

we choose to do with our body. Using this argument, we would have a right to Grab the Authority over our body from God.

18 Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. 19 Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. – 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 NLT

What is the basis of the counterargument that says we should Give the Authority over our body to God (1 Cor 6 19-20) How does that relate to viewing Jesus as your Lord?

Example 3 - Grabbing or Giving Authority over My Choices/My Life

Ultimately our decision to make Jesus our Lord and Savior is a decision to Give All Authority over our life and our choices to God. But we aren't always willing to let go and stop Grabbing Authority back in some areas. We would like to think God is satisfied with whatever authority we are willing to surrender. But in 1 Samuel, King Saul only obeyed God's instructions partially and tried to make up the difference by offering sacrifices. God rejected the substitution, what He wants from us is complete obedience.

22 But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. – 1 Samuel 15:22 NLT

If you sense there is an area you have only offered God partial obedience, ask yourself what is holding you back, then ask God for the courage and faith to fully surrender that area to His will.

WRAP-UP

Alignment with God is about bringing every area of our lives into step with His will. We can easily drift out of alignment when we rely on our own understanding, hold tightly to control, or allow competing priorities to take His place. But as we surrender our plans, choices, and loyalties to Him, we experience the stability, freedom, and peace that come from trusting God's wisdom over our own. True alignment is not just something we believe; it is something we live.

MEMORY VERSE

46 "So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? – Luke 6:46 NLT

Challenge – *Identify one decision you have been revisiting repeatedly and ask God how you can settle it in obedience to His will.*

Aligning Formed by His Presence – Week 2

INTRODUCTION

Last week we heard Jesus' calling us to return to our first love. When we return, we must decide how we orient our heart towards Him. Will we allow Jesus to have a place of ultimate authority in our lives, not only in what we say, but in what we do? Coming into alignment with God means submitting to His lordship. Alignment requires sacrifice but it restores joy and freedom in return.

Ice Breaker

What are the indicators you notice when your car is out of alignment? Do you tend to let it go for a while or get it fixed immediately?

Key Passage

46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. 48 They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." – Luke 6:46-49 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Conduct not Proclamation

In our key passage Jesus asks, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46) He is describing a disconnect between what is said and what is done. This is the definition of hypocrisy. The word for Lord in this passage is *kyrios* which means master. Your Lord is the one who has power and authority and ownership over you. For many that is a difficult thing to accept. We prefer to use Lord as a term of respect or affection, but not to call Jesus our "master".

What are some negative things associated with calling someone your "master"? On what basis does our culture reject the idea of coming under complete submission?

9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. – Romans 10:9 NIV
5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, – 1 Timothy 2:5 NIV

Our understanding of submission to authority is greatly influenced by the culture we live in. And handing over all authority to another person (even a pastor) should raise red flags. There is only one who is worthy of our complete submission, and that is Jesus. No one else should come between you and God (1 Tim 2:5).

What is the connection between our salvation and calling Jesus our Lord according to Rom 10:9? Do you think saying the words without living under Jesus' authority is sufficient?

Jesus invites us to alignment and obedience and offers us salvation in return. Many people want salvation without submission. Yet verbal recognition without behavioral alignment is just empty formality. Our submission can't be forced; it must be given willingly.

2. Order out of Chaos

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
– Genesis 1:1-2 NIV
8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.
– Genesis 2:8 NIV

In the beginning God brought order to the chaos of this world and placed mankind in the garden where we were in an intimate relationship with our creator. But Adam and Eve weren't willing to trust the lordship of God and come under His authority. When sin entered the world, chaos returned.

We can trace the roots of sin back to Eden, but all of us have sinned. (Rom 3:23) All of us share the tendency to disobey God and move out of alignment with Him. We usually find some areas are easier to submit than others. What are the areas that you find most difficult to bring into alignment with God? (e.g. relationships, finances, future plans, career, leisure time...?)

11 For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. 12 And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, – Titus 2:11-12 NLT

Adam and Eve may have ushered in sin, but God responded with grace; the gift of salvation that we don't deserve. We accept that gift when we make Jesus our Lord, opening the way back to that intimate relationship that was lost in Eden. Titus 2:12 tells us that we should respond to God's offer of salvation through a faithful alignment with His wisdom and righteousness.

Grace is not permission to remain unchanged; it is the power to live differently from this evil world. To live in alignment with God means we trust His wisdom over our preferences. It removes competing loyalties. What or who might be competing for your loyalty to God- family, colleagues, politics, social media? In what way are you feeling pulled in a direction out of alignment with God?

3. Grab or Give

As an exercise in applying alignment in our lives let's consider the difference between Grabbing Authority and Giving Authority in three areas of our life. Grabbing Authority would be when we take control away from God. Giving Authority would be when we let go and surrender control to God.

Example 1 – Grabbing or Giving Authority over My Destiny/My Future

Our culture has come to view defiance, self-reliance as strong and noble traits. But when we turn those attitudes against God, we are Grabbing Authority. Perhaps the best example of this is the oft-quoted poem Invictus which ends with the statement- *It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.*

Have you heard this poem presented in a positive or a negative light? What do you think makes it appealing to some?

14 Because strait [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. – Matthew 7:14 KJV

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. – Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

The poem's author writes in direct defiance of Jesus' instructions that we follow the straight and narrow path to life. (Mat 7:14) What does Proverbs 3 tell us to do to Give Authority to God?

Example 2 - Grabbing or Giving Authority over My Body

If there is one area which we tend to withhold from God's authority it is likely the control over our body. Once again, the cultural norm would encourage us to disregard the guidelines given in God's Word concerning how we are to treat our bodies. Many would argue that we should have the final say in what