

**AUTHORITY
OF THE
BELIEVER**

CARRYING OUT JESUS' MINISTRY REQUIRES JESUS' AUTHORITY AND POWER. IN ORDER TO FLOURISH IN ALL GOD HAS PLANNED FOR HIS CHURCH, AND FOR US AS INDIVIDUALS, WE MUST LEARN TO USE THE AUTHORITY HE HAS GIVEN US. IT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TOY GUN AND A BAZOOKA. WHEN WE COME TO MINISTER, WE DO NOT COME IN OUR OWN POWER AND AUTHORITY.

What can we do to change anything? As most of us have probably experienced, we are powerless to preach, love, heal, or do any effective ministry on our own. Nothing good comes from our own ideas and abilities alone. Flesh cannot overcome the impossible, but with God, ALL things are possible (Mark 10:27). We should never come in our own name, but in the name of Jesus. He has all the power and authority, and we have none. Therefore, we need His authority and His power to do His work. This changes the way we view just about every area of our lives! Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 4 that the kingdom of God is not about great words, but real power.

BUT I WILL COME TO YOU VERY SOON, IF THE LORD IS WILLING, AND THEN I WILL FIND OUT NOT ONLY HOW THESE ARROGANT PEOPLE ARE TALKING, BUT WHAT POWER THEY HAVE. FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT A MATTER OF TALK BUT OF POWER. *_1 CORINTHIANS 4:19-20 (NIV)*

BUT WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU, YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER AND WILL TELL PEOPLE ABOUT ME

EVERYWHERE IN JERUSALEM, THROUGHOUT JUDEA, IN SAMARIA, AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. *_ACTS 1:8 (NLT)*

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AUTHORITY & POWER

While God's authority and power are inseparably related, there is a distinct difference between them. Jesus was identified as having God's authority and power; likewise, Jesus gave both authority and power to His disciples.

ALL THE PEOPLE WERE AMAZED AND SAID TO EACH OTHER, "WHAT IS THIS TEACHING? WITH **AUTHORITY AND POWER** HE GIVES ORDERS TO EVIL SPIRITS AND THEY COME OUT!" *_LUKE 4:36 (NIV)*

HE CALLED THE TWELVE TOGETHER, AND GAVE THEM **POWER AND AUTHORITY** OVER ALL THE DEMONS, AND TO HEAL DISEASES. *_LUKE 9:1 (NIV)*

DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND POWER

1. AUTHORITY IS THE RIGHT TO RULE.

Authority is based upon given position, and this position gives that person the right to rule within the limits and scope of a designated authority.

ILLUSTRATION: *A police officer has authority in his precinct as defined by the government of the land. But he would not have any authority to police people in other cities or countries. Likewise, the officer could not march into a battalion headquarters on a military base and start directing soldiers. That would be outside his or her realm of authority.*

2. POWER IS THE ABILITY TO RULE.

God extends His power to believers to exercise His authority on earth, to continue His ministry. This is why He gave it to His disciples, as we read in Luke 9; and it is why, at His ascension, He instructed the disciples and the 120 not to go out and do ministry until they received God's power from heaven. Every believer in Jesus Christ has His extended authority, but many do not use their authority in power. So the resource is available, yet lies dormant!

IT WAS ALSO WRITTEN THAT THIS MESSAGE WOULD BE PROCLAIMED IN THE AUTHORITY OF HIS NAME TO ALL THE NATIONS, BEGINNING IN JERUSALEM: "THERE IS FORGIVENESS OF SINS FOR ALL WHO REPENT.'" YOU ARE WITNESSES OF ALL THESE THINGS. "AND NOW I WILL SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT, JUST AS MY FATHER PROMISED. BUT STAY HERE IN THE CITY UNTIL THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES AND FILLS YOU WITH POWER FROM HEAVEN." [_LUKE 24:47-49 \(NLT\)](#)

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY IS ULTIMATE AND IS THE SOURCE OF OUR AUTHORITY

. . . THESE ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WORKING OF THE STRENGTH OF HIS MIGHT WHICH HE BROUGHT ABOUT IN CHRIST, WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SEATED HIM AT HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES, FAR ABOVE ALL RULE AND AUTHORITY AND POWER AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED, NOT ONLY IN THIS AGE, BUT ALSO IN THE ONE TO COME. AND HE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET, AND GAVE HIM AS HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH. . . AND GOD RAISED US UP WITH CHRIST AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS IN CHRIST JESUS. [_EPHESIANS 1:19-22 \(NASB\)](#)

BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES [HEAVENLIES REALM] IN CHRIST.

