Spiritual Authority

EQUIPPING NEW GENERATION LEADERS WITH A FRESH VISION AND UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S AUTHORITY IN CHRIST

Dr. Michael D. Gross | 5-Fold Global | June 1, 2018
This work is dedicated to a new generation of leaders and believers raised up and anointed by God to fulfill the book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit and to the spiritual fathers and mothers called by God to nurture and equip them for multiplying the harvest through strategic prayer, power evangelism, Spirit filled discipleship and church planting aligned with God’s word.

*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.*

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Chapter 1: The Authority Issue
The Number One Issue

What does a verse like the one following mean to believers today?

Luke 6:46 "But why do you call Me `Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?

This verse immediately precedes the well-known teaching of Jesus contrasting those who build their house upon the rock and those who build their house upon the sand (Luke 6:47-49). The entire context is concerned with hearing what Jesus says (His word) and doing or obeying His word (6:47). Although the word “authority” does not appear in Luke’s account, it remains the prominent issue. Matthew’s account clearly identifies authority as the number one issue. A closer look at both accounts in the Gospels confirms this.

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<td>&quot;But why do you call Me `Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? 47 &quot;Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 &quot;He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 &quot;But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 &quot;Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 &quot;And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 24 &quot;Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 &quot;and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 &quot;But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 &quot;and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.&quot;</td>
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The Luke segment begins with a direct question by Jesus, “Why?” Such questions require an answer. The issue of authority cannot be avoided. The repeat of “Lord, Lord” in both accounts reveals just how serious and passionate Jesus is about the authority issue. I like what the NET Bible study notes say about this double usage: “The double use of the vocative is normally used in situations of high emotion or emphasis. Even an emphatic confession without action means little.” The Greek, kurios (koo'-ree-os), refers to “he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of

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deciding, master, lord.” Matthew’s account reveals the hearers had no doubt that authority was the thing Jesus was talking about because they were “astonished at His teaching.” (Matt. 7:28). And why were they struck with amazement? Because Jesus taught them “as one having authority.” (Matt. 7:29). The Luke account also mentions the man who built his house on the rock “dug deep and laid the foundation.” (Luke 6:48). The two action words used here strongly emphasize the authority issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
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<tr>
<td>eskapsen kai ebathunen</td>
<td>To dig out, excavate, and continue to go deep in the work</td>
<td>Jesus emphasis is on the effort of the man to establish the house in divine counsel and the deep things of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tithemi</td>
<td>To set, place, put, establish</td>
<td>Jesus emphasis is on the foundation being established upon His authority (His word)</td>
</tr>
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The deeper we dig into the things of God, the more we encounter His absolute authority. Does the new generation understand the importance of God’s authority? I like what Watchman Nee says:

“All things are created through God’s authority and all physical laws of the universe are maintained by His authority. Hence the Bible expresses it as "upholding all things by the word of His power, which means upholding all things by the word of the power of His authority. For God’s authority represents God Himself whereas His power stands only for His act. Sin against power is more easily forgiven than sin against authority, because the latter is a sin against God Himself. God alone is authority in all things; all the authorities of the earth are instituted by God. Authority is a tremendous thing in the universe” nothing overshadows it. It is therefore imperative for us who desire to serve God to know the authority of God.”

Leaders, believers, and the church must be established or firmly anchored in Christ’s authority. The purpose of this training manual for leaders is to present an accurate and fresh vision of God’s authority to new generation leaders. I see a stronghold of ignoring and not fully embracing God’s authority in Christ among established pastors today. This must change for a new generation of leaders. They must first meet God’s authority. There’s great conflict over the subject of authority today.

“The controversy of the universe is centered on who shall have the authority, and our conflict with Satan is the direct result of our attributing authority to God. To maintain God’s authority, we must be subject to it with all our hearts. It is absolutely necessary for us to meet God’s authority and to possess a basic knowledge of what it is.”

I recall a car ride in 1990 with Rev. Bruno Glodkowski, Ohio District Superintendent of Education for the Assemblies of God, who served as my field advisor in a doctoral

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3 Ibid., (p. 12).
project. We were discussing church issues when he made this statement, “The number one issue of the church in the 90’s is spiritual authority.” I’ve discovered through our 5-Fold Global operations around the world that spiritual authority continues to be the number one issue for the church. It’s time for a fresh understanding and respect of God’s authority. I cannot stress enough the importance of this equipping topic. Again, I found the principled messages Watchman Nee delivered in China in 1948 to clearly display what God has laid upon my heart regarding spiritual authority. I’ll be quoting him frequently during this study.

“The principle of service must be authority. Are we going to obey God’s authority or not? We who serve God must have this basic understanding of authority... Only after we have known God’s authority and learned obedience can we lead His children in the straight path.”

The Tozer Warning

Aiden Willison Tozer (1897-1963) was a very well-known pastor and writer of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He was raised in a poor farming community and was self-educated, even though he later received two honorary doctorate degrees. Preachers around the world still use many of his quotes. His books and messages were an extension of his prayer life. He inspired many during his life and I was amazed to learn he never owned a car and signed away most of his book royalties to those in need. One biographer wrote, “He had the ability to make his listeners face themselves in the light of what God was saying to them.” Many saw Tozer as a modern-day prophet. In this light, what most intrigued me about this man of God was his final message given just two days before his death. The message was entitled, “The Waning Authority of Christ in the Churches.” This was Tozer’s very last message to the Church. As I read it, I could see that his burden was also the burden of the Holy Spirit. Tozer saw the waning authority of Christ as the most serious condition in the Church. He was grieved by it! In fact, he says, “My grief is simply the result of a condition which I believe to be almost universally prevalent among the churches.” This man of God, who is as popular today as he was when he was on the earth, had a burden. He stated it in very direct terms:

“Let me state the cause of my burden. It is this: Jesus Christ has today almost no authority at all among the groups that call themselves by His name.”

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7 Ibid., (Kindle Locations 50-51).
Can this be the case today? Is there a waning of the authority of Christ in the churches? Does anyone see this? Most would deny it. We will look at this in detail during our study on spiritual authority.

Tozer’s explanation of the above condition is nothing short of an apostolic and prophetic warning to the church of every generation. He begins with a clear statement of the basic New Testament doctrine of Christ’s authority and the challenge to it.

“It is a basic doctrine of the New Testament that after His resurrection the Man Jesus was declared by God to be both Lord and Christ, and that He was invested by the Father with absolute Lordship over the church which is His Body. All authority is His in heaven and in earth. In His own proper time He will exert it to the full, but during this period in history He allows this authority to be challenged or ignored. And just now it is being challenged by the world and ignored by the church.”

I’ve observed church leaders around the world proclaim Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords only to ignore His instructions regarding the leadership structure and basic operation of the church outlined in the Bible. Although wonderful and dedicated men and women of God, there was little doubt who was in charge and who was making the decisions. All leaders declare Jesus as the Head of the Church but is He the functional Head or a figurehead? Tozer says, “Nominally he is head over all, but in every crisis someone else makes the decisions.”

I highlighted several profound statements by Tozer and found them to accurately describe the authority issue in the church.

- Because of long and meticulous organization it is now possible for the youngest pastor just out of seminary to have more actual authority in a church than Jesus Christ has. Not only does Christ have little or no authority; His influence also is becoming less and less. I would not say that He has none, only that it is small and diminishing.
- What we do is this: We accept the Christianity of our group as being identical with that of Christ and His apostles. The beliefs, the practices, the ethics, the activities of our group are equated with the Christianity of the New Testament.
- The prayer before the meeting is for divine help to carry out their plans. Apparently the idea that the Lord might have some instructions for them never so much as enters their heads.
- What foreign mission board actually seeks to follow the guidance of the Lord as provided by His Word and His Spirit? They all think they do, but what they do in fact is to assume the scripturalness of their ends and then ask for help to find ways to achieve them. They may pray all night for God to give success to their enterprises, but Christ is desired as their helper, not as their Lord.

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8 Tozer. The Waning Authority of Christ in the Churches (Kindle Locations 54-57).
9 Ibid., (Kindle Locations 60-61).
10 Ibid., (Kindle Locations 68-71).
11 Ibid., (Kindle Locations 81-83).
12 Ibid., (Kindle Locations 103-105).
means are devised to achieve ends assumed to be divine. These harden into policy, and thereafter the Lord doesn’t even have a vote.\textsuperscript{13}

- What Christian when faced with a moral problem goes straight to the Sermon on the Mount or other New Testament Scripture for the authoritative answer?\textsuperscript{14}
- The causes back of the decline in our Lord’s authority are many. I name only two. One is the power of custom, precedent and tradition within the older religious groups. The second cause is the revival of intellectualism among the evangelicals. This, if I sense the situation correctly, is not so much a thirst for learning as a desire for a reputation of being learned.\textsuperscript{15}
- For the true Christian the one supreme test for the present soundness and ultimate worth of everything religious must be the place our Lord occupies in it. Is He Lord or symbol? Is He in charge of the project or merely one of the crew? Does He decide things or only help to carry out the plans of others?\textsuperscript{16}

The above statements and particularly the questions should cause something to happen in the heart of church leaders. I’m not talking about making mistakes in ministry. Even the New Testament apostles made mistakes and had to be strong in the grace of God. In fact, the Bible says, “\textit{And great grace was upon them all.}” (Acts 4:35). What I’m talking about is understanding and connecting with the authority of Christ in every situation. We must acknowledge His authority and maintain it before we deploy it in faith for His glory.

**The Madu Message**

Robert Madu is a young leader with a national ministry to the emerging new generation. He returned to Faith Family Church where I attend for \textit{Love is Red}, an annual gathering strategically targeting the young generation. His Sunday morning message connected faith with God’s authority like I had never quite seen before. I had been delaying my study and writing on spiritual authority for too long. God anointed this young leader to confirm the writing of this equipping manual. I took diligent notes. The text was Mark 5:21-43 and he entitled the message, \textit{Get Up!} Even as he read the entire text, there was an atmosphere of expectation. I knew something was coming from heaven.

- **Mark 5:21-43 NLT** Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. \textsuperscript{22} Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, \textsuperscript{23} pleading fervently with him. "My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live." \textsuperscript{24} Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. \textsuperscript{25} A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. \textsuperscript{26} She had suffered a great deal from

\textsuperscript{13} Tozer, \textit{The Waning Authority of Christ in the Churches} (pp. 108-111).
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., (Kindle Locations 115-116).
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., (Kindle Locations 122-123, 128-129).
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., (Kindle Locations 140-142).
many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had
gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up
behind him through the crowd and touched his robe.

For she thought to herself, "If I can just
touch his robe, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her
body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. Jesus realized at once that healing
power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my
robe?"

His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask,
'Who touched me?'" But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the
frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her
knees in front of him and told him what she had done. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith
has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over." While he was still speaking to her,
messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, "Your
daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith." Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let
anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James).

When they came to the
home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing.

He went inside and asked, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only
asleep." The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl's father and
mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying.

Holding her hand, he said
to her, "Talitha koum," which means "Little girl, get up!"

And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed.

Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then he told them to give her
something to eat.

Madu began with verses 40-41 where Jesus told the little girl to “Get up!” “Before He
said, ‘get up’ He first said, ‘get out’. The atmosphere around you has power. There may
be some things you have to get out! Life will hit you with something you cannot handle.
That thing is a job for Jesus! Both (Jairus and the suffering woman) had to push people
out of the way to get to Jesus. Desperation hone into what’s important. Desperation is
a game changer. Desperation is the door that breakthrough walks through. When
desperate people are in the house; that’s when miracles take place. The woman had
suffered for 12 years and the girl was 12 years of age. Don’t be so preoccupied with
your promise or your pain that you can’t see people around you. Twelve is the number
of God’s power and authority.”

Robert Madu also mentioned the 12 tribes of Israel, the 12 stones on the ephod representing the 12 tribes, Mary and Joseph finding the 12-year-
old Jesus in the temple about His Father’s business (Luke 2:41-50), and the choosing
by Jesus of 12 apostles. He continued, “There’s no situation not under His authority and
power. The text is not only about faith, but faith connected with God’s authority. There’s
an awareness of God’s authority in each situation. Jesus was sleeping in the boat
during the storm and when the disciples woke Him up, He simply said, “Peace be still”
(Mark 35-41), a 3-part message. A limited understanding of authority equals a struggle

17 Robert Madu. Get Up! Message delivered at Faith Family Church, March 4, 2018
with faith. The centurion (Luke 7:1-10) is another level of understanding authority, ‘just say the word.” When you’re so sick, you’ve got to speak to the Supervisor. It’s not a faith problem but an authority problem. Jesus sometimes will let you watch (referring to Jairus) a miracle while you’re waiting for yours. He does it to encourage you, for your miracle may not look like someone else’s. The woman received healing; Jairus got a resurrection! His horrible friends said, ‘Why bother’. Jesus said ‘Don’t be afraid. Keep on believing.” Fear and faith can’t be in the same place. The mourners laughed because they had no awareness of His authority. Death is not final; only temporary. Jesus controls the atmosphere. He can do anything but fail!”

This message combined with Tozer’s warning caused me to dig deeper into the authority issue within the New Testament Church. Leaders and believers cannot afford to have a limited understanding of God’s authority in an age where mountains need to be moved. Is Watchman Nee right that authority is “the most central thing in the whole Bible”? I believe the biblical evidence will be overwhelmingly in support of this revelation.

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18 Madu. Get Up!
19 Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority (p. 91).
Chapter 2: Understanding God’s Authority

Words Matter

Children in the United States have been liberally educated in what has come to be known as political correctness. Webster defines politically correct as “conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex and race) should be eliminated.”\(^{20}\) And for English language learners it means, “agreeing with the idea that people should be careful to not use language or behave in a way that could offend a particular group of people.”\(^{21}\) Although this all sounds good, those advocating a liberal progressive agenda use it to promote the acceptance of homosexuality, same sex marriage, abortion, gender identity and other social issues contrary to the Judea Christian values America was founded upon. In other words, political correctness is practiced with all groups except when it comes to Jews and Christians. One example of the anti-Christian bias and attacks by these liberal minded PC Police is Mayor Annise Parker of Houston, Texas.\(^{22}\) She decided in 2014 to send subpoenas to five pastors to turn over sermons for review to see if they violated the ordinance she pushed through the city council. This was after a coalition of 400 Houston churches opposed and launched a successful petition against the nondiscrimination ordinance that, among other things, would allow men and women to use each other’s bathrooms. She wanted to review the sermons regarding homosexuality and gender identity. Parker, Houston’s first openly lesbian Mayor, wanted to make pastors fearful about speaking to the social issues of the day. This was a clear abuse of governmental authority. I thank God the pastors and churches of Houston held firm in the faith, risking fines and even imprisonment to recognize a higher authority. They obeyed God rather than man and the courts forced Mayor Parker to withdraw the subpoenas.

The above story is being repeated throughout communities in America. The underlying attack involves the spirit of antichrist using the education and governmental systems in coalition with liberal media outlets to advance its purpose to make America a completely secular nation without God. Those who align with this liberal agenda fail to recognize and understand that this direction, which they term progressive, is a rejection of God’s authority. This is seen in the removal of prayer in all public-school functions, the attempts to remove in God we trust from the pledge of allegiance and currency, and many other things. If this wasn’t enough, they find great offense in the mere mention of the name of Jesus, explaining this is offensive to Muslims, atheists, and other individuals who are present. So, one Muslim or even one atheist can eliminate any public mention of Christianity at public functions where prayer in Christ has been

\(^{20}\) Merriam-Webster online dictionary. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/political%20correctness, March 25, 2018

\(^{21}\) Ibid.

\(^{22}\) http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/10/14/city-houston-demands-pastors-turn-over-sermons.html, March 25, 2018
practiced throughout American history. This is absurd to say the least! It’s being done under the deceptive guise of tolerance and diversity. Therefore, they identify what words are appropriate to use and those that are not in referring to social/moral issues. For example, abortion becomes prochoice and homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders become the LGBT community of victims who are encouraged to openly promote their deviant lifestyles. The attempt is to make things more user friendly; however, the real intent is to make these things acceptable to people, leading to a gradual erosion of what the Bible says. Bible believing individuals are falsely painted as intolerant bigots while the liberal progressive movement dismantles and replaces God’s word with their own litany of acceptable words fitting their errant and sinful purposes.

There is nothing new in this opposition to God’s authority and particularly against the name of Jesus.

- **Acts 4:18-21** And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
- **Acts 5:27-29** And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

The NET Bible accurately identifies the issue we’ve been discussing.

"In the name of Jesus. Once again, the "name" reflects the person. The person of Jesus and his authority is the "troubling" topic that, as far as the Jewish leadership is concerned, needs controlling."23

Religion always wants to control God’s authority as well as those He gives measures of His authority to. I believe new generation leaders need to be warned against religious deception. Religious spirits are some of the strongest spirits in Satan’s arsenal. Young leaders must prepare to break with religion and fully embrace God’s authority in Christ. Although respect for human authority is a godly principle, God’s authority is superior. Young leaders God is raising up must have a fresh vision of God’s authority. Words do matter, but The Word of God matters more!

