

Authority

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I. Introduction.

- A. In a ministry you have to have a clear sense of direction and clear lines of authority.
- B. Authority is the right to decide or take action or to restrain.

II. Background.

- A. To have the right without the power is to be ineffective, but to have the power without the right is illegal. The two go together.
- B. Three things are important to leadership: a commitment to act, the power to act and the right to act.
- C. Authority is part of leadership. Leadership is influence, but this includes relational authority.
- D. Preoccupation with authority can be dangerous. (Luke 10)
- E. There is a dangerous mentality that can prevail in a group.
 - 1. The centric group—an association of people in which the general level of personal concern is greater than the general level of group concern. There is an incompatibility of objectives and resistance to authority. It has an unhealthy pre-occupation with self.
 - 2. Everything must begin with the fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 1:7, 29)
- F. All authority comes from God. (Romans 13:1)
 - 1. All other authorities are established by God.
 - 2. Authority is designated to Satan, Christ, and angels. (Matthew 4, 28, Revelation 13:2)

III. The authorities of men.

- A. God has authority over man.
- B. Man is subject to nature.
- C. Husbands have authority over their wives.
- D. Parents are an authority. (Ephesians 6:1)
- E. Government is an authority. (1 Peter 2:13)
- F. Employers are authorities. (1 Peter 2:18)

G. There are spiritual leaders. (Hebrews 13:17)

IV. Observations on authority.

A. We live in an ordered universe where there is authority and submission to authority.

B. Scriptural principles concerning authority apply whether the relationship is voluntary or involuntary.

C. The Bible has guidelines for every relationship and they are not all that complicated.

D. There is a diversity of authorities that one is to respond to, and the individual must choose sometimes which authority to be accountable to. Intelligence is the ability to discern relationships. (Romans 14:12)

V. The problem in authority.

A. While we live in a universe where there is authority all authorities are limited including God by His own character and by our free will.

B. There are natural limits.

C. There are agreed upon limits and these are adjusted as people grow and change.

D. There are limits set by other authorities.

E. The limits of authority and sin

1. Satan sought authority outside of his limits and fell. (Isaiah 14, Luke 10:18)

2. Adam and Eve violated the one prohibition they were given in the Garden. Man put himself at the center, and sin entered the human race.

3. Sin is a willful turning to one's own way putting oneself at the center.

4. The ultimate freedom is the freedom to choose one's attitude.

5. Our rebellion against God has infected all our relationships. The problem is pride. (James 4)

6. The gospel is the great solution. It is God taking the initiative in reconciling relationships.

VI. Surrender is the solution to the fundamental problem of self-centeredness that results in a world of rebellion.

A. We submit to God and to one another. (Ephesians 5:21)

B. We recognize the existence of and the need for authority in a spiritual organization.

C. We recognize the reality of the universal contamination of all by sin that only through the gospel is it addressed so that our relationships can be restored.

Application questions.

1. How is authority a simple fact of reality? Explain.

2. What are some situations when authorities might seem to conflict with each other? How is one to respond to these situations?

3. What authorities do you have the most difficult time submitting to? What is the biblical response? What can you do differently in light of this message?
