

Our Sin of Impersonating the High Priest

Hebrews 13:17a

“Obey your leaders and submit, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account ...”

The book of Hebrews emphasizes the supremacy of Christ, the New Covenant, faith in God and endurance through difficulty. There are occasions when the author addresses rebellion toward God. *“Oh, that today you would listen as God speaks! Do not harden your hearts ...”* (Heb. 3:7-8). God appoints spiritual leaders to encourage people to submit to Him. There are two views about the authority of God’s leaders: (1) one is law oriented and destructive; (2) the other is love oriented and constructive.

1. **God appoints leaders as persons of authority;** this leads to priests, positions, and power.
2. **God appoints leaders as pointers to authority;** this leads to sensitivity, service and selflessness.

I. Christ alone is our spiritual authority, and our goal is to be submissive to Him.

“Therefore since we have a great high priest ... Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast” (Heb. 4:14). Kittel’s Dictionary definition of *archierus* (High Priest) is “God’s plenipotentiary.” That is a big fancy word that means “invested with full power and authority.” The High Priest is God’s delegated authority. In a simple sense the high priest represents God to the people and the people to God. There is only ever one high priest and one true delegated authority and that is Christ. Christ holds the position forever because He lives forever (Hebrews 7:24). None of us may presume the role of Christ.

II. We Christians are partakers of Christ not priests over other Christians.

*“Take care that there be not be in any of you a heart ... that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another ... so that none of you is deceived by sin. For we have become **partakers of Christ** if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end”* (Hebrews 3:12-14). The word “partner” (translated “*partaker*” in the NAS) is the word *metachoi* which means “one who shares or participates.” We are participants (partners) in Christ’s kingdom work of changed lives.

A. We are called to exhort and encourage one another.

There is no distinction between those who lead and those who don’t. All of us are called to exhort one another. It is implied that everyone, including leaders, are vulnerable to deception.

B. We are called to exhort one another to be submissive to God.

A true spiritual leader is one who is not interested in anyone listening to them, but to God.

1. A spiritual leader recognizes he himself can be deceived by sin.
2. A spiritual leader responds to others’ resistance with compassion.
3. A spiritual leader refers people to God’s authority and never to his.

III. A Christian leader is one who should gently persuade you to be submissive to Christ.

“Obey your leaders and submit (to them)” – Hebrews 13:7.

A. The word “obey” (*peitho*) means “to allow oneself to be persuaded.”

The word is in the present tense and middle voice – it’s something you must allow to happen.

B. The word “leader” (*hegeomai*) means “guide.”

Similar to a pioneer settler or a scout in advance of the company, be persuaded by him.

C. The word “submit” is a word that stands alone.

“To them” is added. “Allow your leaders to persuade you to follow after Christ!”

“We don’t have dominion over your faith, but we are servants for your joy” (2 Cor. 1:24).