[_EPHESIANS 1:3 \(NASB\)](#)

No one and no thing has greater power or authority than Jesus. God has placed all things under Jesus' feet and Satan cannot stand against Jesus' authority. The "every spiritual blessing" that is mentioned in Ephesians 1:3 does not mean the spiritually "warm and fuzzy" feeling we get while listening to a favorite worship album. The blessings described are spiritual resources, capacities, weapons, and gifts that are not a part of our personalities or natural abilities. These blessings can only come from God Himself. They include our position in Christ and our weapons in Christ—both of which allow us to operate in the heavenlies (the spiritual realm). Being "in Christ" is the key that opens these spiritual blessings up to us. The foundation is understanding our authority in Christ.

JESUS MINISTERED IN & UNDER AUTHORITY AND SO SHOULD WE

Not only did Jesus marvel and respond to people who understood and lived in authority, He also lived a life in and under authority Himself. Though Jesus was fully God, He still lived a life of submission to authority as a man. The Gospels demonstrate that He lived under the authority of His father as well as human authorities. If we want to move in the power and authority of God, we must follow in the footsteps of Christ by walking in obedience to God and His delegated authorities. If we cannot submit to the authority of appointed authorities in our lives, how can we submit to God?

BUT I DO NOTHING WITHOUT CONSULTING THE FATHER. I JUDGE AS I AM TOLD. AND MY JUDGMENT IS ABSOLUTELY JUST, BECAUSE IT IS ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD WHO SENT ME; IT IS NOT MERELY MY OWN. *_JOHN 5:30 (NLT)*

SO JESUS TOLD THEM, "I'M NOT TEACHING MY OWN IDEAS, BUT THOSE OF GOD WHO SENT ME." *_JOHN 7:16 (NLT)*

I HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT YOU AND MUCH TO CONDEMN, BUT I WON'T. FOR I SAY ONLY WHAT I HAVE HEARD FROM THE ONE WHO SENT ME, AND HE IS TRUE. SO JESUS SAID, "WHEN YOU HAVE LIFTED UP THE SON OF MAN ON THE CROSS, THEN YOU WILL REALIZE THAT I AM HE AND THAT I DO NOTHING ON MY OWN, BUT I SPEAK WHAT THE FATHER TAUGHT ME." *_JOHN 8:26; 28 (NLT)*

I DON'T SPEAK ON MY OWN AUTHORITY. THE FATHER WHO SENT ME GAVE ME HIS OWN INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT I SHOULD SAY. AND I KNOW HIS INSTRUCTIONS LEAD TO ETERNAL LIFE; SO I SAY WHATEVER THE FATHER TELLS ME TO SAY! *_JOHN 12:49-50 (NLT)*

"NOW TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THIS: IS IT RIGHT TO PAY TAXES TO CAESAR OR NOT?" BUT JESUS KNEW THEIR EVIL MOTIVES. "YOU HYPOCRITES!" HE SAID. "WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO TRAP ME? HERE, SHOW ME THE COIN USED FOR THE TAX." WHEN THEY HANDED HIM A ROMAN COIN, HE ASKED, "WHOSE PICTURE AND TITLE ARE STAMPED ON IT?" "CAESAR'S," THEY REPLIED. "WELL, THEN," HE SAID, "GIVE TO CAESAR WHAT BELONGS TO CAESAR, AND GIVE TO GOD WHAT BELONGS TO GOD."