**Biblical Words for God’s Authority**

Words do matter when it comes to what God says in His Word. What are the prominent words referring to God’s authority in the Bible? The following table examines a variety of words in the Old Testament that directly relate to God’s authority.

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<tr>
<th>Hebrew Words/Meanings</th>
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<td><strong>radah</strong> (raw-daw’) – to rule, have dominion, dominate, tread down, to scrape out.</td>
<td><strong>Genesis 1:26</strong> Then God said, &quot;Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>memshalah</strong> (mem-shaw-law’) – rule, dominion, realm in the context of royalty &amp; royal power.</td>
<td><strong>Psalm 145:13</strong> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.</td>
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</table>
| **sholtan** (Aramaic – shol-tawn’) – dominion, sovereignty.  
**shalliyt** (Aramaic – shal-leet’) – having mastery, having authority, ruling | **Daniel 4:3** How great are His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion is from generation to generation.  
**Daniel 4:26** And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules.  
**Daniel 4:34** And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. |
| **moshel** (mo’-shel) – dominion | **Psalm 22:28** For the kingdom is the LORD’S, And He rules over the nations.  
**Psalm 66:7** He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah  
**Psalm 103:19** The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all.  
**Zechariah 9:10** I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’ |
| **tsavah** (tsaw-vaw’) – to command, charge, give orders, lay charge to, give charge to, order | **Genesis 2:16-17** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 "but of the tree of the knowledge |
of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

**Joshua 1:7** "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

There’s also a display of words in the New Testament for God’s authority. The Kings James Version translates authority as power in most cases and there are instances where authority and power are used together.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Words/Meanings</th>
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| **exousia** (ex-oo-see'-ah) – the power of choice, the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege), the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to and obeyed by others.) | **Matthew 7:29** for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.  
**Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. |
| **kurieuo** (ko-ree-yoo'-o) – to be lord of, to rule, have dominion over things and forces.  
**kuriotes** (koo-ree-ot'-ace) – dominion, power, lordship, one who possesses lordship | **Romans 6:9** knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.  
**Romans 6:14** For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.  
**Ephesians 1:21** far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. |
| **kratos** (krat'os) – strength, might, power of rule and dominion. | **1 Peter 4:11** If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.  
**1 Peter 5:11** To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.  
**Jude 1:25** To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.  
**Revelation 1:6** and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. |
prostasso (pros-tas'-so) – to assign, prescribe, command, order, 
keleuo (kel-yoo'-o) – to command, to order 
diátasso (dee-at-as'-so) – to command, arrange, appoint, ordain, prescribe, give order 
entellomai (en—tel'-lom-ahee) – to order, to command to be done 
entole (en-tol-ay’) – an order, command, charge, precept, injunction. 
paraggello (par-ang—gel'-lo) – to transmit a message along from one to another, to declare, announce, command, order, charge.

Matthew 1:24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 
Luke 18:40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, 
Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. 
1 John 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. 
Acts 13:47 "For so the Lord has commanded us:’I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’" 
Hebrews 9:20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 
Acts 1:4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 
Acts 10:33 "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

What do all these biblical words tell us about God’s authority. Here’s just a few things that must be understood and settled in in the hearts and minds of a new generation of leaders:

- God’s authority is over everything He has created. He’s a good God!
- God’s authority never ceases. He’s still in charge! Our God reigns!
- God’s authority is displayed through people. He issues commands!
- God’s authority includes the freedom to choose. He gives free will!
- God’s authority can be recognized by those who oppose Him. They react to His authority!
- God’s authority is fully in Christ.

These points are important because they determine the nature of our responsiveness to God’s authority.
The Dominion Factor

The creation accounts in the Bible support the understanding of God’s authority displayed in the words presented earlier. Liberal biblical scholars of the 20th century stated that there were two different creation accounts to advance their critical methods in the study of Scripture. However, I recall one seminary professor who taught me a remarkable difference of emphasis in the accounts. Here’s a side by side view of the creation accounts in the Bible:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Account</th>
<th>Second Account</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 1:1-31</td>
<td>Genesis 2:4-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. 6 Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." 7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. 9 Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 So the evening and the morning were the third day. 14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. 20 Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." 21 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters which are under the heavens; and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 23 Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." 24 Thus God made the firmament, an expanse between the waters which were under the heavens and the waters which were above the heavens. And God called the expanse Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the first day. 25 Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 26 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 27 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 28 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 29 So the evening and the morning were the third day. 30 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 31 "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 32 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 33 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 34 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 35 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. 36 Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." 37 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”  

So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind”; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Pay close attention to this important fact. God is the subject in both accounts with His name behind action words like creating, speaking, commanding, seeing, making, and blessing, appearing directly, and as a personal pronoun at least 48 times. Both refer to God as Elohim (God) and Yehovah Elohim (Lord God). These words for God are in the intensive plural form with a singular meaning. In other words, the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is clearly presented in each account. God’s all-encompassing authority is established in the beginning. A closer examination of the first account shows a display of the divine order of things. There’s the ending of the previous day followed by the beginning of a new day: “So the evening and the morning were the first day” and so on. There’s also seven divine assessments in the first account where God observes all He’s done with an authoritative conclusion of “very good”. (Gen. 1:31). My spiritual father always said that God doesn’t make any junk. Recently, my local barber gave me a book he had written on Genesis where he says much the same thing.
“The very power and glory of God is magnified in the fact that He willed and spoke spiritual as well as physical things into existence. God never made junk of any kind. Everything was created perfect the first time.”

The second account has a unique emphasis. In it, we get an inside look at what it was like being a part of God’s creation and what life was like in God’s Garden. Although God is still the authoritative subject of creation, the order of things is not a factor in this account. Instead, there’s a detailed description of how God watered the earth, formed man from the earth, breathed the breath of life into him, and placed him in His garden to tend it. This account introduces the location of Eden and the four riverheads. Most importantly, it describes a single command of God and the only “not good” assessment of God’s creation. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone and that he needed a “helper comparable to him.” This was a behind the scenes look at the creation of woman and the establishment of the marriage relationship. The details are vivid and moving. How far we have drifted from God’s original design. No wonder same sex marriage is so offensive and in complete rebellion against God’s authority. The new generation must be reminded that God created the family before the church. Jesus confirms this in one of His encounters with the Pharisees over marriage and divorce.

- Matthew 19:4-6 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female,' 5 "and said,' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh "? 6 "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Notice how Jesus said, “Have you not read?” I find it quite revealing that the meaning of the Greek anaginosko (an-ag-in-oe'-ko) is to distinguish between, to recognize, to know accurately, to acknowledge with the implication of reading. So, reading is secondary to the necessity of accurately recognizing and acknowledging the truth of what God said in the beginning. It’s not enough to just read what God says, you must accept it and know the truth. Clearly, the testing of the Pharisees was a resistance to God’s authority. The same testing is going on in our modern culture with relentless attacks upon God’s standards for marriage and morality. Although I was merely expecting to get a haircut, my barber was again used by God to bring home in his book the truth about the current rebellion against God’s established authority in creation:

“God has just established the first family union. This is not rocket science here. The other day a doctor said: Show me where a child was conceived and born from a same-sex couple and I will shut my mouth.”

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25 Ibid., p. 16
The liberal progressive plan discussed earlier is to ultimately dismantle the Judea Christian value system. New generation leaders must be spiritually prepared to be a banner of truth against the world’s opposition against God’s authority. The church needs to arise. New generation leaders need to arise under the unction of the Holy Spirit. There can be no room for a casual approach to the Scriptures.

God’s authority is everlasting. This is confirmed from Genesis to Revelation. However, there has been a continuing issue with what has been termed, Dominion Theology or Dominionism. Before we attempt to give definition to those terms, let’s first consult God’s word. The issue is over what God meant when He said: “let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps in the earth.” (Gen. 1:26). And what did God mean in His blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen. 1:28). The action words are very telling in these verses: have dominion, be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue. It’s important to view these words in context. I have observed three ways spiritual leaders are identifying with the dominion factor in these verses:

1. A responsible and obedient servant under God’s authority.
2. A ruler exercising delegated authority over the earth.
3. A governing authority to mandate Christian stewardship in civil affairs.

I discovered that the servant way of looking at things from the beginning is consistent with the flow of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. In the creation accounts the purpose of God giving man dominion over the earth is often overlooked. God’s word says, “For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground.” (Gen. 2:5). Therefore, God planted the Garden of Eden and placed man in it. What was the purpose?

- **Genesis 2:15** Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

The words till and tend are the same Hebrew word, ‘abad (aw-bad’). The word appears 290 times in the Old Testament and means to work for, to serve, do labor for someone, to be a servant, to worship. It refers to someone who acts at the bidding of a superior. This sets up a consistent and meaningful connection with God’s authority. The notion of servant leadership is evident from the outset. The dominion or ruling over the earth aspect is under the supervision of God in Christ. Masters and overlords of the earth is a misrepresentation of God’s delegated authority given to man. This concept is foreign to the New Testament where leaders clearly instructed on how they are to serve:

- **1 Peter 5:2-4** Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly⁴, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those
entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

It looks like this was the way (serving as overseers and not as lords) God designed things from the beginning under His authority.

A problem exists today in the church regarding God’s authority. Dominion teachings are getting things wrong. Watchman Nee’s messages highlight the issue and the principle of service:

“The problems facing us in our day are due to men living outside the authority of God.”

“The principle of service must be authority. Are we going to obey God’s authority or not? We who serve God must have this basic understanding of authority.”

God’s wanting to restore things back to His original design of servanthood under His authority. Modern views of dominion theology tend to overemphasize the ruling and governing aspect. The following online definition and explanation verifies this tendency.

“Dominion Theology is a contemporary grouping of theocratic ideologies that seek to institute a nation governed by Christians based on understandings of biblical law. Extents of rule and ways of achieving governing authority are varied. Prominent adherents of these ideologies are otherwise theologically diverse, including Calvinist Christian Reconstructionism, Charismatic/Pentecostal Kingdom Now theology, New Apostolic Reformation and others. Most of the contemporary movements labeled Dominion Theology arose in the 1970s from religious movements reasserting aspects of Christian nationalism...In the late 1980s, several prominent evangelical authors used the phrase Dominion Theology (and other terms such as dominionism) to label a loose grouping of theological movements that made direct appeals to this passage in Genesis. Christians typically interpret this passage as meaning that God gave humankind responsibility over the Earth, but the distinctive aspect of Dominion Theology is that it is interpreted as a mandate for Christian stewardship in civil affairs, no less than in other human matters.”

Although the extreme views of dominion expressed by the Kingdom Now adherents do not line up with the biblical view of Jesus returning to Himself restore God’s reign and authority over the earth, we must be careful not to ignore the biblical mandate to publicly declare Christ in all spheres of influence. The dominion factor cannot be ignored, but to detach the human responsibility on earth from God’s supervisory authority takes us in a different direction than servants of the LORD. Jesus Christ alone will return to restore God’s rule on the earth.

26 Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority (p. 18).
27 Ibid., p.24
28 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOwdXjiVhx5.
The Presence of Evil

I remember growing up on the farm how farmers were always concerned over the weather. They seemed to thank God when there was enough rain and complain when there wasn’t enough or too much. And when something bad happened, many blamed God as if He was the author and cause of evil. This has become a stronghold in the minds of some believers and unbelievers alike. Let me say this as strongly and emphatically as possible. God is not the creator of evil nor is He the author of evil and the tragic things that happen to people. Our God is a good God! But how do we explain the presence of evil in the world? As I review the biblical record from the beginning I noticed the following development.

- God’s creation was very good.
- God created both angels and mankind with a freedom of will.
- God created the archangels Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer.
- Lucifer challenged God’s authority with a coalition of angels.
- God set mankind upon the Earth and gave them management responsibility under His authority.
- Mankind listened to the serpent (Satan) resulting in the Fall and the presence of evil upon the Earth.

As we examine each of the above points, it becomes clear that God is not the creator nor the author of evil. New generation leaders must not overlook the goodness of God from creation to the present. The biblical record is clear on this.

- Genesis 1:31 NLT Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.
- Psalm 31:19 NLT How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you. You lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world.
- Psalm 65:11 NLT You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance.
- Psalm 107:9 For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.
- Psalm 107:15, 21, 31 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!
- Jeremiah 31:14 I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the LORD.”
- James 1:17 NLT Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

God’s goodness is an everlasting goodness. Moses asked God to “Please, show me Your glory.” (Exodus 33:18). God’s response was to show him His goodness.

- Exodus 33:19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."
In this divine appearance, the term “goodness” entails a collective summary of who God is. God Himself calls out His name and goodness. You might say God’s DNA is a hundred percent “goodness”. Young leaders need to stand in awe and declare His goodness in the latter days:

- **Hosea 3:5** Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

New generation leaders cannot afford to take God’s goodness for granted or approach His goodness as something common. God is kind. God is patient. Does this not mean anything to young leaders today? God’s intention is to turn the new generation away from sin and nearer to Him.

- **Romans 2:4** Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?
- **Romans 11:22** Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.)

It’s time to take the goodness of God seriously. God is good! Satan is evil! Heaven is good! Hell is bad! The Earth is a spiritual battleground. The question for a new generation is, “Who are you going to obey?”

The origin of evil is found in Lucifer, one of three ruling angels created by God. These three archangels seem to function in three unique areas under God’s authority.

- **Gabriel (man of God)** – leading deliverer of divine messages of immense importance, including announcing and bringing understanding to those on the receiving end. Gabriel appears four times by name in the Bible: Twice to Daniel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21) and once to Elizabeth (Luke 1:19) and then to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26). He is referred to as the angel of the LORD so it’s most likely he’s also the angel who appeared in a dream to Joseph (Matt. 1:20-21; 2:13, 19) and stood before the shepherds announcing the birth of Christ (Luke 2:8-14).
- **Michael (who is like God)** – leading heavenly forces in spiritual warfare. He’s mentioned five times in the Bible: Three times in Daniel (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1), once in Jude (Jude 1:9), and once in Revelation (Rev. 12:7). In every instance, this chief angel is displayed as fighting against evil and protecting God’s people. Michael is the archangel who always stands in the time of conflict.
- **Lucifer (light-bearer, shining one, day star)** – leading heavenly praise and worship. He’s referred to by this creative name only once in the Bible by the prophet Isaiah, who in his proclamation of the fall of Babylon and its king includes a vivid description of Lucifer’s fall from heaven (Isa. 14:12-15).

**Isaiah 14:12-15** "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer¹, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have said in your heart:`I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I
will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

The prophet Ezekiel’s lamentation over the king of Tyre also has an interesting comparison with Lucifer describing him as an **“anointed cherub”** and implies that he was originally created as a worship leader in heaven (Ezek. 28:13-15).

- **Ezekiel 28:13-15 NLT** You were in Eden, the garden of God. Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone—red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald— all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created. I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian. You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire.

“Satan was once an angel called Lucifer, who, in love with his own beauty, fell into pride and self-centeredness. His rebellion manifests in five “I will” statements addressed against God (vv. 13, 14). With five utterances he declares that he will take the place of the Most High God. But vv. 15-20 reveal that God has the last word, as the Most High makes five responses: “Satan, you will 1) be thrown into hell; 2) be gazed upon (that is, made a spectacle); 3) be talked about (mocked, scorned); 4) be cast out of your grave like a carcass; and 5) be alone.” God’s “last word” on Satan is still applicable to any challenge he attempts to bring against any of the people of God.”

I like the idea that God has the last word on things. This is a proclamation of God’s all-encompassing authority. The study notes for Ezekiel also reveal some fascinating details when viewed in conjunction with the Isaiah description. Speaking about Ezekiel 28, the authors conclude:

“Vv. 14, 15 are the most conclusive evidence that this text likely refers to Satan’s fall. Anointed cherub who covers indicates high office with authority and responsibility to protect and defend the holy mountain of God, an allusion to God’s throne. The high order and specific placement of Lucifer prior to his fall afforded unique opportunity to bring glory to God. V. 13 suggests his role included leading heaven’s choirs in the worship of the Most High. His fall was occasioned by his seeking to have this glory for himself (see Is. 14:12-17).”

