

Authority

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I. Introduction.

A. Subject: authority.

B. Reason for discussion: many wonder how to relate one another with authority in the global community, there are concerns over how to respond to a new general direction, and the message may merit a book.

II. The right to take action.

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. There has been a great conflict over authority throughout history.

C. There was a conflict over authority between Christ and Satan. (Matthew 28:19)

D. In ministry you need a clear sense of direction and of authority. Without authority, confusion reigns.

III. Spiritual leadership is influencing the attitudes and actions of others.

A. This is exercised through...

1. Prayer.

2. Example. This is not enough though—teaching is needed.

3. Teaching. This is preferable to authority. (Luke 12)

4. Authority. There still is a place for this though despite teaching's preference.

5. Discipline.

B. Authority is not equated with leadership, but authority is a legitimate aspect of leadership.

IV. Authority.

A. The fact of authority. (Romans 13:1-2)

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

2. There are some authorities that are appointed by God and it is important to find out who they are and submit to them so that we do not fall under judgment.

3. God is sovereign, possessing all authority.

4. Authority was delegated to Christ and the Devil. (Revelation 13:2)
5. God also delegated authority to man.
6. Seven Biblical authority submission relationships in the Bible.
 - a. God and man.
 - b. Man and nature.
 - c. Husband and wife.
 - d. Parents and children.
 - e. Governments and governed.
 - f. Employers and employees.
 - g. Spiritual leaders and followers.
7. Working against these relationships results in catastrophe and working with them results in peace.
8. There are guidelines for each relationship that fit whether the relationship is voluntary or involuntary.
9. There are spiritual overseers and there are those who are to follow. (1 Peter 5:2, Hebrews 13:17)
10. There may be more than one authority to which we are to relate. Intelligence has to do with discerning which relationship is apt at a certain time.

B. The problem in authority.

1. While we live in a universe where there is authority all authorities are limited including God by His own character and by what He has delegated.
2. There are natural limits.
3. There are agreed upon limits but these must be adjusted as people grow and change.
4. The problem is self-centeredness. This is rebellion against authority.
 - a. This is reflected in Satan. (Isaiah 14)
 - b. Our rebellion against God has infected all our relationships.
 - c. Pride is essentially conflict.
5. The gospel is the great solution.

C. The response to authority. One must surrender to authority.

D. The exercise of authority.

1. Authority is legitimate and is given as a reward. (Luke 22:24-30)

2. He who has a right has a responsibility.

3. Authority at times must not only be exercised but asserted. (Titus 2:15)

4. There must be steel but there also must be softness. Authority must be exercised in a redemptive way in the family, in the government, and in spiritual leadership.

V. Both sides of the authority relationship have a responsibility to respond.

A. Husbands are to treat their wives in a certain way and wives are to treat their husbands in a certain way. (1 Peter 3:7)

B. All leaders are accountable to God. (Romans 14:12)

C. Power is a poison, but to the human that has faith and has a consciousness of his own limitations it is not necessarily fatal. Power only works under God.

D. Consensus leadership may not be the Biblical pattern but it is wise when possible so that one does not have to “carry the team.”

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?