_MATTHEW 22:17-21 (NLT)

HOWEVER, WE DON'T WANT TO OFFEND THEM, SO GO DOWN TO THE LAKE AND THROW IN A LINE. OPEN THE MOUTH OF THE FIRST FISH YOU CATCH, AND YOU WILL FIND A LARGE SILVER COIN. TAKE IT AND PAY THE TAX FOR BOTH OF US.

_MATTHEW 17:27 (NLT)

"I WILL PROVE THAT I, THE SON OF MAN, HAVE THE AUTHORITY ON EARTH TO FORGIVE SINS." THEN JESUS TURNED TO THE PARALYZED MAN AND SAID, "STAND UP, TAKE YOUR MAT, AND GO ON HOME, BECAUSE YOU ARE HEALED!" FEAR SWEEPED THROUGH THE CROWD AS THEY SAW THIS HAPPEN RIGHT BEFORE THEIR EYES. THEY PRAISED GOD FOR SENDING A MAN WITH SUCH GREAT AUTHORITY.

_MATTHEW 9:6; 8 (NLT)

JESUS GIVES HIS AUTHORITY TO US

It is obvious to us that Christ had authority from God. He was, after all, God incarnate. It is also easily understood from Scripture that the disciples were given the authority and power to do the very things Jesus was doing. But are we to continue on in this same authority even today—continuing the ministry of Jesus? Is there

biblical precedent to believe that we have been given this same authority?

1. THE TWELVE DISCIPLES RECEIVED CHRIST'S AUTHORITY.

ONE DAY JESUS CALLED TOGETHER HIS TWELVE APOSTLES AND GAVE THEM POWER AND AUTHORITY TO CAST OUT DEMONS AND TO HEAL ALL DISEASES.

_LUKE 9:1 (NLT)

2 THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES RECEIVED CHRIST'S AUTHORITY.

THE LORD NOW CHOSE SEVENTY-TWO OTHER DISCIPLES AND SENT THEM ON AHEAD IN PAIRS TO ALL THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES HE PLANNED TO VISIT ...WHEN THE SEVENTY-TWO DISCIPLES RETURNED, THEY JOYFULLY REPORTED TO HIM, "LORD, EVEN THE DEMONS OBEY US WHEN WE USE YOUR NAME!" "YES," HE TOLD THEM, "I SAW SATAN FALLING FROM HEAVEN AS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING! AND I HAVE GIVEN YOU AUTHORITY OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY, AND YOU CAN WALK AMONG SNAKES AND SCORPIONS AND CRUSH THEM. NOTHING WILL INJURE YOU.

_LUKE 10:1, 17-19 (NLT)

3. ALL OF US HAVE RECEIVED CHRIST'S AUTHORITY.

In Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17, he prays for His disciples and everyone who would ever believe in Him because of their message. That is us! If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then you are one of His disciples. You might not be one of the original twelve (neither were the seventy-two listed above who received His authority), but you believe because their message has traveled through the generations from person to person—and finally to your ears.

Jesus makes it clear in this text that we are sent into the world as He was, with the same authority and mission. John 14 states Jesus says that "anyone" who has faith in

Him will actually do even greater things than He. This is a startling revelation and an amazing mission we get to share in.

AS YOU SENT ME INTO THE WORLD, I AM SENDING THEM INTO THE WORLD. I AM PRAYING NOT ONLY FOR THESE DISCIPLES BUT ALSO FOR ALL WHO WILL EVER BELIEVE IN ME BECAUSE OF THEIR TESTIMONY. MY PRAYER FOR ALL OF THEM IS THAT THEY WILL BE ONE, JUST AS YOU AND I ARE ONE, FATHER—THAT JUST AS YOU ARE IN ME AND I AM IN YOU, SO THEY WILL BE IN US, AND THE WORLD WILL BELIEVE YOU SENT ME.