The fact that evil was found in Lucifer demonstrates it originated with him because he was not created with evil; only with a free will just like us. As we mentioned earlier, God created angels and mankind both with a freedom of choice. God receives

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30 Ibid., Study Notes, p. 1086.
no glory from robots. Lucifer, now the serpent, is not only proof of this with his deception of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but other angels began to follow his lead. Adam and Eve were not the only ones deceived by him. The following verses confirm that Satan brought a lot of angels under his evil wings:

- **Matthew 25:41** "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:
- **2 Peter 2:4** For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;
- **Jude 1:6 NLT** And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment.
- **Revelation 12:7-9 NLT** Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. 8 And the dragon lost the battle, and he and his angels were forced out of heaven. 9 This great dragon -- the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world -- was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

Furthermore, the Bible records that the fall of Lucifer, the dragon in Revelation 12, drew away a third of the angels of heaven (Rev. 12:4), where stars refers to angelic beings that are cast down or out (see also 2Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). The verse in Jude warrants special attention in the context of authority. I will examine it more closely later in our study; however, it's important to note the identity of these specific angels. The New Spirit Filled Study Bible sheds a lot of light upon who these angels were and the domain they left.

"The angels who left their own domain are probably the lustful "sons of God" mentioned in Gen. 6:1-4. According to first century Jewish teaching, especially in the apocryphal Book of 1 Enoch, angels descended and cohabited with women who lived before the Flood." 31

The references to Genesis 6 in Job confirm the Jewish teaching where “sons of God” are angelic beings.

- **Genesis 6:1-4** Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive 1 with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.
- **Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7** Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan 1 also came among them.

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31 The New Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1802
All this reveals that the Fall of Lucifer, angels, and mankind comes down to one common factor: A rebellion against God’s authority. Understanding this from a biblical perspective clearly answers a common question of “Why there’s so much evil in the world”? Watchmen Nee puts it this way:

“Have you noticed how greatly the fall of the angels and of man has affected the universe, what a great problem it has created for God? It was God’s intention that the beings He created should accept His authority, yet both kinds of created beings rejected it. God could not establish His authority in the created beings; even so, He would not withdraw it. He might withdraw His presence, but He will never give up the authority He has initiated. Where His authority is, there is His rightful place.”

I urge the new generation to fully connect with God’s authority in a fallen and evil world.

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Chapter 3: The Authority of Christ

Comprehensive Authority

The authority of Christ is an unlimited, comprehensive authority that continues to be challenged in the 21st century. What makes His name, His presence, His words so explosive in every generation and in every sphere of society. People of all ages discuss everything under the sun, but when the name of Jesus is mentioned, there’s a nuclear reaction. America appears not to want His name mentioned anymore in public education, athletic events, government, media, and all public life. The demonic strategy is to limit the authority of Christ to the four walls of the churches. The goal is to silence the church. This has been going on far too long in America and other nations with a history of revival. A cloud of darkness comes over any nation and region that seeks to limit Christ’s authority. What is the Holy Spirit saying to an emerging generation of young leaders? “It’s time for you to arise and be set in place under the authority of Christ. The LORD will arise over you and His glory will be seen upon you.”

- Isaiah 60:1-2 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.

I speak boldly about this because I see by the Spirit of God a societal influence upon established church leaders that must be overcome with new generation leaders.

The extent of Christ’s authority is often ignored by church leaders. Take for instance the Great Commission. There’s a common response all over the world when I ask spiritual leaders of all ages what’s the beginning of the Great Commission. Of course, they all answer with the utmost confidence: It begins with “Go!” Then I correctly quote the words of Jesus Himself:

- Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore' and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen!

The Great Commission begins with the all-encompassing authority given to Christ. The Greek phrase, πᾶσα ἡ ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, literally means all the power of absolute rule throughout heaven and over all the earth. The extent of the authority of Christ is unlimited. Recognition and subjection to Christ’s authority must be the starting place for understanding and fulfilling the Great Commission. The all-inclusive terminology for everything appears three times in the Great Commission.

1. All authority has been given Me (28:18)
2. Teaching them all things I have commanded you (28:20)
3. I am with you all the time to the end (28:20)
I’ve been very emboldened by the Holy Spirit to challenge church leaders in every place with their God-given responsibility to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.” (Eph. 4:12). I’ve discovered in congregations worldwide few believers have been taught even the basics of what the Bible says. How do I know this? Because I ask them questions like: How many of you have ever received any teaching on casting out demons or the six foundational principles of the doctrine of Christ? How many of you have been taught about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? How many of you have ever been instructed on the nine manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit and their operation in the church? I’m still surprised in various places around the world when no hands are raised among church attenders. And sometimes only one hand is raised among hundreds attending the church service. This is reason for pause and a question: What are we doing? The teaching mandate of the Great Commission has not changed. Look at Paul’s exhortation to young Timothy.

- 2 Timothy 4:1-5 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 

  2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 

  3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 

  4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 

  5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Note how the entire exhortation begins with a declaration of Christ’s authority. This says two things about Him. First Jesus Christ has been given the authority to judge everyone. Here’s five things every disciple needs to know about this crucial point:33

1. The Father has committed all judgment to Jesus.

   For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (John 5:22-23)

2. God ordained Jesus to judge everyone.

   And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. (Acts 10:42)

3. Jesus is the Righteous Judge.

   Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2Tim. 4:8)

4. The Father has given Jesus authority to execute the judgment.

   For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. (John 5:26-27)

5. All believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There’s a future accountability for what we do or do not do in service to Christ.

   For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2Cor. 5:10)

Another critical factor is that Jesus is the King of God’s Kingdom. Kingdom, basileia (bas-il-i'-ah), means royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. It also refers to the territory subject to the rule of a king. Not just any king rules over God’s Kingdom! Therefore, Jesus Christ is declared “King of Kings and Lord of Lords in both heaven and on earth.” No earthly king could compare with the all-encompassing authority of Christ.

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<td>Ezra 7:12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth.</td>
<td>1 Timothy 6:15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,</td>
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The Kingdom of God is fully under Messianic rule. The reign of the Messiah is documented throughout the Bible. This is especially the case in the Messianic Psalms like Psalm 110. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all quote this Psalm. Jesus Himself uses it to prove His deity and authority. Interestingly, the religious leaders questioned the identity and authority of Jesus. They could no longer test Him on this issue after He taught on Psalm 110.

### Announcement of Messianic Rule

| Psalm 110:1-7 <A Psalm of David.> The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." 2 The LORD shall send the | Mark 12:35 Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? 36 "For David |

### Confirmation of Messianic Rule

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rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The LORD has sworn and will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.

himself said by the Holy Spirit: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Therefore David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son? And the common people heard Him gladly.

Acts 2:32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Take a moment to deliberate on who is speaking in this inspired prophetic utterance. The Lord of all creation (Yahweh) speaks through David by the Holy Spirit to David’s Lord (‘Adonai, the Messiah) to rejoice over the announcement of the Messiah’s rule. And Jesus is lifted and placed at the most exalted place, the right hand of God. There are 25 references to the right hand of God in the Book of Psalms alone. Look at what the Bible says about the right hand of God:

- **Exodus 15:6, 12** "Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces... You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them.
- **Psalm 16:11** You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- **Psalm 18:35** You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great.
- **Psalm 20:6** Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.
- **Psalm 44:3** For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them.
- **Psalm 48:10** According to Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.
- **Psalm 63:8** My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.
- **Psalm 80:15** And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted, And the branch that You made strong for Yourself.
- **Psalm 80:17** Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself.
- **Psalm 89:13** You have a mighty arm; Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand.
- **Psalm 98:1** <A Psalm.> Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
- **Psalm 118:15-16** The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
- **Psalm 139:10** Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.
- **Isaiah 41:10** Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
- **Isaiah 48:13** Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; When I call to them, They stand up together.
- **Isaiah 62:8** The LORD has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength: "Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies; And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored.
- **Matthew 26:64** Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- **Mark 16:19** So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.
- **Luke 22:69** "Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."
- **Acts 2:33** "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.
- **Acts 5:31** "Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.
- **Acts 7:55-56** But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"
- **Romans 8:34** Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
- **Colossians 3:1** If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.
- **Hebrews 1:3** who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
- **Hebrews 1:13** But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?
- **Hebrews 8:1** Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
- **1 Peter 3:22** who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.
- **Revelation 1:16** He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

- **Revelation 1:17** And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me¹, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

- **Revelation 1:20** "The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw¹ are the seven churches.

- **Revelation 5:1, 7** And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals… Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

I believe the evidence is overwhelming that God is right handed. All authority and power flow from the right hand of God. This is the exalted position of our Lord Jesus Christ! And then, there’s the name above all names. The prophet Isaiah foretold that the name of God’s Son would be awesome.

- **Isaiah 9:6** For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Do you see the divine connection between **"the government will be upon His shoulder"** and **“His name.”** The prophet spells out what the Messiah’s government (rule, dominion) is. It’s in His name! It’s forever embedded in the strong name of Jesus Christ!

- **pele** (peh'-leh) – wonderful, marvelous, extraordinary, unusual, surpassing
- **ya'ats** (yaw-ats') – to advise, consult, give counsel, purpose, devise plans
- **gibbor El** (ghib-bore') – mighty God, mighty, valiant warrior, strong and powerful in battle (warfare) fighting for His people
- **‘ad ‘ab** – perpetuity, forever, continuing future as head and protector of His people
- **sar shalom** – a prince, ruler, leader, chief official, captain of completeness, soundness, welfare, peace.

Isaiah declares the deity of the messianic ruler 700 years before the birth of Jesus. Furthermore, he points out the future King of kings and Lord of lords will receive the Spirit of the Lord without measure.

- **Isaiah 11:1-2** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

How can anyone argue that Christ’s rule is not extraordinary when it finds its source in the Holy Spirit? The New Spirit Filled Life Bible explains it this way:
“The Spirit of the Lord gives the king his skills to rule, a truth clearly seen in Christ’s ministry (Luke 4:14). The Holy Spirit is mentioned by Isaiah more than by any other prophet. The attributes of the Spirit’s anointing here suggest the names of the miracle Child. See 9:6, 7). The seven distinct ministries of the Holy Spirit mentioned – exalting the Lord’s rule, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear (reverence) – are thought by some to be the OT counter reference to Rev. 4:5, revealing multiplicity of expression in the Holy Spirit’s workings.”

The authority of Christ cannot be separated from His name nor can there be any disconnect with the Holy Spirit. New generation leaders must capture a fresh vision and understanding in word and ministry operation for the authority and power in the name of Jesus and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Paul expresses the surpassing quality of His name in several places. His prayer for the saints in Ephesus echoes over a new generation in the 21st century.

- Ephesians 1:15-23 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding 1 being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Note how the domain of Christ’s authority is endless, above all, surpassing everything. Even His name is above all! Paul has put it all together in one prayer. The overarching theme is Christ’s dominion (kratos – ruling authority). The entire Godhead is represented as bringing to us the understanding and revelation of the comprehensive authority of Jesus Christ. The new generation before us needs a fresh revelation and understanding of God’s authority in Christ. Young leaders today must take this truth to heart and operate in ministry according to their high calling.

“All kingdom, authority, and glory belong to God and to God alone. What sets us totally free from Satan is the seeing of this most precious truth — that the kingdom is God’s.”

Direct and Delegated Authority

One of the most dramatic transformations recorded in the Bible is that of the Apostle Paul. The gap between what Saul, the Pharisee, was doing and what God was doing in Christ was as far as it can get. His conversion and ministry give hope to every

34 The New Spirit Filled Life Bible. Study note 11:2, p. 888
35 Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority (p. 11).
person on the face of the earth. On the road to Damascus, he went from persecutor to proclaimer of Christ. In addition, we see in the details a notable example of direct and delegated authority.

### Direct Authority

**Acts 9:3-9**

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

### Delegated Authority

**Acts 9:16-19**

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. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Watchman Nee Insights:

- Before a man can subject himself to God's delegated authority he must first meet God's inherent authority. (p. 13)
- For the convenience of explanation, we distinguish between direct authority and delegated authority; to God, though, there is but one authority. (p. 72)
- Therefore, men ought to be under the restraint of God's authority and learn to be led by God's delegated authority. (p. 38)
- Thus, will God set up His authority in the midst of His created beings. He wants us to be obedient not only to the direct authority which He Himself exercises but also to the delegated authorities whom He sets up. (p. 57)
- Only what comes from God constitutes authority and commands man's obedience. A delegated authority is to represent God's authority; never to assume that he too has authority. (p. 116)
- No one is able to be God's delegated authority unless he has learned to obey God's authority and understand His will. (p. 117)
The direct authority in the above account is in the calling. The calling is God’s business. I’ve made it a practice not to question a person’s calling. Many young leaders have come to me over the years saying they have been called by God. This is God speaking directly to a person just like He did with Saul, who became Paul. What man has the right to question another’s calling by God? To do so is questioning God’s authority. The light that shined was from heaven and not from a delegated authority on earth. Paul described it in this way:

- **Acts 26:13 NIV** About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions.

The light was from heaven, the voice was that of Jesus, and the instructions were all directly from heaven. Jesus is the ruling authority surrounding this great transformation. The blazing light of Christ’s authority needs to surround new generation leaders today. He is calling them to also arise and go and they will be told what to do because Jesus is in charge. Now, notice how the Lord calls a disciple, named Ananias. Again, the calling is an example of direct authority in Acts 9:10-16. However, the Lord directly called him for a special assignment which comes with the delegated authority to accomplish the mission. Watchman Nee said, *“Whoever is gifted has a ministry, and whoever has a ministry has authority.”*36 This is the case with delegated authority. There’s an amazing flow of Christ’s direct and delegated authority. Both Saul and Ananias meet God’s direct authority and they also understand His delegated authority demonstrated in Ananias. Saul needed three things before he could go forth and be what God called him to be:

1. Water baptized as a testimony of his conversion
2. His sight restored
3. Filled with the Holy Spirit

The Lord provided each to him by sending His representative or delegated authority who laid hands on him. Ananias understood his assignment because he had first met Christ’s authority. Both Saul and Ananias first touched God’s authority. Watchman Nee again provides a wonderful insight into this dynamic flow of direct and delegated authority.

> “The Lord showed Paul how he had kicked against the goads when he had resisted the Lord. Once Paul saw the light and saw authority, however, he asked, " What shall I do, Lord ? " By this action he put himself under the direct authority of the Lord. Nevertheless, the Lord immediately shifted Paul to His delegated authority. " Rise, and enter into the city , and it shall be told thee what thou must do " ( Acts 9.6 ).”37

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36 Nee, Watchman. *Spiritual Authority* (p. 82).
37 Ibid. (p. 72).
Although I will deal later with what to do when those who represent God conflict with God’s direct authority, it’s important here to understand that the New Testament fully embraces the display of Christ’s authority through delegated authority. In fact, God acting through delegated authorities is the norm in the New Testament Church. The new generation must first meet God’s authority before turning to the work of ministry. The church cannot be blessed until young leaders are touched in their hearts with the magnitude of God’s authority in Christ. There must be clarity regarding spiritual authority in the modern church. Look at these statements by Watchman Nee:

- Thus, will God set up His authority in the midst of His created beings. He wants us to be obedient not only to the direct authority which He Himself exercises but also to the delegated authorities whom He sets up. (p. 57)
- In God’s view, those who reject His servants reject Him. It is impossible for us to hearken to God’s word and not to the words of His delegates. If we are subject to God’s authority, then we must also be subject to His delegated authority. Other than in Acts 9.4 -15 which illustrates the direct authority of the Lord, the rest of the Bible demonstrates the authority He has delegated to men. (p. 71)
- Delegated authority is so serious that if one offends it he is at odds with God. No one can expect to obtain light directly from the Lord if he refuses to have light from delegated authority. (p. 73)
- The whole New Testament stands behind delegated authority. The only exception is found in Acts 5.29 when Peter and the apostles answered the Jewish council which forbade them to teach in the name of the Lord Jesus. Peter answered by saying, "We must obey God rather than men." This was due to the fact that the delegated authority here had distinctly violated God's command and trespassed against the Person of the Lord. Such an answer as Peter's can only be given under this particular situation. (p. 74)
- The ministry God appoints is authority; no one should reject it. Most people want to have God's direct authority, but God's more frequent way is to set up indirect or delegated authorities for us to obey. (p. 82)
- When delegated authority (men who represent God's authority) and direct authority (God Himself) are in conflict, one can render submission but not obedience to the delegated authority. (p. 108)

These few statements lead us into a deeper understanding of how Christ’s authority is to be understood and exercised in our lives and in the church. I urge young leaders to examine them in conjunction with the Word of God.

The Authority Scripture

Jesus moved in accordance with God’s will and God’s word. There needs to be a realignment with God’s word in this generation. The 5-Fold Global mandate is “to equip and empower a new generation of leaders and believers to fulfill the book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit and multiply the harvest through strategic prayer, power evangelism, Spirit filled discipleship, and church planting aligned with God’s
Alignment with Scripture isn’t an option for young leaders; it’s a necessity. The instruction of the new generation will be guided by the Holy Spirit.

- **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
- **John 16:13** "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Young leaders must operate in agreement with the Scripture. Otherwise, they will operate outside of Christ’s authority. Look what Jesus said in His great prayer for us.

- **John 17:14-19** "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus gives us the Word because He’s the Living Word from the beginning to end.

