

# Series: Five Ways Weird

## Session Title: Submission

Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Markers for every student
- ☐ Three sheets of large newsprint or chart paper prepared with questions front and back
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Copies of page A5
- ☐ More large newsprint or chart paper for the group discussion (one per group)
- ☐ DVD copy of *School of Rock*

### Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify submission to civil authorities is part of what it means to be a Christian.
- Identify submission to spiritual authorities is part of what it means to be a Christian.
- Identify submission to parental authorities is part of what it means to be a Christian.
- Begin to identify how very 'odd' these acts of submission appear to our peers.
- Identify some of the benefits of submission.

### Pastoral Objectives:

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### Lead In:

You are going to show the clip from the movie *School of Rock* where Jack Black's character describes the history of rock music and uses the phrase 'Stick it to the man!' several times. Before showing it, ask the students to identify the spirit of rock music according to Jack Black.

The expected answer is ‘rebellion’ or perhaps ‘individualism’. Write all of their answers on the board or chart paper. Keep collecting answers until at least one student suggests something like rebellion or non-conformity. Without explanation head on to the second part of the Lead In exercise.

Ask the students if anyone can define the word ‘ethical’. Write their definition on the board. It should be something approaching this: *conforming to right principals of action or behaviour accepted among a common group*. Explain that doctors have ethics that govern how they behave, soldiers are supposed to follow the rules of engagement, and politicians are supposed to operate by certain standards of ethics (when they don’t it becomes a scandal). Just like doctors, soldiers, and politicians there is an ethical standard for Christians, a code that we are supposed to live by. Ethics are not about how you get saved; they are about how you live after you have been saved.

Have the following twelve descriptives written on the board or chart paper in view of the students:

Transformed Mind	Humility	Commitment to Group
Genuine Love	Discernment	Submission to Authority
Servant Zeal	Joyful	Prayerful
Compassionate	Forgiving	Authentic

Inform the students that the Bible spends a lot of time telling people how they should behave once they are Christians. Some people break this teaching down into twenty five ethical markers while others prefer twelve categories. This list is twelve. Which of the twelve ethical markers do you think the Bible spends the highest word count on? By highest word count I mean the ethical marker that has the most number of words dedicated to teaching its importance. Have the students vote.

The surprising answer is ‘Submission to Authority’. It has the highest word count in the New Testament of any of these ethical markers. Ask the students why they think that is true? Is it because it is so difficult to do or because we are so disinclined to do it?

Consider transitioning into the tasks by saying something like this:

*Given the attention that this practice receives in the Bible it is surprising how few sermons and Bible lessons we hear on it in the church. Likely that is because it so hard for most of us to swallow. It seems so counter-cultural. We live in a land of people committed to sticking it to the man! Independence and rebellion are national virtues! Submission to authority seems like an idea that went out with “Leave it to Beaver” and “Happy Days”, but that is precisely what makes this action so weird! Submission to authority might just be the most remarkable thing you do on this earth and it just might be weird enough to cause your friends to ask you questions about the Lord Jesus.*

## Task One Instructions:

Give the students these instructions:

*Let's be honest and admit that submission is tough. You might even say it totally sucks. Not everything we're called to do for the Lord is fun; let's be honest about that. Taped up around the room are three large pieces of newsprint. The first one asks the question: "Why is it so hard to submit to civil authorities?" Civil authorities are school teachers, police officers and politicians. The second asks the question: "Why is it so hard to submit to spiritual authorities?" Spiritual authorities are pastors, elders and youth leaders. The third asks the question: "Why is it so hard to submit to parental authorities?" That one should be fairly obvious. Take your marker and visit each of the three pieces of newsprint. Write down why you think it is so hard to submit to those authorities. Be honest. No one here will be surprised that you find it hard.*

Give the students about ten minutes to complete the task.

After the students have completed the exercise go around the room and do two things. First, send one member of the group to each piece of paper to summarize the answers into one sentence. Ask the other students whether the summary answer is a reasonable one. Second, ask the student who is standing at the paper to turn the paper over and tape it back to the wall with the second side facing out. Ask the group to answer the new question: what is the possible value of submitting to these authorities? Have the representatives of each station (or you could switch for variety) scribe the group's answers to the question on each paper. This should take another eight to ten minutes.