_JOHN 17:18, 20-21 (NLT)

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, ANYONE WHO HAS FAITH IN ME WILL DO WHAT I HAVE BEEN DOING. HE WILL DO EVEN GREATER THINGS THAN THESE, BECAUSE I AM GOING TO THE FATHER. AND I WILL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME, SO THAT THE SON MAY BRING GLORY TO THE FATHER. *_JOHN 14:12-13 (NIV)*

JESUS CAME AND TOLD HIS DISCIPLES, "I HAVE BEEN GIVEN COMPLETE AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. THEREFORE, GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. TEACH THESE NEW DISCIPLES TO OBEY ALL THE COMMANDS I HAVE GIVEN YOU. AND BE SURE OF THIS: I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE."

_MATTHEW 28:18 (NLT)

I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; WHATEVER YOU BIND ON EARTH WILL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, AND WHATEVER YOU LOOSE ON EARTH WILL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN. (KEYS REPRESENT AUTHORITY)

_MATTHEW 16:19 (NIV)

WE RECEIVE THIS AUTHORITY AT SALVATION

BUT GOD, BEING RICH IN MERCY, BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED US, EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST (BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED), AND RAISED US UP WITH HIM, AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES, IN CHRIST JESUS. . . *_EPHESIANS 2:4-6 (NASB)*

- *Ephesians 2:1-3 tells us that we used to be under the dominion of hell, Satan, and his minions.*
- *Jesus, the great Savior, came and delivered us from the dominion of Satan and transferred us into His kingdom.*
- *Jesus not only delivered us from Satan's domain, but He swept us up and seated us with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 1:19-22).*
- *This is a present reality, not one that will be realized only in the future. We now possess every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies (Ephesians 1:3).*

THE AUTHORITY STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD

FOR IN CHRIST ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE DEITY LIVES IN BODILY FORM, AND YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN FULLNESS IN CHRIST, WHO IS THE HEAD OVER EVERY POWER AND AUTHORITY. *_COLOSSIANS 2:9-10 (NIV)*

THEREFORE, SINCE THE CHILDREN SHARE IN FLESH AND BLOOD, HE HIMSELF LIKEWISE ALSO PARTOOK OF THE SAME, THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT RENDER POWERLESS HIM WHO HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL,

AND MIGHT FREE THOSE WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH WERE SUBJECT TO SLAVERY ALL THEIR LIVES.

_HEBREWS 2:14 (NASB)

WHEN YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR SINS AND IN THE UNCIRCUMCISION OF YOUR SINFUL NATURE, GOD MADE YOU ALIVE WITH CHRIST. HE FORGAVE US ALL OUR SINS, HAVING CANCELED THE WRITTEN CODE, WITH ITS REGULATIONS, THAT WAS AGAINST US AND THAT STOOD OPPOSED TO US; HE TOOK IT AWAY, NAILING IT TO THE CROSS. AND HAVING DISARMED THE POWERS AND AUTHORITIES, HE MADE A PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF THEM, TRIUMPHING OVER THEM BY THE CROSS.

_COLOSSIANS 2:13-15 (NIV)

This chart shows the authority structure of the world:

UNBELIEVER	BELIEVER
Jesus Christ <i>Ephesians 1:22</i>	Jesus Christ <i>Ephesians 1:22</i>
	Believers <i>Ephesians 2:6</i>
Satan <i>Ephesians 2:2</i>	Satan <i>Ephesians 2:2</i>
Spirits <i>Luke 13:11</i>	Spirits <i>Luke 13:11</i>
Human Beings <i>Genesis 1:26</i>	Human Beings <i>Genesis 1:26</i>
Animals <i>Psalms 8:6-8</i>	Animals <i>Psalms 8:6-8</i>

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A "CERTAIN" DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

So many times we default to thinking we are disqualified as instruments of God's demonstrated power because we are just "normal" people. We could never be a Peter, John, or Paul, let alone even consider being an Elijah or Moses. However, James negates any potential for deifying these men by letting us know that Elijah was a normal human being just like us.