- **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Attitudes need to change regarding God’s word. The Word is not subject to our diverse interpretations and opinions. It’s God-breathed and inspired by the Spirit of God; not man.

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- **2 Peter 1:19-21** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is emphatic that “all Scripture” is coming from God. Christ’s authority resides in the Word. Jesus said, “the Scripture cannot be broken.” (John 10:35). The word of God is binding and cannot be set aside in lieu of cultural changes on social issues or anything else. I caution young leaders about playing with God’s word. I urge them to stop the casual approach and get serious about the Scriptures. This requires a careful study of the Bible.

- **2 Timothy 2:15 KJV** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
A review of what the Greek words mean in the above passage sheds light on the approach young leaders need in relation to God’s word.

- spoudazō (spoo-dad’-zo) - From G4710; to use speed, that is, to make effort, be prompt or earnest:—do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavor, labor, study.
- dokimos (dok’-ee-mos) - From G1380; properly acceptable (current after assayal), that is, approved:—approved, tried.
- ergatēs (er-gat’-ace) - From G2041; a toiler; figuratively a teacher:—laborer, worker or workmen.
- orthotomeō (or-thot-om-eh’-o) - From a compound of G3717 and the base of G5114; to make a straight cut, that is, (figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message):—rightly divide.

A new generation of leaders is rising, and they must be thoroughly grounded in Christ's authority to be able to instruct others accurately in the Word. Watchman Nee is right about this.

“Only after we have known God’s authority and learned obedience can we lead His children in the straight path.”

God’s word is the command of authority that backs us up. God is watching and is ready to perform His word in this generation.

- Jeremiah 1:12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."

If the new generation desires to walk as Jesus walked, then they will walk according to His Word. Church constitutions and bylaws are no substitute for the Word. God’s Word must become the ruling authority again in the church.

- Acts 19:20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

The Authority of the Body of Christ

I fully agree with Watchman Nee who shared with the saints of China that “the fullest expression of God’s authority is found in the body of Christ, His church.” There is an inseparable connection between the body of Christ and the church. I don’t think church leaders today fully display the authority God has set in His church. I say this because there’s a substantial difference between the physical and the spiritual. There continues to be an authority issue in the church. I discovered in my study of the New Testament Church the importance of the identity of the church as the body of Christ.

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39 Ibid., (p. 76).
It’s foundational to a clear understanding of the manifestation of Christ’s authority. The following is a fascinating examination of the church as the body of Christ.

- **John 2:13-22** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. 15 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. 16 And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!" 17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." 18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

What was happening here? I believe there’s more than we might think? There are several points to consider in relation to the New Testament Church. First, Jesus draws a clear distinction with what is going on in the temple (what they’ve made it) and what it is to be. He proclaims the temple as “My Father’s house” and not the house of the Jews or Herod’s temple. Jesus also points to the need for a dramatic transformation with imperative and authoritative actions and words that cannot be misunderstood: “Take these things away!” It begs the question for the church today: What things need to be taken away? John the Baptist never preached in the temple, but Jesus enters the temple to re-establish and restore it as His Father’s house. This leads us to a second point contained in Jesus’ response to the Jews who demanded a divine sign for his authoritative actions. Of course, Jesus, in a more figurative way than with His disciples, foretells His death and resurrection. This was early in His ministry. We see this in other places in the Gospels when He referred those opposing Him to no other sign but Jonah: “But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”” (Matt. 12:39-41; 16:4). The Jews are focused upon the physical temple building whereas Jesus is focused upon the temple of His body. Has anything changed today? But there’s more here. Look at what Matthew Henry says about how Jesus expressed this:

“He chose to express this by destroying and re-edifying the temple, First, Because he was now to justify himself in purging the temple, which they had profaned; as if he had said, "You that defile one temple will destroy another; and I will prove my authority to purge what you have defiled by raising what you will destroy." The profaning of the temple is the destroying of it, and its reformation its resurrection. Secondly, Because the death of Christ was indeed the destruction of the Jewish temple, the procuring cause of it; and his resurrection was the raising up of another temple, the gospel church... Though Christ had discovered a great respect for the temple, in purging it, yet he
will have us know that the holiness of it, which he was so jealous for, was but typical, and leads us to the consideration of another temple of which that was but a shadow, the substance being Christ. Some think that when he said, Destroy this temple, he pointed to his own body, or laid his hand upon it; however, it is certain that he spoke of the temple of his body. Note, The body of Christ is the true temple, of which that at Jerusalem was a type."

This sheds much light upon the church of the Gospels. It establishes the temple as foreshadowing the New Testament Church as the body of Christ. Could this have been the intention of Jesus at the beginning? Obviously, Jesus was introducing another temple. The prophet Zechariah and others confirm this:

- **Zechariah 6:12** "Then speak to him, saying, \`Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD."

Interestingly, the Hebrew *banah* in the above reference means *to build, rebuild, and restore*. But we must be continually reminded that the temple Jesus was talking about was the temple of His body. The disciples only understood this after His resurrection. In fact, it was only then when they remembered and “believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.” Kevin Conner in his classic work, *The Church in the New Testament*, documents this tendency.

> “Note how Christ spoke of “this bread”, and “this Gospel”, and “this temple”, to the people. People looked at the wrong thing so much, when He was speaking of Himself (John 2:18-22; 6:34, 51-57; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 16:18).”

Furthermore, this makes perfect sense in relation to all the New Testament biblical references to the church as the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the fullness of Him.

- **1 Corinthians 3:16** Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- **1 Corinthians 12:27-28** Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.
- **Ephesians 1:22-23** And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
- **Ephesians 5:29-30** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.
- **Colossians 1:24** I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,

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The conclusion is that the Early Church understood the church as the body of Christ. Everything points to Him and His church; that is, the one He is building.

There are two crucial points regarding spiritual authority in the context of the church as the body of Christ. First, Jesus Christ is the Head of the church and the members of His body have special functions under His authority. Any disconnect with the Head affects the proper functioning of the body. I believe many churches struggle because they are, as Watchman Nee said, “living outside the authority of God.”\textsuperscript{42} Five times Paul refers to Christ as the Head of the church.

- \textbf{Ephesians 1:22-23 AMPC} 22 And He has put all things under His feet and has appointed Him the universal and supreme Head of the church [a headship exercised throughout the church], [Ps. 8:6.] 23 Which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all [for in that body lives the full measure of Him Who makes everything complete, and Who fills everything everywhere with Himself].
- \textbf{Ephesians 4:15 NLT} Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.
- \textbf{Ephesians 5:23 NKJ} For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.
- \textbf{Colossians 1:18 AMPC} He also is the Head of [His] body, the church; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything \textit{and} in every respect might occupy the chief place [stand first and be preeminent].
- \textbf{Colossians 1:18-19 AMPC} Don’t tolerate people who try to run your life, ordering you to bow and scrape, insisting that you join their obsession with angels and that you seek out visions. They’re a lot of hot air, that’s all they are. They’re completely out of touch with the source of life, Christ, who puts us together in one piece, whose very breath and blood flow through us. He is the Head and we are the body. We can grow up healthy in God only as he nourishes us.

How can any of us say Jesus is the Head of the church when the leadership structure, the discipleship training, the gift operation, and the like continue to conflict with the direct authority of God Himself? Although there is much effort placed upon creating unity in the church, most end in failure. Why? Because there’s not a biblical understanding of Christ as the Head of the church. Man appears to be in charge when God is working overtime to recover unity in the church.

“God is working towards recovering the oneness of the body. But for this to be accomplished there must first be the life of the Head, followed next by the authority of the Head. Without the life of the Head there can be no body. Without the authority of the Head there can be no unity of the body. To maintain the oneness of the body we must let the life of the Head rule.”\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{42} Watchman Nee, \textit{Spiritual Authority}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 24.
The new generation needs to “let the life of the Head rule.” This is the challenge for every spiritual leader.

The second crucial point regards the functioning of the members of Christ’s body. The Bible has much to say about this.

- **Romans 12:3-8** For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

- **1 Corinthians 12:12-28** For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the head should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

- **Ephesians 4:7-16** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men". 9 (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind
of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-- Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- Colossians 2:5-10, 19 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it1 with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power… 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

The above segments of Scripture demonstrate a maturity (completeness) in connection with Christ, the Head of the church. The members of Christ’s body function according to their connection with the Head. The relationship among members is determined by their connection with the Head of the body, Jesus Christ. Watchman Nee explains how it works, as well as the problem that continues to affect the church today.

“Neither can the hand order the eyes to look, but it merely notifies the head and lets the head give command to the eyes. Hence all the various members are equally close to the head. Whatever a member does is attributed to the head… Today’s problem is that the hand insists on seeing, even after the eye has already seen. Everyone desires to have everything in himself, refusing to accept the supply of the other members. This creates poverty in him as well as in the church. Authority is but another expression of the riches of Christ. Only by accepting the functions of others — accepting their authority - does one receive the wealth of the whole body.”44

Isn’t the church, the body of Christ, an amazing living organism to manifest Christ’s authority on earth! There are several emphases in how the Bible describes the structure and operation of Christ’s body, the church, that warrant our attention.

- The authority of Christ as the Head of His body.
- The endorsement by the complete Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- The close connection of each member to the Head, Jesus Christ.
- The unity (oneness) of the body of Christ with many members.
- The variety of spiritual gifts given members under Christ’s authority.
- The interdependence between members of Christ’s body.
- The growth of the body of Christ through the supply of each member.

44 Nee, Watchman. *Spiritual Authority* (pp. 79-80).
As I look at these factors, I see an enormous contrast with the religious mindset of church leaders and members today. Look at how one national church planter speaks about ecclesiastical authority. He recommends this article be put into the bylaws of newly started churches throughout the USA.

“This is an article that clearly defines the pastor’s authority as the head of the church and its highest authority in matters regarding doctrine, faith, polity and decisions that affect the spiritual environment of the church. This type of authority places the day-to-day management of the church in the hands of the pastor.”

I don’t find any evidence in the New Testament where God has made the pastor as the head of His church. Nor is the pastor the highest authority! I say this respectfully, however, I must speak the truth in love. This type of pastoral authority is not helping the church grow into the fullness of Christ. It has gradually replaced God’s authority in Christ. “God calls us to represent His authority, not to substitute His authority!”

This is more representative of the Gentile spirit of leadership, the one that Jesus said, “It shall not be so among you.”

- Mark 10:42-45 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (See also Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27).

Note that the Gentile leadership system is hierarchal and represents the spirit of the world. This is not way Jesus wants the church to operate. I’ve often told young leaders that if you are compelled to publicly and repeatedly announce your title and authority to the church, then you weaken the authority God has given you. Why? Because “authority is established by God; no delegated authority need try to secure his authority.”

The Gentile spirit subjects people to those who secure the authority either by birth or force. The Jewish spirit subjects people to leaders who bring them into religious bondage to the law. The following chart identifies some of the conflicts religious authority and order has with the spiritual authority and order outlined in the Bible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecclesiastical Authority</th>
<th>Spiritual Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious institution</td>
<td>Church of the living God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural/Physical (human reasoning)</td>
<td>Spiritual (wisdom and revelation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned &amp; high-ranking clergy as temporal heads of the church</td>
<td>Jesus is the Head and His servants equip the saints and oversee His church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46 Ibid., p. 121.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church doctrine &amp; bylaws</th>
<th>Doctrine of Christ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pews, Bible reading, liturgy, church buildings, stained glass windows, etc.</td>
<td>Spiritual gifts operate through every member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative discipline by pastor and board</td>
<td>Apostolic and churchwide discipline, repentance and restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial jurisdiction</td>
<td>Spiritual boundaries of delegated authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is it possible that the 21st century church has lost its connection with the Head? The new generation church must fully commit to the stewardship of spiritual authority in alignment with God’s word and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The church is the place for the manifestation of Christ’s authority.
Chapter 4: Biblical Examples of Authority
Moses and God’s People

There are many biblical examples of authority; however, I have picked four that provide the most practical details of how God’s authority works through His chosen servants for the benefit of His people. The Bible describes Moses in this way:

- **Numbers 12:3** (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

Many confuse this description with a soft-spoken, tolerant, unassuming person; liked by all and does not make any waves. This is not the character of Moses. Rather, this description of Moses as humble or meek is a report of his position of absolute dependence on God. More than anyone else living on the earth at that time, he was the most adequately related to God and His authority. This is very similar to Paul’s statement to the Ephesian church elders when he described himself as “serving the Lord with all humility.” (Acts 20:19). The emphasis upon each description is on this distinctive character ingredient humility or meekness. Moses displayed this quality most effectively when God’s people murmured and complained in rebellion against God and the delegated authority of His servants. Moses only failed one time. Matthew Henry’s Commentary has an excellent analysis of this about the rebellion of Aaron and Miriam:

“The wonderful patience of Moses under this provocation. The Lord heard it (v. 2), but Moses himself took no notice of it, for (v. 3) he was very meek. He had a great deal of reason to resent the affront; it was ill-natured and ill-timed, when the people were disposed to mutiny, and had lately given him a great deal of vexation with their murmurings, which would be in danger of breaking out again when thus headed and countenanced by Aaron and Miriam; but he, as a deaf man, heard not. When God’s honour was concerned, as in the case of the golden calf, no man more zealous than Moses; but, when his own honour was touched, no man more meek: as bold as a lion in the cause of God, but as mild as a lamb in his own cause. God’s people are the meek of the earth (Zeph. ii. 3), but some are more remarkable than others for this grace, as Moses, who was thus fitted for the work he was called to, which required all the meekness he had and sometimes more. And sometimes the unkindness of our friends is a greater trial of our meekness than the malice of our enemies. Christ himself records his own meekness (Matt. xi. 29, I am meek and lowly in heart), and the copy of meekness which Christ has set was without a blot, but that of Moses was not.”

Often, this relationship with God’s authority and His people is missing. The NET Bible has a very challenging comment on the situation among leaders today: “Humility is a quality missing today in many leaders. Far too many are self-promoting, or competitive, or even pompous.”

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48 Ibid., NET Bible. Num. 12:3, note sn
Moses was not self-assertive in that way until faced with a contentious people and a rock.

- **Numbers 20:7-13** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 7 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 8 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. 9 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 10 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 11 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." 12 This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

Although the Lord still miraculously brought forth the water and "hallowed" or sanctified Himself before the people, Moses and Aaron did not. This moment of disobedience was an affront to God’s authority. Any act of disobedience is a rebellion against the authority of God. I believe Watchman Nee has a point when he says, "To offend God's authority is a rebellion far more serious than that of offending God's holiness." 49 The issue was one regarding the authority of God. Humility or meekness in relation to God’s authority is very important. The following chart contrasts the rebellions against God’s authority with the practical operation of humility by His delegated authority, Moses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rebellions</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 14:8-12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. 9 So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon. 10 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 Then they said to Moses, &quot;Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 &quot;Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the</td>
<td>Exodus 14:13 And Moses said to the people, &quot;Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 &quot;The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.&quot; 15 And the LORD said to Moses, &quot;Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16 &quot;But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17 &quot;And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18 &quot;Then the Egyptians shall know that I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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49 Nee, Watchman. *Spiritual Authority*, p. 11.
Egyptians?" For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

Exodus 14:31 Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

Exodus 15:22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"

Exodus 15:25-26 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. And there He tested them, and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."

Exodus 16:1-3 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Exodus 16:4-8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Exodus 32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

Exodus 32:4-6 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."
your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" 5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD." 6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Numbers 11:1 Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.

Numbers 11:4 Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat?

Numbers 11:18-20 "Then you shall say to the people: 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, 'Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt.' Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19 'You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20 'but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, 'Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?'"

Numbers 11:10 Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased.

Numbers 11:13-14 "Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying,'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14 "I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.

Numbers 11:23 And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD'S arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not." 24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle.

Numbers 12:1-2 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.

Numbers 12:13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

Numbers 14:4-9 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed
the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

**Numbers 14:10** And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us; a land which flows with milk and honey."

9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them."

**Numbers 14:17-19** "And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 18 The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression: but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation. 19 "Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

**Numbers 16:1-3** Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

**Numbers 16:12-14** And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! 13 "Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us? 14 Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

**Numbers 16:19** And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

**Numbers 16:4-5** So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him.

**Numbers 16:15-16** Then Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them." 16 And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the LORD-- you and they, as well as Aaron."

**Numbers 16:20-22** And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." 22 Then they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?"
Numbers 16:41 On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." 42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

Numbers 16:43-50 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. 44 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. 46 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

Numbers 20:2-5 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3 And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! 4 "Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5 "And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink."

Numbers 20:6-11 So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

Numbers 21:4-6 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and...

