



Setting Aside Childish Ways

by Lisa Pineira

As a kid in Northern Wisconsin, I remember my parent's telling me to slip my red boots over my shoes before walking to school in winter. One block from home, I pulled off my boots, tucked them under my arm, and then ran and slid on the icy road all the way to school.

One summer I got grounded for going inside a friend's house without telling my mother, who called and looked for me for over an hour. The consequence: to stay in our house or yard for an entire week.

The first day I obeyed. The next day, after my parents went to work, I split. I made sure to return home by lunchtime, when my mother came to watch her favorite soap opera. After she left, I again disappeared. I came home before my parents returned at the end of the workday.

If you had asked me if I was obedient, I would have said, "Yes." But looking back at my actions, I often fell short. These examples came to mind while studying the Epistle of James with some women at my church. We felt convicted to be doers of God's Word, not just hearers. We saw that we had deceived ourselves by thinking we obeyed God, when in fact we didn't. Looking intently into the mirror of God's Word exposed pride that comes out in our thoughts, speech and actions. We judge, we speak before we listen, and we want to call the shots rather than humble ourselves.

I want to express my love for God by respecting Him and what He says. Am I going to act like I did as a kid and conform outwardly, yet do what I want instead? Or, will I do what He says but kick and scream all the way? Either choice tries to usurp God and His ways. Either way hinders true community.

"The biblical teaching on submission focuses primarily on the spirit with which we view other people," says Richard Foster in *Celebration of Discipline*. "... The real issue is the spirit of consideration and deference we have when we are with others. In submission we are at last free to value other people."

Submitting to God and others shows we value them. Maybe if we set aside our childish ways and do what God says—inside and out—the world around us will see Him afresh.

Reflect and Respond

- 1) *Submission* is repeated throughout the New Testament. Do a word study to discover the richness of the meaning in the Greek language. Process what you learn with someone.
- 2) Do you ever consider how not obeying God affects Him? Read James 4:6-8: How does God respond to one who fails to humble herself?
- 3) Read James 1:21-27. Take an honest look within: Are you a doer of God's Word in this area, or a hearer who deceives herself?
- 4) Do you ever consider how not submitting to authority—whether government, workplace, church, family or God—affects the intimacy within the body of Christ and the effectiveness of your witness outside the fold?

"The highest level of fellowship" says Dallas Willard in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, "involving humility, complete honesty, transparency, and at times confession and restitution—is sustained by the discipline of submission."

Practice the discipline of submission this week by laying down your need to get your own way. Record the times you catch yourself wanting your own way with God or others. Especially note how people respond.



Lisa Pineira enjoys biking, hiking, and fireside chats on her deck. She is involved in discipleship relationships with adult women as she serves with Campus Crusade for Christ. She can be reached at lisapineira@hotmail.com.