ELIJAH WAS A MAN WITH A NATURE LIKE OURS, AND HE PRAYED EARNESTLY THAT IT WOULD NOT RAIN, AND IT DID NOT RAIN ON THE EARTH FOR THREE YEARS AND SIX MONTHS. *_JAMES 5:17 (NASB)*

The Scripture does not hide the "warts" of men and women in biblical accounts. Abraham had his messy days as a human being; as did Moses, King David, and the Apostle Peter. We are not any different. God does not release His power to do strategic and supernatural things in perfect human beings, for there are none! He uses His imperfect children!

Look at the Scripture about a man named Ananias in the book of Acts:

NOW THERE WAS A CERTAIN DISCIPLE AT DAMASCUS NAMED ANANIAS; AND TO HIM THE LORD SAID IN A VISION, "ANANIAS." AND HE SAID, "HERE I AM, LORD." SO THE LORD SAID TO HIM, "ARISE AND GO TO THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT, AND INQUIRE AT THE HOUSE OF JUDAS FOR ONE CALLED SAUL OF TARSUS, FOR BEHOLD, HE IS PRAYING."

_ACTS 9:10-11 (NKJV)

AND ANANIAS WENT HIS WAY AND ENTERED THE HOUSE; AND LAYING HIS HANDS ON HIM HE SAID, "BROTHER SAUL, THE LORD JESUS, WHO APPEARED TO YOU ON THE ROAD AS YOU CAME, HAS SENT ME THAT YOU MAY RECEIVE YOUR

SIGHT AND BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT." IMMEDIATELY THERE FELL FROM HIS EYES SOMETHING LIKE SCALES, AND HE RECEIVED HIS SIGHT AT ONCE; AND HE AROSE AND WAS BAPTIZED.

_ACTS 9:17-18 (NKJV)

The New King James Version describes Ananias as a "certain" disciple. We never hear of him again. We do not read that Ananias had a high position or office in the early church. He simply was a "certain" disciple through whom God exercised His mighty power. God used Ananias to impart healing to Saul and the filling of God's Spirit for his amazing life and ministry. You qualify as a "certain" disciple if you are, through His grace, a believing follower of Jesus Christ.

JESUS I KNOW, PAUL I KNOW, BUT WHO ARE YOU?

SOME JEWS WHO WENT AROUND DRIVING OUT EVIL SPIRITS TRIED TO INVOKE THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS OVER THOSE WHO WERE DEMON-POSSESSED. THEY WOULD SAY, "IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WHOM PAUL PREACHES, I COMMAND YOU TO COME OUT." SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA, A JEWISH CHIEF PRIEST, WERE DOING THIS. ONE DAY THE EVIL SPIRIT ANSWERED THEM, "JESUS I KNOW, AND I KNOW ABOUT PAUL, BUT WHO ARE YOU?" THEN THE MAN WHO HAD THE EVIL SPIRIT JUMPED ON THEM AND OVERPOWERED THEM ALL. HE GAVE THEM SUCH A BEATING THAT THEY RAN OUT OF THE HOUSE NAKED AND BLEEDING. *_ACTS 19:13-16 (NIV)*

The seven sons of Sceva thought they could simply use the name of Jesus and the demons would flee—they were wrong! Authority is not about saying the right thing; it is about who you know. The sons of Sceva did not believe in Christ, so they had no authority—they were not authorized to use His name. They were all then beat to a bloody pulp by one man! But when we

move in the power and authority of Christ, (like Paul) the enemy knows our name because we are followers of Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION

CLOSING QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between power and authority? Why is the distinction important?
2. Why is it important to be under (submitted to) human authority in order to move in Christ's authority?
3. How does John 17:18-21 help you understand your mission to continue the ministry of Christ?
4. As a follower of Christ, when do you receive His authority?
5. As a believer, what authority do you have over the powers of the enemy? Do you have to be specially gifted in this area, or do all believers have this authority?

GROUP PRAYER EXERCISE

Practice using your authority together! When we come against the enemy we can come in confidence. It is in the name and authority of Christ that we are victorious. Come before the Lord with great privilege of repentance, and with a fierceness rebuke the enemy.