Numbers 21:7-9 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten,
God’s people tested the Lord with their complaints at least ten times in the wilderness (Num. 14:22); however, there were additional challenges to His authority. The conclusion to these instances where God’s people rebelled against His authority shows two things. One is that the people’s connection with God’s authority was temporarily severed by their complaining and disbelief against the Lord and His delegated authority, Moses. Psalm 78 rehearses these events and says this about all the rebellions:

- **Psalm 78:40-41** How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, *And grieved Him in the desert!* 41 Yes, again and again they tempted God, *And limited the Holy One of Israel.*

God’s chosen leaders can make a difference if they in humility and without self-interest approach God on behalf of the people. This is the overwhelming and orderly pattern we see in Moses. It’s a pattern of humility.

- Moses goes to God.
- God speaks to him.
- Moses speaks to the people.
- Moses acts in accordance with God’s command.
- God performs His word.

Typically, Moses’ first reaction was to “**fall on his face before the Lord.**” This needs to be the attitude and action of young leaders today. I agree with Watchman Nee regarding those who represent God.

“Anyone who represents authority should be low and humble before God and before His people. He should not be high-minded; neither should he seek to maintain his own authority among men... Coming out is to speak and act for God with authority, but going in is to prostrate oneself at the feet of the Lord, acknowledging what an unworthy man one is.”

Another important thing about Moses and God’s people is that Moses paid very close attention to details when it came to what God spoke. He was very careful to say and do what God said. God Himself testifies about Moses.

- **Numbers 12:6-8** Then He said, “*Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.* 7 Not so with My servant Moses; *He is faithful in all My house.* 8 I speak with him face to face, *Even plainly,* and not in dark sayings; *And he sees the form of the LORD.* Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?”

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Repeatedly, Scripture records, “So Moses did as the LORD commanded him.” The Bible also makes this very clear in the building of the tabernacle, which was a shadow or copy of the New Covenant and the Greater One who was coming.

- **Hebrews 8:1-6** Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

The biblical evidence on Moses testifies to two facts: He was more humble or meek than anyone else and he was insistent on following all instructions from above. You cannot do this without the fullest understanding of God’s authority.

**David and Saul**

The interactions between David and Saul provide us with both a negative and positive understanding of relating to God’s authority. Many leaders today acknowledge God’s authority in word, but I wonder if they are subject to His authority in their heart. The Bible says David was a man after God’s heart, while Saul was not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saul</th>
<th>David</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Samuel 13:14 &quot;But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.&quot;</td>
<td>Acts 13:22 &quot;And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’&quot;</td>
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What was the issue here? Saul was careless with what God commanded and David was careful to do all of God’s will. This distinction is one that exists among leaders today. Watchman Nee explains it well.

“In the Old Testament time David became the second person whom God made king; the first king, Saul, had also been set up by Him. David was the authority newly raised up by God, the newly anointed of the Lord: whereas Saul was the rejected authority, the one whose anointing was in the past, for the Spirit of God had already left him.”

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Could this be the case with some pastors and church leaders in our time? I believe a large part of the established church today appears to be growing weaker like the house of Saul.

- **2 Samuel 3:1** Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

There’s always a tension between generations; however, new generation leaders need divine wisdom about their alignments with various existing church organizations. We live in a time where it seems that the spirit of the world is prevailing against God’s people. I see an emerging conflict between established church leaders and organizations and new generation leaders. It’s important to understand that both are anointed by God; however, the religious house (house of Saul) with all its variations is growing weaker and the new generation church (house of David) is growing stronger. It may be time for many to consider transitioning by the Spirit from the house of Saul to the house of David. It’s interesting to note that many from the house of Saul joined with David. We can gain much insight from these references.

- **1 Chronicles 12:1-2** Now these were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers in the war, armed with bows, using both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows with the bow. They were of Benjamin, Saul's brethren.

- **1 Chronicles 12:16-18** Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold. 17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since there is no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment." 18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, and he said: "We are yours, O David; We are on your side, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, And peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.

- **1 Chronicles 12:22** For at that time they came to David day by day to help him, until it was a great army, like the army of God.

“I declare by the Spirit of God that new generation leaders being raised up by the hand of the Lord will be stronger than us!” I’ve devoted the rest of my life on earth to helping new generation leaders fulfill the book of Acts in the power of the Holy Spirit. Saul and David were fighting the same enemy, the Philistines and the Canaanites. Their enemy was over-running things with wickedness and idolatry. But Saul could not overcome them just as the religious order today cannot overcome that which is defeating God’s people. There’s a significant difference between Saul and David. And there’s a significant difference between the religious house and the new generation today! Saul failed for two reasons according to the biblical record:
1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.

Saul did not maintain God’s authority while David did. I like how Watchman Nee portrays the dynamic quality in David’s heart.

“David stood absolutely for God’s authority. It is just this trait which God desires to recover. Because David maintained the authority of God, God acknowledged him as a man after His own heart. The kingdom of David continues until now; even the Lord Jesus is a descendant of David. We must subject ourselves to God’s authority in our heart before the church can be blessed.”

How did David maintain God’s authority? I find the most convincing evidence when Saul sought to kill him. David’s response was to spare Saul’s life; not once, but twice. Why did he do this?

1. The cave in the wilderness of En Gedi where he cut off a piece of Saul’s clothing (1Sam. 24).

   1 Samuel 24:4-6 Then the men of David said to him, “This is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.’” And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 5 Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s robe. 6 And he said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD’S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.”

2. Saul’s camp in the hill of Hachilah where he took Saul’s spear and water jug while he slept (1Sam. 26).

   1 Samuel 26:9-11 And David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD’S anointed, and be guiltless?” 10 David said furthermore, “As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11 "The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD’S anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go.”

Why was David’s heart troubled over cutting off a piece of Saul’s clothing and later taking his spear and water jug? It wasn’t because he respected what Saul was doing. No, it was because he respected God’s authority and anointing! David’s understanding is so aware of God’s authority that he repeatedly says he will not stretch out his hand against the Lord’s anointed. In fact, David declares this in the cave and in Saul’s camp seven times and with a broader application in the Psalms.

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52 Nee, Watchman. *Spiritual Authority*, p. 44.
• Psalm 105:15 Saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm."

David understood God’s direct authority and he respected God’s delegated authority. He completely places everything under God’s authority.

• 1 Samuel 24:12 "Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you.

David had a knowledge of and connection with God’s authority that young leaders must encounter. The future of the church depends upon this! One final word about Saul’s son Jonathan. I believe there’s something important for new generation leaders to learn from his alignment. I found this statement by Jonathan to be very interesting:

• 1 Samuel 23:16 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." 18 So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

“I shall be next to you.” I believe Jonathan intended to be in David’s kingdom; even second in command under David, God’s delegated authority. This was the second time they made a covenant with each other. The first was made with the “house of David” (1Sam. 21:14-16), but the second one was made “before the LORD.” (1Sam. 23:18). The first involved family protection of descendants; the second a new kingdom by divine will. Although Jonathan’s death in battle prevented him from later joining David’s kingdom, his heart was always with David rather than his father (1Sam. 20:28-34). Jonathan saw God’s will, but he remained physically in Saul’s camp. Is there a message here for young leaders? I believe the time is coming and even now is upon us when a new generation of leaders who are in Saul’s camp need to prayerfully observe the arrows and move to David’s camp both spiritually and physically. There's a respectful way to do this, but it must be done. I believe God has a remnant of spiritual fathers who can facilitate this launching of a new generation church and a powerful, fresh mission force. One concluding aspect concerning the examples of Moses and David by Watchman Nee:

“Both Moses and David were the greatest of authorities, yet they were not people who tried to establish their own authority. Those today who desire to be in authority ought to follow their footsteps.”53

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Jesus and His Disciples

We have already established in this study that God has given all authority to His only Son, Jesus Christ. Interestingly, most, if not all, religious attacks against the teachings and ministry of Jesus dealt with His authority and power. They questioned His authority at every turn. There are 74 Bible verses dealing with the Pharisaic or religious attitudes about Jesus.54 Here are just a few instances:

1. Jesus forgives and heals the Paralytic and they reason saying, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:17-26).

   Luke 5:24 NIV But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

2. Jesus does not require His disciples to fast while He is with them. The Pharisees said, "Why do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?" (Luke 5:33-39).

   Luke 5:34 And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

3. Jesus allows His disciples to eat on the sabbath. They say, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" (Luke 6:1-5; 14:1).

   Luke 6:5 And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."


   Luke 6:9-10 Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?" 10 And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

5. Jesus forgives a sinful woman in a Pharisee's house. The Pharisee thinks, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." (Luke 7:36-50).

   Luke 7:47 "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."


   Luke 11:39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. 40 "Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?


   Luke 15:7 "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.


   Luke 19:40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

9. Jesus taught the people in the temple and the religious leaders confronted Him saying, “Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?” (Luke 20:1-7).

   Luke 20:3-4 But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: 4 "The baptism of John-- was it from heaven or from men?"

10. Jesus taught the way of God, but the Pharisees wanted to trap Him over the paying of taxes to the government asking, “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” (Luke 20:20-26).

   Luke 20:24-25 "Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's." 25 And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Just this brief review of the questions directed at Jesus shows a rebellious attitude toward His authority. Related questions arise from religious leaders today when revivals strike in various places under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Signs, wonders, and miracles abound, and new leaders arise in the authority and power of Christ. Seldom, is this favorably acknowledged by religious leaders. Instead, such moves of God are often resisted for the sake of maintaining existing authority structures established by church organizations. These organized denominations and the religious leaders promoting them are an affront to God’s authority in Christ. But there’s a new generation church arising, and Jesus shall give them authority and power for Kingdom advancement. It will
look like a new thing to current religious leaders just like when Jesus walked on the face of the earth. Remember, Jesus taught as one with authority. All the Gospels record authority and power as the unique qualities of His teaching and ministry.

- **Matthew 7:28** 1When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

- **Mark 1:22, 27** They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes... 27Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority1 He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

- **Luke 4:31-32, 36** And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; 32 and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority... 36Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."

- **John 7:46** The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."

Another thing that set Jesus apart was His primary mission to do the will of His Father. Jesus spoke this directly to His disciples.

- **John 4:34** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

Interestingly, none of the disciples had brought Him something to eat and the Samaritan woman had left. The disciples demonstrated little if any spiritual awareness. The NET Bible notes explain the situation:

> “The disciples thought Jesus referred to physical food, while he was really speaking figuratively and spiritually again. Thus, Jesus was forced to explain what he meant, and the explanation that his food was his mission, to do the will of God and accomplish his work, leads naturally into the metaphor of the harvest. The fruit of his mission was represented by the Samaritans who were coming to him.”

The disciples' knowledge of God's will is limited at this time. Jesus had to teach them and even show them God's will before He could delegate authority and power to them. This is a profound statement by Watchman Nee:

> “The measure of one's knowledge of God's will is the measure of his delegated authority. God establishes a person to be His delegated authority entirely on the basis of that person's knowledge of God's will. It has nothing at all to do with having many ideas, strong opinions, or noble thoughts. Indeed, such persons who are strong in themselves are greatly to be feared in the church. Many young brothers and sisters are as yet unlearned, not knowing God's will; hence God has put them under

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authority. Those in authority are responsible to instruct these younger ones in the knowledge of God’s will."56

Young leaders must first encounter and understand God’s authority to fully grasp His will. God’s authority in Christ is all about His will. Jesus demonstrated to His disciples He had perfect knowledge of God’s will. But He did not stop there! He did the will of the One who sent Him. Is there too much human reasoning, thinking, and opinions guiding the modern church? New generation leaders and the spiritual fathers chosen by God must as Watchman Nee says, “rise high and touch deeply in spiritual things. We need to have a more abundant knowledge of God’s will and way.”57 Now let’s look at how Jesus equipped His disciples in the knowledge of God’s will and delegated authority and power to them.

Jesus began His ministry when He was nearly 30 years of age. This means He was 29 years old. Apparently, Christ’s ministry began in the 15th year of Tiberias Caesar. This would be 27-28 A.D. This is significant because Jesus was young and most of His disciples were also quite young. Although we cannot know for certain the ages of the apostles when they began following Jesus, it’s most likely they were less than 25 years of age.

"Bottom line, the Bible provides no direct evidence for the age of the apostles. Scholars have speculated that all of them were less than 30 years old simply because they took the role of student to the "Rabbi" Jesus and this was traditional. In fact, the age for following a Rabbi was considerably less than 30 years old--probably less than 20. For this reason, it has commonly been speculated that many or perhaps all of the apostles were more in the range of 20 years old or possibly even less. Others have speculated that Matthew was a bit older than the others because he had a fairly important position as a tax collector. In the end, this is speculation, and we simply cannot know how old the apostles were. We know that John lived until about AD 96 or 97, which is about 66 years after Jesus died. This does seem to imply that John was almost certainly less than thirty when he began to follow Jesus. If I had to guess, I believe that most or all of the apostles were less than 25 years or so at the time they began to follow Jesus, but I cannot prove this, nor can anyone else as far as I know."58

Just think of this! Jesus equipped and launched a new generation of leaders! This is a positive message to all young leaders. It proves your training and release into Christ’s ministry at an early age is authorized and supervised by God. No wonder Paul wrote two letters to equip young leaders in First and Second Timothy and said things like this:

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57 Ibid., p. 117
• **1 Timothy 4:12** Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

As I examine the Gospel record, I see a strategic pattern with the 12 disciples from the time Jesus called them to when He released them into ministry.

• He chose them according to God’s purpose.
• He taught them.
• He had them observe His ministry.
• He sent them forth in teams with mission instructions.
• He gave (delegated to) them authority and power.
• They reported to Him.
• He supervised them.
• He left them with a Helper, The Holy Spirit.

I believe Jesus followed the same pattern with the Seventy because He chose them, sent them with the same mission instructions, gave them authority and power to heal and overcome the enemy, and they reported to Him (Luke 10:1-24). And this pattern led to the rapid deployment of a new generation mission force evidenced throughout the Early Church. The advancement of the Kingdom of heaven on earth was miraculous over a reasonably brief period. This is evidenced by the addition and then multiplication of the number of disciples in the Early Church. If we could only duplicate this strategic training pattern with young leaders? I believe we can and we must!

**Paul, Timothy, and the Church**

Paul’s relationship with Timothy is a very positive example of equipping a young leader for Kingdom advancement. I mentioned earlier that two books in the Bible are devoted to the equipping of a new generation of leaders. The 5-Fold Global *Leadership Training Orientation Course* features these two books of First and Second Timothy to help young leaders clarify their callings and appreciate the cost of obedience.⁵⁹ Paul was connected to God’s authority and purpose. Therefore, he was able to issue some commands to Timothy before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

• **1 Timothy 1:3** As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine...
• **1 Timothy 1:18** This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare...
• **1 Timothy 5:21** I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

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• **2 Timothy 4:1** I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

The Greek, *paraggello* (par-ang-gel’-lo) and *diamaturomai* (dee-am-ar-too’-rom-ahee) used in the above references are directly associated with the giving of commands and solemnly affirming or attesting to those commands. Note also the connection of each command with God’s authority in Christ. The areas of authority mentioned are very similar to the purpose of Christ: doctrine, spiritual warfare, obedience to instructions, preaching, teaching, correcting, warning, etc. It’s critical that every young leader knows that he or she is called according to God’s purpose in Christ Jesus.

• **2 Timothy 1:9** He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...

Young Timothy’s must capture a fresh revelation of Christ’s authority. This involves a renewed connection with the Lord beyond salvation to an understanding and acceptance of His will. Otherwise, His commands will be trivialized with a wealth of religious practices and symbolism. And, simple instructions like Paul gave Timothy and others are diminished and, in many cases, ignored.

• **Titus 2:15** Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

The authoritative command in the above passage is referring to an injunction or mandate. What is a mandate? It’s “*an authoritative command; especially, a formal order from a superior court or official to an inferior one.*” Paul is commanding Titus to use all the authority Christ has delegated to him to fulfill His purpose. There’s mandates given by Christ to a new generation of leaders. There’s the authority to act given within the mandate and the requirement for the mandate to be obeyed. In addition, there’s a mandated territory. I’ll say more about that later, but for now, it is important for young leaders and God’s people to view Christ’s authority in the context His mandates.

What are the two most prominent last commands of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not the Great Commission, which not only includes going, but making disciples, and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? We must fully align ourselves with both to really count ourselves under the authority of Christ. A brief review of the Early Church provides a most wonderful example of how to fulfill these commands.

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### The Great Commission

**Acts 1:8** "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

**Acts 1:4-5** And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

### The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

**Acts 2:40-43** And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

**Acts 2:1-4** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

**Acts 4:1-2** Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

**Acts 4:4** However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

**Acts 4:12** "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**Acts 4:7-8** And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:

**Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

**Acts 5:14-15** And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

**Acts 5:32** "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

**Acts 5:41-42** So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

**Acts 6:1** Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

**Acts 6:3** "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;

**Acts 6:5-6** And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of
| Acts 6:7 | Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. |
| Acts 6:8 | And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. |
| Acts 8:4-8 | Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city. |
| Acts 8:25 | So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. |
| Acts 8:28 | And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. |
| Acts 9:15-16 | But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." |
| Acts 9:17 | 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." |
| Acts 10:27-28 | While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning." Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He...
| Acts 11:18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." | said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' |
| Acts 11:17 "If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" | Acts 11:22-24 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. 23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. |
| Acts 11:19-21 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. 20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. | Acts 11:22 But the word of God grew and multiplied. |
| Acts 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied. | Acts 13:2-5 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. |
| Acts 13:12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. | Acts 13:9-11 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11 "And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. |
| Acts 13:44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. Acts 13:46-49 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" 48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. | Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. |
Acts 18:24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.

