



This study is about **authority, leadership and trust** and is a supplement to the study: Hebrews 13:17 - Have confidence in your leaders.¹

The text:

About horses and obedience:

- *When we put bits into the mouths of horses **to make them obey us**, we can turn the whole animal. (James 3:3)*

Obey is the translation of ‘**peitho**’ here:

According to the OLB to be translated as:

- persuade
- be persuaded
- to trust, have confidence, be confident

To be certain of what this text means, contact was made by telephone with a horse breeder.

It was explained to the person who answered that the Bible says that when someone puts a bit in a horse’s mouth, that horse will obey that person and he will be able to direct it to wherever the rider wishes.

It was also explained that the Greek word translated as ‘**obey**’ apparently rather means ‘**trust**’.

The immediate reaction at the other end of the telephone wire was:

- Oh, yes, of course, the second word. A brutal rider will get nothing from that horse.

Another person who was called to the telephone and told the same story, reacted in exactly the same way.

In an article in the magazine Seasons² a splendid illustration is given of how much effort can be required to gain a horse’s confidence.

It describes how a horse, which the owner had destined to be slaughtered because he was unable to do anything with it, opened up like a flower through love and attention to become a good horse to ride.

Dozens of breeds of horses have now been bred over the centuries, so that there is always a special breed available to carry out the task for which one wishes to use a horse.

In other words, a steeple chase is not won with a Brabant carthorse and a full-blooded Arabian is not used for ploughing.

The moral of this tale:

A horse **obeys** the rider inasmuch as it **trusts** him.

If a rider wants to drive on the horse correctly, he has to build a **relationship of trust** with the horse and appreciate that it will not **voluntarily** allow itself “**to be driven**”.

As well as this, the rider must realise that every horse has its **own** character, with its **own** capabilities and limitations.

A great problem arises if the rider asks more of the horse than it is able to give.

¹ Study: Hebrews 13:17 - Have confidence in your leaders.

² Article in the magazine Seasons.



An important lesson for the rider:

- The rider must **first** gain the horse's **confidence**.
- He must **adjust** his expectations of the horse to the horse's character and capabilities.
- He **cannot force** the horse to obey him.

From the world of horses to the church.

The rider can symbolise the leaders - those who are esteemed in the church.

Hebrews 13:17 calls upon the church members to put their trust in the people who are in leadership in the church.

Verse 7 of this chapter says:

- *Remember your leaders (those who are esteemed), who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)*

This verse can be divided into three instructions:

- 1.- to be mindful of the 'ministers' who bring the Word of God
- 2.- to consider the outcome of their way of life
- 3.- to imitate their faith.

Developed practically in an example:

Point 1:

Anyone who learns to drive with a driving instructor does best to put the instructor's teaching into practice.

Not only the technique of driving a car, but also keeping in mind the tips a good instructor gives about how to behave in traffic towards the other road users.

Point 2:

Be sure that the instructor himself also respects the Highway Code and has a friendly, polite style of driving.

Point 3:

A good instructor not only teaches the rules of the Highway Code, but also demonstrates the utility thereof clearly and why it is good to submit to them.

Keep this in mind as well **after** passing the driving test.

Concerning leaders and church members.

Both the rider and the instructor symbolise the leaders - those who are esteemed in the church. Like the rider, the leaders in the church must gain the trust of their church members.

This trust can only be confirmed when leaders behave towards the church members in the same cautious way in which the rider behaves towards his horse, and the instructor towards his pupil.

Those to whom authority is given by the church members must be aware of the fact that they cannot extort this authority.

They have the responsibility of serving the church with a way of life, in word and deed, that is under the authority of Jesus Christ, founded upon the Bible, as the Word of God.

In this sense they are 'ministers', who must 'minister' by being an example to the church.