

Children and Authority | the biggest parenting challenges you will face, Part 4

I. What are authority problems?

- Merriam-Webster rightly defines authority as “persons in command,” and some of their definitions of command is “to direct authoritatively, to exercise dominating influence over, the ability to control, the authority or right to command.”
- And it’s very possible that many of you hate those definitions . . . not because they’re inaccurate, but because the very idea of being “commanded” doesn’t sit well with you. Our first-world culture rises and falls on the idea that no one gets to tell me how to live my life.
- The problem is that most parents try to deal with authority issues in a backward way.
 - Some parents try to play the authority card in order to get the child to submit to the authority to which they were already refusing to submit. Yeah, that’s probably not going to work.
 - Some parents try to reason with the child. Even though the kid has proven that there isn’t a single logical or even coherent reason to rebel against the authority, somehow the kids are going to — all of a sudden — submit to the pragmatic thinking being presented by the authority they don’t want to obey. Generally, the only value that arises from this kind of approach is that the kid finally starts thinking enough to realize that they’re only making things worse for themselves, and they resign themselves to doing what they were asked hoping not to earn more and more consequences. The authority issue isn’t fixed; the kids brain just finally engaged long enough for them to realize they were making a bigger mess of their lives.
 - Other parents will quote Scriptures to their child about how they are to obey their parents. Now, that has promise and sounds like a great idea — and there definitely is room for that — but, if that’s all they do, they’re still not dealing with the main problem.
- The main problem is not the disobedience. It’s not the rebellion. It’s not the disdain for authority.

II. What are the real authority problems?

- The child doesn’t want to submit to the authority.
- The child doesn’t submit to the authority because he believes he doesn’t need anyone to have a satisfying life.
- The child believes they don’t need anyone to have a satisfying life because they’ve experienced enough “success” in attaining happiness on their own.
- The child has achieved a certain level of satisfaction because he’s invested all of his technologies to that pursuit.
- The child has dedicated all of his technologies to that end because he believes that it’s up to him to find his satisfaction.
- And the child believes it’s his responsibility to gain his own satisfaction because he doesn’t believe it’s God’s job.
 - If you are experiencing authority problems with your kids (whether it’s with a teacher or with the police or with a parent), the most seminal heart issue is the fact that your children don’t believe God can or will satisfy them. They believe they have to do it on their own. They’re rejecting God’s sovereignty.
 - Romans 1:21-23; II Peter 2:1-3; Psalm 2:1-3; Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:13-19; Hebrews 11:6