1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

1 Corinthians 14:22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

Acts 18:26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

1 Corinthians 14:39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

Acts 19:8-10 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 19:18-20 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

2 Timothy 4:5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

1 Timothy 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

1 Timothy 4:14 NLT Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.

2 Timothy 1:6 NLT This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.

The above litany of passages proves something very conclusive about how the Early Church understood and submitted themselves to Christ’s authority. If new generation
leaders desire to be united with Christ and His purpose, then they must unequivocally accept the certain connection between the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Great Commission. Paul’s relationship with Timothy and the church is one that boldly advocates this connection under the authority of Christ. This was the biblical pattern in the Early Church. But it does not appear to be the case today with many pastors who continue to follow patterns that do not encourage believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit and operate in His gifts. For this reason, a lukewarm environment has settled over many churches. Has the Holy Spirit stopped distributing His gifts? Of course not! New Generation leaders must correct this error and boldly minister the things of the Spirit. Otherwise, they will be like many who are operating outside of God’s authority. Paul, Timothy, and all the other young leaders never stopped ministering the Holy Spirit. There was no watered-downed approach by any of the young generation in the Early Church. This is because they viewed this twofold connection as the commandment of the Lord. They had met God’s authority in Christ.

- 1 Corinthians 14:37-40 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Of course, I’ve heard those in authority defensively say things must be done in an orderly fashion in church. But who’s order is to be on display in the church; God’s or man’s? And who’s making the decisions? Here’s some good advice for young leaders.

“All who serve God must categorically refrain from making decisions on the basis of their own thoughts; rather, they are to execute the will of God...Wherever there is a church on this earth which truly obeys God’s authority, there is the testimony of the kingdom and there Satan is defeated.”

You are in the best position for transformation when you are united in Christ’s authority. This means you must make His priorities your priorities and execute His will in line with His commands.

- Romans 12:1-3 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

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Chapter 5: Apostolic Authority

The Chief Apostle

The nature and operation of the ministry gift of apostle has been awakened in the church today. However, this ministry gift cannot properly function or be accurately understood without fully acknowledging Christ’s authority. If you are going to partake or share in Christ’s work, then you must consider (fix your eyes and mind on) our Chief Apostle, Jesus Christ.

- **Hebrews 3:1** Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus…

Apostolic authority flows from above. Note Jesus is declared the “**Apostle and High Priest of our confession.***” The Greek, homologia (hom-ol-og-ee’-ah) refers to the agreement of what we speak or acknowledge as truth. We speak all the same thing and are like-minded with Christ. He’s the authority in our life. To meet Jesus is to meet God’s authority. Therefore, to overlook or diminish Christ’s commandments in any way is opposing His authority over the church. Many religious structures and practices today demonstrate a lack of respect and understanding of God’s authority in Christ. God’s desire is to transform this situation in the new generation church. The difference between religious authority and Christ’s authority is that religious authority leans almost entirely on human reasoning. If young leaders cannot see the conflict between the will of man and God’s will, then they are in trouble. Too many leaders are mixing up reason with God’s authority. All who want to know God and understand His authority need to make a choice. Like Watchman Nee says,

“If anyone wishes to learn obedience he must cast aside reason. He must either live by God’s authority or live by human reason — it is absolutely impossible to live by both. He is God, and He has the authority to do what He likes. We cannot follow Him on the one hand and on the other hand demand to know the reason.”

Transformation embodies a transfer of authority. It is no less dramatic than that of Saul who became Paul, called to be an apostle by the Chief Apostle.

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<tr>
<th>Before Transformation</th>
<th>After Transformation</th>
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<td><strong>Acts 9:1-2</strong> Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.</td>
<td><strong>Acts 9:20</strong> Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.</td>
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<td><strong>Acts 9:22</strong> But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.</td>
<td><strong>Acts 9:27</strong> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he</td>
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Acts 9:14 "And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

Acts 9:26 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.

Acts 22:4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

Acts 26:12 "While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

Acts 22:10 "So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.'

Acts 26:15-18 "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. '

'But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Paul saw the light of Christ. There’s no evidence that he argued with or reasoned with the Lord. The transfer of authority from the religious leaders to Christ is the same needed today. I like how Watchman Nee puts it, "No one who knows God will argue, for reason is judged and set aside by the light." A new generation of leaders cannot effectively engage in Kingdom Advancement without first being transformed. And this transformation involves a transfer of authority. To meet Jesus is to meet God’s authority. Have you met Jesus in this way? How can you know? Again, Watchman Nee provides a worthy insight into this question:

"Whether or not a brother has met authority may be readily discerned by observing: (1) whether he has any rebellious words, (2) whether he reasons before God, and (3) whether he still offers many opinions."

Are you more influenced by the power of reasoning or by the authority of Christ? Again, Watchman Nee says, "One who has not met authority often aspires to be God’s counsellor." How can young leaders really know Him or engage in His mission to advance His Kingdom on earth without connecting first with His authority? There must be a proper understanding, connection, and coordination with Christ’s apostolic authority to effectively advance God’s Kingdom. Jesus Christ is our Chief Cornerstone, our Chief Shepherd, our Bishop (Overseer), our High Priest, Our Lord, and our Apostle.

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63 Watchman Nee, Spiritual Authority, p. 98.
64 Ibid. p. 102.
65 Ibid., p. 102.
He was our Apostle when He walked upon the earth. He is still our Apostle at the right hand of God in heaven. Jesus Christ is our Apostle! We are His associates! The counsel of heaven is very clear regarding apostolic authority. Hear Him!

- **Luke 9:35** And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son¹. Hear Him!"

**The Chain of Command**

A chain of command refers to the order in which authority and power functions and is delegated from top to bottom. It’s important to understand that instructions flow downward along the chain of command and accountability flows upward. In military terms, those holding military rank are eligible to exercise authority. These individuals are chosen by a team of superiors. For example, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) has officers, staff non-commissioned officers (Staff NCO’s), and NCO’s who give orders to a defined group of people immediately below them. In my combat experience in Vietnam, I began as a member of a fireteam and then was given the responsibility of leading a fireteam of Marines in battle. All recruits are taught the chain of command during basic training. It runs from the lowest ranking recruit to the President of the United States. Breaking the chain of command is a most serious offense in the military. This is the case, to my knowledge, for military training in all nations. The President of the United States is the Commander in Chief over the nation’s Armed Forces. Although we need to be careful of the analogy, Jesus Christ is the Commander in Chief of the Armies of God.

- **Joshua 5:14-15** So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" ¹⁵ Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

Does God have a chain of command? This is an important question because the answer affects the degree by which one recognizes and accepts the flow of apostolic authority in the church. Let’s examine His word to see if one exists.

Paul on more than one occasion uses the marital relationship to talk about Christ and the church. Right after instructing Ephesian believers to be filled with the Spirit and to submit themselves to each other in the fear of God (Eph. 5:18-21), he says the following:

- **Ephesians 5:22-33** Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their
own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Although there’s been considerable misunderstanding and abuse over the husband being the spiritual head of the family and over the whole notion of submission, we cannot ignore the existence of a godly chain of command or order of spiritual authority. This appears to be confirmed in another context with believers at Corinth and some of the difficult passages instructing Timothy.

- **1 Corinthians 11:3** But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.
- **1 Timothy 2:11** Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

It appears that a chain of command is emerging from these passages. We can add children to the chain because chapter 6 of Ephesians begins with “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*” So, God’s chain of command is: God, Christ, Husband, Wife, Children. Apparently, God in His wisdom knew the enemy would sow confusion and conflict in families and churches to disrupt and destroy the free flow of spiritual authority in Christ. Therefore, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write three profound balancing and guiding statements to the Ephesian, Corinthian, and Galatian churches:

- **Ephesians 5:33** Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.
- **1 Corinthians 11:11** Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.
- **Galatians 3:26-29** NLT For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. 28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.

The phrase “*in the Lord*” refers us back to the flow of authority from the Head, Jesus Christ who has been given all authority from His Father. However, Paul reminds us that he is speaking about Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32). I believe there’s a divine connection between the ascension or leadership gifts (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher) and the chain of command under discussion. I find this most evident in the ministry gift of apostle. A brief look at the progression of how Christ
orderly set up the leadership in His church after His resurrection and ascension displays the chain of command.

1. Jesus gave commandments through the Holy Spirit to His chosen apostles during 40 days before His ascension. (Acts 1:1-8).
2. Peter fulfills Scripture, closing the leadership gap caused by Judas. Matthias is appointed in apostolic ministry and numbered with the apostles. (Acts 1:15-26).
4. Jesus gives the ascension or leadership gifts to the church. (Eph. 4:7-16).
5. Jesus sets divine order and prioritizes functioning in the church beginning first with apostles; second prophets; third teachers and so on. (1Cor. 12:28).
7. Apostles Paul and Barnabas appoint elders in all the churches. (Acts 14:23). Note: Paul also instructed Titus to do the same (Titus 1:5). He provides elder qualifications (1Tim. 3:1-7). Those who work hard in preaching and teaching are to be doubly honored (1Tim. 5:17).

It’s important not to get legalistic here; however, there exists a direct flow of spiritual authority in the chain of command from Christ through the apostles. And it’s fully displayed in the illustration of the family. Watchman Nee explains it this way:

“God has set the husband as the delegated authority of Christ, with the wife as representative of the church. It would be difficult for the wife to be subject to her husband if she did not see the delegated authority vested in him by God. She needs to realize that the real issue is God’s authority, not her husband … God has arranged to have the men represent Christ as authority and the women represent the church in subjection.”

Family and church conflicts arise without a respect and proper understanding of the above dynamic. There’s a powerful spiritual conclusion for young leaders when it comes to the exercise of authority with respect to the chain of command.

- **1 Peter 5:5-11** Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

God cannot establish you if you operate outside His authority. New generation leaders need to acknowledge and function within God’s chain of command. Spiritual authority in

the Early Church appears to flow in a consistent pattern of: God, Christ, Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers, followed by appointed elders in every church. It is from this vantage point that things are “set in order” (1Cor. 11:34; 14:40; Titus 1:5) in the church. The priesthood of all believers is fully displayed in the chain of command.

- **Revelation 1:4-6** John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**The Measure of Authority**

The Apostle Paul is a notable example of the proper understanding and operation of spiritual authority. He acknowledged God’s authority as a creation principle and understood his delegated role as an apostle in accordance with God’s will. You cannot read the Epistles without noticing the frequent references to Christ. References like, “in Christ, in Him” (131 times), “by Him, by Christ” (14 times), “through Christ, through Him” (13 times) indicate an amazing connection with Christ. Paul was united with Christ and with Christ’s authority. Paul mentions his apostleship numerous times. Many of the greetings to the Epistles stress that his apostolic calling is completely by the will of God. He goes to great lengths to indicate it was not by the flesh or the will of man.

- **Romans 1:1** Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God
- **1 Corinthians 1:1** Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
- **2 Corinthians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:
- **Galatians 1:1** Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),
- **Ephesians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:
- **Colossians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
- **1 Timothy 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,
- **2 Timothy 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,
- **Titus 1:1** Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

Peter also uses similar greetings in his Epistles.
Both Paul and Peter viewed themselves as apostles of Jesus Christ and they affirm God’s authority in Christ in their selection. The fact that they emphasize their servant status with Christ further shows they understood their apostolic authority as a delegated authority under the Lord Jesus Christ. They were subject to Christ’s authority. To view spiritual authority in this way, fully connected and bonded to Christ is the starting place for all His chosen leaders. This is a lesson for all young leaders today. The authority Christ entrusted to them was a measured authority. They recognized it had limits or boundaries.

Paul explains his spiritual authority in Christ because there were those who questioned it. One of the first things he clarifies with the Corinthian church is that his apostolic authority does not have “dominion over your faith”:

- 2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

What does this mean? It means leaders must not attempt to rule or control the faith of believers. This is happening in more churches than is commonly thought. Some pastors are very territorial and possessive. There’s always an overextension of spiritual authority with elements of control over God’s flock in these situations. Peter expresses it this way in his instructions to church leaders:

- 1 Peter 5:1-4 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

The point is that you are not a master over any one’s faith. I thought it was only a matter of training when I observed pastors misusing spiritual authority, but I believe there’s also a different spirit in operation. God’s word declares that only Jesus is “the author and finisher of our faith.” (Heb. 12:2).

The second thing Paul clarifies regarding the exercise of his apostolic authority under the Lordship of Jesus Christ is its purpose. He reminds Corinthian believers that the authority Christ gave him is for building them up.
2 Corinthians 10:8 NLT I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn't tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority.

2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

2 Corinthians 13:10 NIV This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

The Corinthian church was plagued with many problems. Frank Damazio, in his epic work, *The Making of a Leader*, documents 15 problems in Second Corinthians alone: 67

- Restoration after discipline (2:6-11).
- Ungratefulness (4:8-13; 6:1-10; 11:7-9).
- Impurity (7:1-10; 11:1-3).
- Insincerity (8:1-10).
- Comparing with one another (10:12, 13).
- Deception (11:1-4).
- Disguised ministries (11:13-16).
- Glorifying after the flesh (11:18).
- Debates, envying, and wrath (12:20).
- Strifes and backbitings (12:20).
- Unrepentance (12:21).
- Reprobates (13:5).
- Receiving apostolic correction (13:6-12)

It seems the entire letters to the Corinthian church has to do with apostolic authority. Although we cannot look at every instance where Paul used the authority Christ gave him, there are a few that will enhance our knowledge of the limits of delegated authority. Paul encourages the Corinthian believers to imitate him:

1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

Interestingly, Paul is referring to the teachings he is passing on to them. Paul was fully committed to and engaged with the new generation. He is concerned with what they will become. His encouragement for them to “imitate” him as he imitates Christ displays his apostolic authority is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It’s important to recognize this before looking at the issue because the issue of head coverings is one that remains

in some churches today around the world. I’ve been in churches where pastors and other church leaders required women to wear physical head coverings as a sign of submission to men and to God. And the women faced much scorn if they did not comply. But privately they would express their dissatisfaction to me and question the biblical validity of the legalistic practice. It was quite evident that this required practice was a heavy yoke upon them. Is this what Paul intended? Was he legislating that women must wear a head covering and have long hair? Or, that men can never wear hats? Some religious leaders make this a litmus test for spirituality; however, this is not the covering Paul is talking about. Paul is using an example from Jewish law that required married women to cover their hair to illustrate the greater importance of having a spiritual covering. How do I know this? Look closely at what Paul says.

- 1 Corinthians 11:10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.
- 1 Corinthians 11:16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

Note that Paul does not indicate or use a word to describe what type of physical covering (hat, veil, scarf, etc.) should be required of women. This is because under the New Covenant none is required except for an inward attitude of respect for God’s delegated authorities in the church. To view otherwise, is to place disciples in bondage and test the Lord. Christ’s delegated authorities are forbidden to do this.

- Acts 15:10 "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

The requirement Paul is talking about is not physical, but spiritual. Paul is saying just like the Jewish law requires a married woman to wear a physical head covering, God now requires a covering of spiritual authority in Christ. The covering is spiritual authority. Otherwise, Paul would not have made clear that the New Testament churches have “no such custom.” You might be wondering what angels have to do with it. There are several explanations. All of them deal with spiritual authority.

1. The angels represent the spiritual realm and Paul’s reference is referring to the fallen demonic angel’s effort to move the church toward pride and arrogance when God’s created order of authority is violated.
2. The angels relate to the original authority lost in the Garden of Eden because Eve acted independently from Adam and came out from his covering of spiritual authority.
3. The angels view the life of the church and are sensitive to any resistance to God’s created order of authority.

I believe each of the above explanations have merit. Paul is talking about spiritual authority in heaven and on earth. He uses the symbolism of Jewish tradition to illustrate his point. Religious leaders who focus on the physical head covering miss the principle
of spiritual authority. Paul was not instituting a practice of wearing physical head coverings into the New Testament churches. Nor was he diminishing the ministry of women in the church. After all, they were praying and prophesying along with men. (1Cor. 11:4-5). It’s important to understand the truth in what Paul is saying about the covering of spiritual authority. To do so, you must look behind the veil.

“Behind the symbolism of wearing the veil is the acknowledgment of mankind’s need to show submission to divinely appointed authority if he is to regain the dominion lost (Gen. 1:28). True authority comes by submissiveness and both men and women – husbands and wives – are called to learn it (Eph. 5:21).”