## Task Two Instructions:

Tell the students that they are going to split up into discussion groups that have no more than ten people and no less than five people in them. When they are in their groups hand out pens and a discussion sheet (copies of page A5). This should take fifteen to twenty five minutes.

When the groups are finished or the time is up, take up the sheet as a group. Give the students a chance to share their answers with each other and to give each other feedback. You should allow them to give each other feedback and you should also guide them towards clear and reasonable answers. They may need some clarification or correction; they may not.

Note to the leader: Appended to this lesson is a page entitled Five Ways Weird, Leader Helps. It is intended to help you guide your students through the feedback to the handout. You may find it helpful or not, but we have provided it for your convenience.

## Conclusion:

Consider wrapping up the evening by saying something like this:

*Submitting to authority might just be the hardest thing Jesus ever asked us to do. It's a lot harder than sharing, being nice or loving others. It's harder than giving money to the poor and forgiving people who do mean things to us. It goes against every cultural value and instinct we possess. Maybe that's part of the reason we should do it. Maybe just doing it will be such a statement of faith and followership that we will stand out as unique and unusual to our peers. Maybe when they see our lives are actually improved by this crazy act (by experiencing all of the benefits that can come from living under authority) they will ask what gave us the idea of doing it in the first place. Certainly there is nothing you can do that is more likely to get noticed than this one. Try it! The next time your friends are bad-mouthing a teacher try saying something like: "Hey I think Mrs. Smith is doing the best she can. It can't be easy trying to teach a bunch of kids like us." I'll bet you get noticed! Or the next time your friends are plotting a deception of their parents in order to go to a party try saying something like: "I think I'll just ask my parents if I can go and if they say no I think I'll just accept their wisdom." You know that will get noticed. But before we go let me give you a warning: If you do not want to talk to your friends about Jesus then do not be in submission to authority. It will be noticed and you will be asked why you are so weird!*

## Five Ways Weird! Leader Helps

*Leaders: Because there is so little teaching on this topic, we recognize that you may appreciate some priming on this one. Feel free to answer in your own way or to use the sample primers below.*

### Weird Way Three: Submission

Before we go much further as a group we should probably define some terms. Take a look at the three related terms below and as a group craft definitions for each word that distinguish them from each other. Take only about five minutes to do this.

#### Word One: Slave

Sample Answer: *A slave has no rights or independence. They must do whatever the master says.*

#### Word Two: Servant

Sample Answer: *A servant has rights. Servants can decide not to do something if they feel it is an abuse or against their beliefs or preferences. They must work hard for the master but can object or quit if they desire.*

#### Word Three: Co-worker

Sample Answer: *A co-worker is an equal partner. S/he shares creative ownership of the project and helps to determine the parameters and guidelines that the team will operate by. S/he is a free agent and cannot be forced to do anything.*

As a group read Romans 6:17-23. Try to read it from a more literal translation (NRSV, NASB, NIV) rather than a paraphrase version. Decide which of the above terms (slave, servant or co-worker) best describes the nature of our partnership with God. When you have decided, use the words of the corresponding definition to fill in the spaces below.

As a *slave* of God I should live in total submission to my master. I must do whatever my master says.

God says in the Bible that he has delegated authority out to certain people on earth to help govern us. The Bible lists parents, civil authorities and spiritual authorities as types of people God requires us to submit to in his name. As a group read Deuteronomy 5:16, 1 Timothy 5:17 and Romans 13:1-2. Then pick one of the passages and come up with a list of five ways you could live in submission to that form of authority over the next calendar year. Record your ideas in the space below.

## Chosen Authority: Sample Answer: Parental

1. I could keep curfew without deviation or complaint.
2. I could clean my room without being asked.
3. I could do my homework without being asked.
4. I could speak positively about my parents to my friends and refuse to trash them.
5. I could do whatever chores have been assigned to me to the best of my ability.