to your lifestyle. For to him that is joined to all of the living, there is hope. In other words, as long as you're alive, you're hope.

Man, when you're dead, it's all over. And so, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. Now, a lion is stronger than a dog and a dog would be no competition for a lion.

Unless it's dead. And so, a living dog is better than a dead lion. Jesus said, don't fear those who can kill your body and after that they have no power.

But rather fear him who after the body is destroyed is able to cast both your soul and spirit into Gehenna. Yes, that's the one you should fear. The one who is able to cast soul and spirit into Gehenna.

Death after death. This is the second death, the scriptures say. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of Ecclesiastes in our next lesson.

As Pastor Chuck Smith continues with, Death comes to all. And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to remind you that if you'd like to secure a copy of today's message, simply order Ecclesiastes, chapter 8, verse 11, when visiting the [wordfortoday.org](http://wordfortoday.org). And while you're there, we encourage you to browse the many additional biblical resources by Pastor Chuck.

You can also subscribe to the Word for Today podcast or sign up for our email subscription. Once again, all this can be found at the [wordfortoday.org](http://wordfortoday.org). If you wish to call, our toll-free number is 1-800-272-WORD. And our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time.

Again, that's 1-800-272-9673. For those of you preferring to write, our mailing address is The Word for Today, PO Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628. And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support.

And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck continues his verse-by-verse study through the Bible. That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today. And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck with today's closing prayer.

Father, we thank you again for the wisdom and the instruction that you give to us and that has been handed down to us. Help us, Lord, that we might be wise and do justly and do that which pleases you. In Jesus' name, amen.

The question is, have you laid hold of what God has called you to do? Well, let me ask you this, are you sure you know what your calling is? Well, ladies, I have a special surprise for you. The Word for Today is making available the When Leaders Lead Women's Conference on DVD with a bonus MP3 that has over 40 messages to assist women to discover God's call and then to equip, teach, and encourage them to minister the gospel to others. Topics include how to witness to loved ones, balancing ministry and motherhood, coping with conflict, counseling with compassion, discipling others, and knowing the Lord's will.

There are even messages geared to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and teaching a Bible study. To find out more, call The Word for Today at 714-825-WORD or contact them online at [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org). This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today in Costa Mesa, California.

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