Any attempt by spiritual leaders or husbands to view or enforce an inferior or second-class status upon women in the church and home is a violation of God’s creative order and a misappropriation of spiritual authority. This authority does not represent Christ’s authority. The Fire Bible: Global Study Edition has one of the best commentaries that I’ve seen on chapter 11 of First Corinthians:

“Paul bases the husband’s headship not on cultural considerations but on God’s created activity and purpose in creating the woman to help the man. Submitting to this order is not meant to be demeaning to anyone, for it does not imply control or oppression. Rather, the husband must recognize the worth God places on the woman, and he is to take responsibility to protect and lead in such a way as to allow his wife to fulfill her God-given roles and responsibilities in the home, the church and all of life. Just as Christ is not inferior or second-class because the Father is his head (i.e., he submitted to him, and his purpose was to honor him), so the woman is not inferior in her relationship to the man. In God’s kingdom, leadership is never connected with being “greater.” Servanthood and obedience are the keys to greatness in God’s kingdom (Mt 20:25-28; Php 2:5-9). In God’s design, the highest honor is always found in submission and service (see Mt 23:11-12; Lk 22:26-27).”

Many spiritual leaders have been unable to effectively equip and release women into ministry in accordance with their callings and anointings. This is very sad since most Christians today are women. Instead, there’s been restraint upon them, using Scriptures like the one we are discussing and these difficult passages:

- **1 Corinthians 14:34** Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?
- **1 Timothy 2:11-12** Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

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Considering what was mentioned earlier regarding women praying and prophesying in church and God’s creative purpose, these passages are not some absolute prohibition against women speaking in church. Such an interpretation is absurd. So, what do these passages mean? After all something is being prohibited. I found the answer in one word that addresses both passages. That word is authority, but it’s a different word from the most common one in the Greek. The Greek verb authenteo (ow-then-teh’o) has a meaning that brings clarity and guidance to all we’ve been talking about. Look carefully at the meaning.

1. One who with his own hands kills another or himself (earliest meaning)
2. One who acts on his own authority, autocratic
3. An absolute master
4. To govern, exercise dominion over one

Anyone who assumes a stance of independent authority and gives controlling orders from that position should not be permitted to speak in the church. I believe this statement by Watchman Nee describes what is happening in many churches today.

“There is no place for isolated individual service. In spiritual work all must serve in coordination. Coordination is the rule; the individual is not the unit. Today many are trying to serve God independently. They have never been under authority; they unwittingly sin against God’s authority.”

Remember, God’s word declares men and women are not independent of each other (1Cor. 11:11). Both men and women of the new generation need to step up and step out together in their calling and ministries. God gives the measure of authority to do this!

There is a measure of authority that God gives those he calls. This delegated authority is equal to the assigned purpose or task. The late Dr. C. Peter Wagner accurately identified two essential characteristics that set apostles apart from others in the body of Christ:

1. The amount of delegated authority
2. The sphere of ministry assigned (churches, leaders, cities/nations)

This renowned teacher of God’s word also indicated that “the authority of an apostle is only operative within the sphere of ministry that God has assigned to the apostle.”

The Apostle Paul speaks of this very thing and the limits of his authority in Second Corinthians.

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72 Ibid., p. 38.
• **2 Corinthians 10:12-18** For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment. 17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

First, Paul was keenly aware that God had set him apart and changed his life forever. He repeatedly identifies himself as *“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be and apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.”* (Rom. 1:1 NIV). The Greek *aphorizoo* (af-or-id’-zo) means to mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate. Although Paul understood his calling, he also recognized the boundaries when it came to exercising apostolic authority. This is what he’s addressing in Second Corinthians. There are several measure words used in connection with his assigned sphere and authority in Christ.

- *metreo* (met-reh’-o) – to measure, take the dimensions of, evaluate. *metron* (met’ron) – an instrument or standard for measuring to determine extent or limit. (Note: to measure oneself by comparing with others is not according to the measure of the rule which God has apportioned to us. This is important for young leaders to grasp and evaluate themselves in accordance with God’s standard; not man’s.)

- *kanon* (kan-ohn’) – a rod or straight piece of rounded wood to which anything is fastened to it to keep it straight. A definitely bounded or fixed space within the limits of which one’s power of influence is confined. Any rule or standard, or principle of law for living and acting. (Note: Young leaders must keep their eyes fixed on Jesus and operated in coordination with the authority He has delegated. In other words, “Run in your lane!”)

- *ametros* (am’-et—ros) – beyond limits, immeasurable, extravagant and excessive. (Note: Young leaders must learn to love the praise of God more than the praise of men).

- *megaluna* (meg-al-oO’-no) – to make or declare great, increase, enlarge, magnify, get glory and praise. (Note: It’s important for young leaders to accept and operate in the level of delegated authority, but also to recognize that Christ will give more authority when their faith becomes greater).

- *huperekeina* (hoop-er-ek-ti’no) – to extend beyond the prescribed bounds, stretch out beyond measure or overmuch. (Note: Young leaders must serve in place and avoid overreaching prematurely into higher spheres of authority).

All the above words are used more than once in Paul’s discussion of his apostolic authority. In them, new generation leaders will find important lessons in their assigned spheres of influence. Most importantly, they will be properly aligned under Christ’s
measure of delegated authority for Kingdom advancement. They must be careful not to over-extend the boundaries because this does not help people to respect or submit to Christ’s authority.

The Price of Authority

This section of our study on spiritual authority provides young leaders with a reality check. There’s nothing wrong with desiring to effectively operate in the authority of Christ. However, many fail to recognize or accept that the way usually is filled with difficulties. Paul goes into detail regarding many of these difficulties.

- **2 Corinthians 6:3-10** We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. 4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

The above description reveals that Paul had both good and bad experiences in ministry. The following chart shows the stark reality in the ministry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardships</th>
<th>Blessings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribulations (extreme pressure)</td>
<td>Patience (steadfast perseverance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs (imposed by external conditions)</td>
<td>Knowledge (spiritual understanding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distresses (extreme affictions that box you in)</td>
<td>Forbearance (endurance in bearing troubles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumults (uprisings against authority)</td>
<td>Kindness (moral goodness/integrity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stripes &amp; Imprisonment (public calamity leading to punishments)</td>
<td>Holy Spirit (help, comfort, and partnership with the Spirit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labors (intense toil united with trouble for the sake of the salvation of others)</td>
<td>Sincere love (uncompromising and relentless love)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeplessness (a burdensome watching)</td>
<td>The Word of Truth (sanctified and guided by God’s word)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastings (frequent abstaining from food &amp; drink driven by want)</td>
<td>God’s power &amp; armor of righteousness (strength and ability in righteousness acceptable to God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonor (unseemliness and offensive, disgraced)</td>
<td>Honor (the shining/glorious condition of being exalted by God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evil report (utterance of defaming words)</td>
<td>Good report (utterance of good words of praise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceivers (misleading others into error)</td>
<td>True (speaking the truth in love)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown (ignorant and to be disregarded)</td>
<td>Well known (fully acknowledged by God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dying (daily living in danger &amp; death)</td>
<td>Alive (living and thriving in the Lord)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chastened (punished with vigorous intent to destroy or make extinct) | Not killed (liberated from death and the bond of anything)
---|---
Sorrowful (thrown into sadness and grief) | Always rejoicing (exceeding joy and gladness)
Poor (destitute of wealth, influence, position, and honor) | Rich (thoroughly furnished with spiritual riches)
Have nothing (nothing in this world) | Possess all (all the treasures of heaven in Christ)

As you can see, there were hardships and a lot of pressure on all sides. Can spiritual leaders expect any less today? Spiritual authority comes with a price. And it’s a price we all must pay to be a minister of the gospel. I believe it’s important for young leaders to get a realistic picture of what’s involved in the ministry. The Bible provides such a picture. Here’s another place where Paul describes in detail the “perils” of the ministry.

- **2 Corinthians 11:23-33** Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 28 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 29 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. 30 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 31 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; 32 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Interestingly, Paul uses the Greek *diakonos* (dee-ak’-on-os) for “minister” in both of the passages under examination. Often the broader understanding of a minister as a servant or attendant overshadows the more specific reference to those who execute the commands of another. A servant has a Master. Therefore, a minister and ministry refer to those who by the command of God are given spiritual authority to proclaim and promote His cause throughout the earth. This ministry is not easy according to the Bible. You can easily see from God’s word that Paul was personally in touch with Christ’s sufferings and persecutions. He was so “*in Christ*” that he rejoiced like the other apostles that he was privileged to share in His sufferings.

- **Acts 5:41** So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.
- **Colossians 1:24** I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.

It’s important for new generation leaders to understand that suffering for Christ is to be commended. Like my spiritual father, an apostle to the nations, instructed me: “It
comes with the territory." Here are twenty ways Paul shared (had fellowship with) Christ's sufferings.73

1. “Many hardships” encountered in serving God (Acts 14:22)
2. Deep distress at the sin (i.e., defiance and opposition toward God) in society (Acts 17:16).
3. Serving the Lord and his people with “many tears” (2Cor. 2:4).
4. Warning the church “night and day with tears” because of the destruction caused by those who had twisted Christ’s message (Acts 20:31).
5. Grief in leaving Christian co-workers and congregations with whom he had served (Acts 20:17-38) and his broken heart because of their sorrow (21:13).
6. “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” because of his “brothers” (i.e., fellow Jews) refusing to accept Jesus as their Messiah (i.e., Savior, Christ, Rom. 9:2-3; 10:1).
7. Many difficulties and troubles as a result of his work for Christ (2Cor. 4:8-12; 11:23-29; 1Cor. 4:11-13).
8. Grief over the church tolerating sin and ungodliness among its members (2Cor. 2:1-3; 12:21; 1Cor. 5:1-2; 6:8-10).
9. “great distress and anguish of heart” as he wrote to those who were abandoning their faith in Christ and devotion to the true message (2Cor. 2:4).
10. His desperate desire to be with Christ and free from the trouble, sin and concerns of the world (2Cor. 5:1-4; Php. 1:23).
11. His being “harassed at every turn” because of his commitment to the church’s purity (2Cor. 7:5; 11:3-4).
12. His daily “concern for all the churches” (2Cor. 11:28).
13. His inward burning for Christians who are deceived and led into sin (2Cor. 11:29).
14. His having to condemn those who preached a gospel other than the authentic NT revelation (Gal. 1:6-9).
15. His experience of “pains of childbirth” for those who have rejected God’s grace and tried to gain spiritual salvation through their own efforts (Gal. 4:19; 5:4).
16. His “tears” over the enemies of Christ’s cross (Php. 3:18).
17. His “distress” in wondering whether some might be tempted to abandon their faith (1Th 3:5-8).
18. Persecution because of his passion for godly living (2Ti 3:12).
19. Sorrow over the believers in Asia who deserted him during a time of great persecution (2Ti 1:15).
20. His desperate plea to Timothy to guard the true faith in light of the coming faithlessness and spiritual rebellion against God (1Ti 4:1; 6:20; 2Ti 1:14).

Take a moment and check any on the list that you have experienced in ministry. No wonder Paul could implore young leaders to imitate him as he imitated Christ. You will face many things on the list when you step out in the authority Christ has granted you as an emerging leader.

Young leaders should not be attracted too much to the attention surrounding leaders who walk in prominent levels of spiritual authority. All attention should first be

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73 Fire Bible: Global Study Edition, p. 2218
placed squarely upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His will. Two things are important to understand in the context of the price of authority: The preeminence of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of His sufferings. The supremacy of Christ must be first upon the heart and mind of young leaders. Leaders cannot compete with God and be effective in Kingdom Advancement. Look at the contrast between these two leaders. Which one will properly use spiritual authority? Which one will misuse spiritual authority?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paul</th>
<th>Diotrephes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Corinthians 12:9 And He said to me, &quot;My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.&quot; Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.</td>
<td>3 John 1:9 NLT I wrote to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us. 10 When I come, I will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when they do help, he puts them out of the church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colossians 1:18 And He (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.</td>
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</table>

Seldom is the fellowship of His sufferings considered among leaders. Yet, Paul’s prayer was “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:10-11). New generation leaders need to be led on a straight course regarding the ministry. Today, ministry success is often connected with the fame and fortune of ministers, the size of buildings and crowds, and many other external things used to evaluate ministers. I urge all young leaders to avoid measuring their effectiveness in ministry with such foolish criteria. Just think of this for a moment. If you use the same criteria to evaluate the ministry of the apostles in the New Testament, you would have to conclude they were all failures. It’s obvious this was not the case with them and their ministries. Young leaders must abandon all human notions of success in ministry and seek to be “in Christ.” And to be “in Christ” is to be connected and coordinating with His authority in the work of ministry. Look at Paul’s response when the Philippian church renewed their support for him and his ministry. In times of need or in times of abundance there was no change in his spiritual demeanor or use of apostolic authority. He remained fully connected with Christ.

- Philippians 4:10-13 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Here is some great counsel from Watchman Nee for young leaders regarding the price of authority:
“The sparrows fly in flocks, whereas the eagles fly singly. If we can only fly at a low level because we cannot bear the solitude of high flying, we are unfit to be in authority. To be in authority requires restraint; one must sanctify himself. Others may, but you cannot; others may speak, but you cannot. You must obey the Spirit of the Lord as He teaches within you. You may feel lonely and miss the fervor of the crowd; nevertheless, you dare not mingle with the brothers and sisters in joking and jesting. This is the price of authority. Unless we sanctify ourselves like our Lord we are not qualified to be in authority.”74

“All who would maintain God’s authority must know how to oppose their own feelings, how to lay aside the deepest of their affections towards their relatives, friends and loved ones. The demand of God is exacting: unless one lays aside his own affections he cannot serve God. He who is sanctified is God’s servant; he who is not sanctified is a common person.”75

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74 Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority, p. 181.
75 Ibid., p. 183.
Chapter 6: The Obedience of Faith

Submission and Obedience

The Scripture speaks of the obedience of faith. Submission and obedience are greatly misunderstood by many leaders today. Both biblical concepts fully relate to Christ's authority.

- Romans 1:5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,
- Romans 16:26 KJV But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:
- Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?
- James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Submission and obedience are essential to Kingdom advancement. Watchman Nee makes an important observation regarding obedience and faith.

“Obedience is a foundational principle. If this matter of authority remains unsolved, nothing can be solved. As faith is the principle by which we obtain life, so obedience is the principle by which that life is lived out.” 76

The best environment for miracles is when faith is anchored in Christ's authority. In fact, you can expect miracles to happen when this is the case. One of the greatest examples of this is the Roman Centurion who came to Jesus on behalf of his servant, who was seriously ill.

- Luke 7:2-10 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. 3 So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 5 "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue." 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. 7 "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed." 8 "For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" 10 And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

76 Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority, p. 23.
The Centurion has acknowledged that Jesus is a Superior Officer with more authority. He has linked faith with Christ’s authority to heal. Jesus heralds this display of faith as the greatest in all of Israel. Watchman Nee goes as far to say, “Believers would best be called “obeayers,” for they are to be subject to the authority of the Lord as well as to believe in Him.” You might say faith is at its highest level when it’s coordinated with the authority of Christ. I believe God desires to restore this connection in new generation leaders. This is the obedience of faith.

Submission is also misunderstood and misused today in churches around the world. There’s an error in the application of submission and obedience. The church is affected by many who don’t know how to obey. They have been damaged by those who have not been trained how to be in authority under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is a twofold problem in the church. Pastors demand submission, but don’t know how to obediently and properly exercise the authority Christ has entrusted to them. The apostles displayed a healthy awareness of both the limits of their authority and a wholesome respectful attitude toward dignitaries. Watchman Nee clarifies this distinction by indicating, “Submission is a matter of attitude, while obedience is a matter of conduct.” He also makes an important qualification regarding submission and obedience.

“1. Obedience is related to conduct: it is relative. Submission is related to heart attitude: it is absolute. 2. God alone receives unqualified obedience without measure; any person lower than God can only receive qualified obedience. 3. Should the delegated authority issue an order clearly contradicting God’s command, he will be given submission but not obedience. We should submit to the person who has received delegated authority from God, but we should disobey the order which offends God.”

This is a very helpful assessment of submission and obedience. Often, I suspect, believers sitting in pews, understand obedience and submission as something expected of them without question. Something like blind obedience to their pastors. But blind obedience is not the obedience of faith. Neither is forced obedience. Therefore, Paul reminded believers that he did not have rule or control over their faith (2Cor. 1:24). And, look at how the apostles responded to the command given them by the rulers, elders, scribes, and the Jewish high priest and his family.

- Acts 4:18-20 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

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78 Ibid., p. 107
79 Ibid., p. 109.
Remember, these religious leaders were offended by a notable miracle that had taken place through the apostles, who exercised the authority and power in the Name of Jesus. Their question was the same one posed to Jesus when He walked as a man on the earth. “By what power and what name have you done this?” (Acts 4:7). Peter, filled with the Spirit, told them it was Jesus. You would think the religious leaders would be thrilled that the lame man had been healed. Instead, they commanded the apostles “not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” Any commands by religious leaders or government officials that disobey God are unlawful commands. This scenario plays out again with these same leaders and the Sadducees.

- Acts 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Many leaders today are troubled when faced with obedience to God or human authorities, including pressure to conform to secular cultures who want to remove God from society. But there will always be conflicts between the Spirit and the flesh, both internally and externally. However, the apostles appear extremely confident in facing these situations. This is because they demonstrate a submissive attitude toward the leaders while in action obeying the command of God. They adhered to a much higher authority in Christ. Even the religious leaders recognized the apostles had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Young leaders need to spend more time with Jesus.

Obeying the Lord is not always easy. This is because it’s a learned behavior. How do I know this? Because Jesus Himself learned obedience. How did He do this?

- Hebrews 5:5-11 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” 6 As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek”; 7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

The Greek manthano (man-than'-o) in verse 8 means to learn by use and practice, to be in the habit of or accustomed to. Note also that learning obedience “perfected” Jesus for His divine purpose. This means His obedience arrived at a completed state to attain
the goal. His Heavenly Father had now qualified Him to be the Savior of all those who obey Him. Young leaders should adopt this same principle of learning obedience? This would require a change of attitude regarding the afflictions which Christians must undergo in behalf of the same cause for which Christ patiently endured. Look at these verses in the Amplified Bible:

- **Romans 5:3-5 AMPC** Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.

- **James 1: 2-4 AMPC** Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing.

- **1 Peter 4:1-2 AMPC** SO, SINCE Christ suffered in the flesh for us, for you, arm yourselves with the same thought and purpose [patiently to suffer rather than fail to please God]. For whoever has suffered in the flesh [having the mind of Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God], So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by [his] human appetites and desires, but [he lives] for what God wills.

- **1 Peter 4:12-19 AMPC** Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange (unusual and alien to you and your position) were befalling you. But insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, rejoice, so that when His glory [full of radiance and splendor] is revealed, you may also rejoice with triumph [exultantly]. If you are censured and suffer abuse [because you bear] the name of Christ, blessed [are you—happy, fortunate, to be envied, with life-joy, and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward condition], because the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. [Isa. 11:2.] But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or any sort of criminal, or as a mischief-maker (a meddler) in the affairs of others [infringing on their rights]. But if [one is ill-treated and suffers] as a Christian [which he is contemptuously called], let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is [deemed worthy to suffer] in this name. For the time [has arrived] for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will [be] the end of those who do not respect or believe or obey the good news (the Gospel) of God? And if the righteous are barely saved, what will become of the godless and wicked? [Prov. 11:31.] Therefore, those who are ill-treated and suffer in accordance with God's will must do right and commit their souls [in charge as a deposit] to the One Who created [them] and will never fail [them].

These passages prove that new generation leaders need to practice obedience. And the practice field of obedience are the trials and tribulations encountered in life and the ministry. Watchman Nee gives very helpful advice on this:
“1. Have a spirit of obedience. 2. Practice obedience. Some individuals are like savages who just cannot obey. But those who are trained do not feel bound no matter where they are placed. They can naturally live out obedience. 3. Learn to exercise delegated authority. He who works for God needs not only to learn to obey authority but also to learn how to be God’s delegated authority in the church and in the home. Once you have learned how to be under God’s authority, you will count yourself as nothing even after God entrusts you with much.”

Young leaders who grow in the obedience of faith are only connected with God’s will. They are under the authority of Christ. They have touched His authority and they know His will. The obedience of faith flows naturally from their connection with Christ’s authority and knowledge of His will.

The Authority of Believers

Many Christians are unaware of the authority Christ has delegated to them. I’m sure it’s ignorance on the part of some and a case of inaction by others. Nevertheless, leaders are responsible to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.” (Eph. 4:11-12). This is not being done in most churches. So, let’s review the authority God has entrusted to believers. I want to begin with one that is often overlooked. I call it “the authority to become.”

- **John 1:12-13** KJV But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Of course, the King James Bible translates authority as power. Although there is a distinction, the connection between authority and power cannot be denied. Jesus sent the apostles out with both (Luke 9:1-2; Mark 3:14-15; Matt. 10:1). It appears that authority (exousia) and power (dunamis) are used interchangeably. So, there’s power in authority and authority in the power. The fundamental authority believers have been given at the outset of receiving or inviting Christ into their lives is the power to become a mature child of God. The obedience of faith is at a primitive stage, but Jesus has given the authority to become obedient children.

- **1 Peter 1:13-16** NLT So think clearly and exercise self-control. Look forward to the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. 14 So you must live as God’s obedient children. Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn’t know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. 16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

The power of transformation is given to us when we receive Christ. The Pauline formula of “in Christ” is the key to activating the obedience of faith for spiritual growth. This is seen in the marks of being born again. These marks begin at salvation. We live in a

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culture of easy believism and cheap grace. There’s a fundamental problem when we observe little or no change in those claiming to be born again. Classical understandings of holiness that are rigid and legalistic are to be avoided in favor of loving others just as they are. However, this truth must be tempered with the truth that Jesus loves us too much to leave us the way we are. A changed heart will lead to a changed life. I found seven marks associated with being born again. These seven marks of being born again are fully confirmed in God’s word. They represent true transformation when engaged with the obedience of faith.

1. Authority to become God’s children (Greek exousia—“right, privilege, ability, capability”)

   **John 1:12-13** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2. Agape Love

   **1 John 4:7-8** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

3. Pursuit of Righteousness

   **1 John 2:29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

4. Resistance Against Sin

   **1 John 3:9** Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

   **1 John 5:18** We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

5. Public Affirmation that Jesus is the Christ

   **1 John 4:2** Therefore, whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Matthew 10:32-33 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

6. Victorious and Overcoming Faith
1 John 5:4-5 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

7. Lively Hope in the Resurrection

1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

The authority of believers does not end here. The typical believer depends too much upon the delegated authority of spiritual leaders in areas where Christ has also given them authority. Jesus gives all Christians the authority and power to do the miraculous. Here are a few of the things:

- **Mark 16:17-20** "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." 19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Note that these miraculous signs **“follow”** the believers. The Greek *parakoloutheo* (par-ak-ol-oo-theh’-o) means *to be always present and to attend one wherever he or she goes.* What are these signs?

- Casting out demons
- Speaking in new tongues
- Divine protection from deadly things
- Healing the sick (by laying on of hands)

These signs are not merely present where believers are, but they accompany or follow close upon them. This is because believers are obediently walking in the footsteps of Jesus. They are imitating His example just like the apostles and believers in the Early Church. What is God doing? He’s establishing His word. And Jesus says to all believers today: **“In My name they will...”** The authority and power to do these things is **“in Christ.”** He’s delegated this authority to believers. Interestingly, Jesus gives full authority and power to leaders and believers in these areas.

- **Luke 10:17-19** Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.
• **Acts 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

• **Matthew 10:1** Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.

These miraculous signs that accompany believers establish and maintain Christ’s authority. In addition, they witness that God’s kingdom is near.

• **Luke 10:9** "And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’"

• **Luke 11:20** "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

New generation leaders and believers need to respond to Christ’s authority and power with the obedience of faith.

**Witchcraft in the Church**

My wife and I were born again early in the Charismatic movement. We followed the example of our spiritual father and other believers in the church to obediently follow Jesus in the supernatural. We regularly cast out demons with others and laid hands on the sick in His name with overwhelming results that equaled the book of Acts. I’ve observed for several years now how many Charismatic and Pentecostal churches have transitioned into a more strictly evangelical ministry. Things like the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, casting out demons, healing of the sick, spiritual gifts, etc., are rarely mentioned publicly any more. And sometimes the public prayers in the church don’t include the Name of Jesus. It’s like the church has lost its power! Watchman Nee identifies two things that cause Christians to lose their power: “1) sin, 2) a reviling of authority.” Why is this the case? What is the problem? Is it evidence of a disconnect with Christ’s authority? Could it possibly be a case of disobedience? If so, then it’s a severe problem in the church. The Apostle Peter gives a clear warning:

• **1 Peter 4:17** For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Non-compliance with Christ’s commands is an affront to God’s authority. Let’s call it what the Bible calls it: rebellion. And what is rebellion? It’s witchcraft!

• **1 Samuel 15:23** For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.”

• **Hebrews 3:7-19** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,

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And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'” 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

I believe God’s word confirms there’s witchcraft in many churches around the world today. Remember, we began this study with Jesus saying, "Why do you call Me’ Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46) and “’Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” (Matt. 7:21). I’ve been unable to fully understand why Jesus severely reprimanded those who prophesied, cast out demons, and did many miracles in His name, until I read this explanation by Watchman Nee:

“In Matthew 7.21 - 23 we find our Lord reprimanding those who prophesy and cast out demons and do many mighty things in His name. Why are they disapproved? Because they make self their starting point; they themselves do things in the name of the Lord. This is the activity of the flesh. Wherefore our Lord pronounces them to be evildoers instead of His laborers. He emphasizes that only that person who does the will of His Father shall enter the kingdom of the heavens. This alone is work in obedience to God’s will, that which originates with God. We are not to find work to do, rather are we to be sent to work by God.”

Furthermore, Watchman Nee says, “if there is no testimony of authority, there is no church nor work.” We serve God through the obedience of faith. In obeying Christ, new generation leaders can renew and maintain God’s authority in every sphere of influence. It’s important for young leaders to realize that only what comes from God constitutes authority. Therefore, organized denominations are the work of man and not God. I declare a new generation church is about to arise by the hand of God. Young leaders must reconnect and be fully established with God’s authority in Christ. Humility is the key to getting back on track. God is able to do this for the obedience of faith.

- Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the

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82 Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority, p. 16.
83 Ibid., p. 115.
commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—

to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Only those who know and obey God’s will are operating in Christ’s authority.

Declarations of Christ’s Authority

The authority and power of Christ is destined to flow through the church to establish God’s authority and advance His kingdom on earth. We can only understand and participate in this supernatural flow united with Jesus and His will. The following declarations of Christ’s authority reveal that Jesus is on His throne.

Christ’s Authority as Creator

- **John 1:3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
- **Colossians 1:16** For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
- **1 Corinthians 8:6 NLT** But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we live for him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life.
- **Hebrews 1:2 NLT** And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.

Christ’s Authority as Sustainer of the World

- **Colossians 1:17 NLT** He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.
- **Hebrews 1:3 NLT** The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

Christ’s Incarnate Authority

- **Philippians 2:5-10 NLT** You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- **John 5:30** “I can do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.
- **John 6:38** “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
• **John 17:2 NLT** For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him.

• **Hebrews 5:7 NLT** While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God.

**Christ’s Authority over Nature**

• **Matthew 8:26-27** But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

• **Mark 11:12 NLT** The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. 14 Then Jesus said to the tree, "May no one ever eat your fruit again!" And the disciples heard him say it.

**Christ’s Authority over Living Creatures**

• **Luke 5:4-6** When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

• **Matthew 17:27** "Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

• **Mark 11:2-4 NLT** "Go into that village over there," he told them. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks, 'What are you doing?' just say, 'The Lord needs it and will return it soon.'" 4 The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door.

**Christ’s Authority over Sickness**

• **Matthew 8:3** Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

• **Mark 2:10-12 NLT** So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 11 "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!" 12 And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"

• **Mark 3:3-5** And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." 4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.
Christ's Authority over Death

- **Matthew 9:23-25** When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24 He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. 25 But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

- **Luke 7:13-15** When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

- **John 11:43-44** Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Christ's Authority over Demons

- **Matthew 12:28** "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- **Mark 5:6-9** When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." 8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" 9 Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

- **1 John 4:4** You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Christ's Authority over Angels

- **Psalm 148:2** Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!

- **Psalm 148:5** Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.

- **Matthew 13:41** "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,
Concluding Remarks and Admonition Chart

Spiritual authority is a prevailing and engaging theme throughout the entire Bible. Young leaders cannot afford to ignore it. I believe we all need a fresh connection with Christ’s authority. I hope and pray this study serves to help the new generation to move forward under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. I want to close this study with one final quote from Watchman Nee followed with a chart to help guide new generation leaders to properly operate in the spiritual authority entrusted to them by Christ. According to Watchman Nee, young leaders must fulfill three principle requirements:84

1. He must know that all authority comes from God. (Young leaders must learn to obey God’s authority and increase their understanding of His word and His will).
2. He must deny himself. (Young leaders must be broken to their own thoughts and opinions to represent His authority. They must teach the whole counsel of God’s word and will to others)
3. He must constantly keep in fellowship with the Lord. (Young leaders must live in God’s presence, be united in His purpose, and learn from Him to know what to do when there are problems in the church)

The following chart is designed to assist young leaders in their attitude toward and operation in spiritual authority. It includes several spiritual admonitions from God’s word with helpful tips.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual Admonitions</th>
<th>Scriptures</th>
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| **Restrain from Selfish ambition** – Don’t minister with insincere motives like electioneering for an office, implying rivalry. | **Philippians 1:16-17 NLT** Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me.  
**Philippians 2:3-4** Let nothing _be done_ through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. |
| **Unhealthy comparisons** – Avoid measuring yourself with others in a competitive spirit to commend or exalt yourself to a higher position. | **2 Corinthians 10:12** For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. |
| **Denominational loyalties** – Be careful of denominational ties and doctrines that don’t align with God’s word. Never choose them over God’s word and judge other believers accordingly, leading | **1 Corinthians 3:1-4 NLT** Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn’t talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants |

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84 Nee, Watchman. *Spiritual Authority*, pp. 116-120.
| Covetness – Relinquish any powerful desire to secure material things in the ministry for personal success and financial gain. Many leaders seek things rather than the will of God. | Acts 20:33-35 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said,'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

**Philippians 4:11** Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

**1 Timothy 6:10 NLT** For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

| Self-willed – Don’t be determined to follow your own opinions even when contrary to God’s word and the counsel of spiritual fathers. Follow Christ! Be faithful to His will! | Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

**Titus 1:7** For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

| Controlling – Avoid being territorial and speaking things to draw a following to your ministry. Cast out and overcome the Gentile spirit in the church that desires to rule people instead of leading and serving them. Adopt the New Testament way of leadership under Christ, the Head of the church. | Mark 10:42-45 So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 43 But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant. 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."
| A Doer of God’s Will – Set your heart and mind on learning and doing God’s will. Align everything you do with God’s word. | Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.  
Mark 3:35 "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."  
John 7:16-18 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. 18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.  
Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. |
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| Able to teach and admonish – Become skilled in instructing others in the essentials of God’s word and His will, including exhortations and warnings. Always remember that your job is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. | Acts 20:27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.  
Romans 15:14 NLT I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them.  
1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were |
written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

**Ephesians 4:11** And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

**2 Timothy 4:2** Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

**1 Timothy 5:17** Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

**Hebrews 5:12** NLT You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.

| Spiritual – Incline yourself toward spiritual things, even the deep things of the Spirit. Develop the habit of using God’s word to discern between good and evil; to become knowledgeable of the spiritual house, the operation of spiritual gifts; and how to restore other believers who sin. Be faithful to understand and obey God’s commands and to rightly apply the Word of God. |
| 1 Corinthians 2:13 NLT When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths. |
| 1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: 1 Corinthians 14:37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. |
| Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. |
| Colossians 1:9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; |

| Serving the Lord with humility – Pray and learn a humble attitude toward God with an unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Eliminate the need for self-attention. |
| John 13:12-17 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I have given you an example, |
that you should do as I have done to you. 16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

**Acts 20:17-20** From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 "serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;"

**Philippians 2:5-8** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross.

**1 Peter 5:5-6** In the same way, you younger men must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God opposes the proud but favors the humble." 6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. (See also James 4:6-10)

**Able to gently rebuke and correct** – Be diligent to firmly and lovingly point out errors and speak words of correction into the lives of believers. Your goal is a positive one: that they may be sound in the faith.

**Revelation 3:19** "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

**1 Timothy 5:1 NLT** Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers.

**1 Timothy 5:19** Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

**Titus 1:9** holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

**Titus 1:13** This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,
As new generation leaders review the above admonitions, I pray their faith will rise with eagerness to lead the new generation church in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the full counsel of God’s word. I pray the restoration of God’s authority in Christ to be established in the new generation church for Kingdom advancement under the Lordship of Jesus Christ!

- **Colossians 3:16-17** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- **Colossians 3:16-17 NLT** Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

- **Colossians 3:16-17 AMPC** Let the word [spoken by] Christ (the Messiah) have its home [in your hearts and minds] and dwell in you in [all its] richness, as you teach and admonish and train one another in all insight and intelligence and wisdom [in spiritual things, and as you sing] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to God with [His] grace in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do [no matter what it is] in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in [dependence upon] His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him.
Works Cited


