

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

Lesson 1

Introduction To Authority

Authority: *the power to determine, adjudicate, or settle issues and disputes; the right to control, command, or determine; the legal power to make and enforce laws*

We will simplify this definition by summarizing authority as follows: the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience.

****The premier purpose of authority is to create and maintain peace and harmony wherever men are found.****

THE RIVER OF AUTHORITY (And The Economic Trinity)

All authority comes from God. He is the first authority, and He is the final authority. He is the creator and giver of authority. All things began with Him, for He is authority.

- **‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.** **Psalm 45:6**

God’s throne is His seat of authority, and His scepter is the emblem of His regal and imperial power. A scepter represents sovereignty, that is, supreme and independent power or authority. This authority flows from the throne of God like a river. It flows from the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is explained by the concept of **Economic Subordinationism**, or **Economic Trinity**. This is a doctrine that states: for the time being and for the sake of the efficiency of divine activities, the nature of the Trinity is such that the Holy Spirit receives from the Son while the Son is submitted to the Father. Though the Persons of the Godhead are co-equal in power, glory, and nature, they differ in role and function. Although some believers disagree with this concept, if there is no difference in the roles of the Trinity then there can be no distinction between the persons. Consider the following facts:

- Jesus is the only-begotten. The Father and the Spirit are not. (**John 3:16**)
- The Son went about His Father’s business. The Father was not about the Son’s business. (**Luke 2:49**)
- The Father anointed the Son with the Holy Spirit. The Son did not anoint the Father with the Holy Spirit. (**Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18**)
- The Father gave the Son. The Son did not give the Father. (**John 3:16**)
- The Father sent the Son. The Son did not send the Father. (**Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; John 5:37; 6:44; 8:18; 10:36; 1 John 4:14**)
- The Son came to do the will of the Father. The Father does not do the will of the Son. (**Psalm 40:7-8; John 6:38; Hebrews 10:7**)
- The Son learned obedience to the Father. The Father did not learn obedience to the Son. (**Hebrews 5:7**)
- The Son prayed the will of the Father be done. The Father did not pray the will of the Son be done. (**Matthew 26:42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42**)
- The “**head of Christ is God.**” (**1 Corinthians 11:3**)

- Furthermore, of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, **“He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak . . . He shall glorify me [Jesus]: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”** (John 16:13-14)

So, for the time being and for the sake of the household’s organization (*oikonomos: economics; the management of a household*), the Spirit is submitted to the Son and the Son is submitted to the Father until **“God may be all in all.”** (1 Corinthians 15:28) For now, authority is delegated from the Godhead down to the earth and into the affairs of mankind. The ultimate purpose and determined result for all authority is PEACE!

GOD’S DELEGATED AUTHORITY

As supreme Creator, God created positions in the earth to which He could delegate His authority.

- **¹⁶For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.** Colossians 1:16-17

In creating (*monarchal*) thrones, dominions, principalities (*chief in rank*), and power (*governments*), God distributed a measure of His authority into each of these arenas for the purpose of providing organization, harmony, efficiency, and peace for mankind. In that regard, authority (properly used) is a gift of mercy and love because it helps, protects, and preserves life. It enforces divine and civil law.

- **¹Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (*governing authorities*). For there is no power (*authority*) but of God: the powers (*authority*) that be are ordained (*ordered*) of God.** Romans 13:1
- **²Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.** Romans 13:2 NIV

Romans 13 further affirms that *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience* was distributed and ordained by God. Why is obedience enforced? To keep peace and order, to the end mankind might live quiet and peaceable lives. These truths were first established in the Garden of Eden.

AUTHORITY IN THE GARDEN

From the very beginning, God’s divine plan required mankind to walk in a measure of God’s authority:

- **²⁶And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. . . . ²⁸And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue**

it [to keep under]: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:26, 28

- **⁴What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? ⁵For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. ⁶Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.**

Psalms 8:4-6

God gave man *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience* in the Garden of Eden and over all the earth. In essence, God made man the steward over the earth and every living thing in the earth. From the Genesis account, we extract three limitations to authority.

THE THREE LIMITATIONS OF AUTHORITY

Being delegated by a higher power, all authority carries with it three built-in limitations. They are: domain, scope, and time.

- 1. Domain of Authority:** What is the geographic area and/or group of people over which you have been set to lead, superintend, or manage? For example:
 - a. Adam was placed in the garden of Eden. That was his domain. (**Genesis 2:15**)
 - b. Police enforce law within their city limits, not the neighboring city.
 - c. Sheriff deputies enforce law within their county limits, not the neighboring county.
 - d. Teachers oversee their classroom, not the classroom down the hall.
 - e. Parents parent their children, not the neighbor's children.
 - f. Pastors oversee their flock, not the flock across the street.
 - g. Salespeople sell their employer's goods, not the goods of the competitor.
- 2. Scope of Work Authorized:** What work must be accomplished? The scope of work defines the purpose and type of work the delegated authority is meant to accomplish. For example:
 - a. Adam was to dress and keep the garden. That was his scope. (**Genesis 2:15**) There were no schools to superintend or widgets to manufacture. He was a gardener.
 - b. Schoolteachers educate students for the betterment of society.
 - c. Contractors build structures for their clients.
 - d. Drill sergeants train new recruits for the military.
 - e. Pastors lead a local flock to produce fruit for Jesus.
 - f. Managers supervise their underlings to ensure productivity.
- 3. Time Limit:** What is the term of the authorization? All authority eventually expires at death, if not before. For example:
 - a. Adam would have been appointed over the garden for life had he not rebelled. (**Genesis 3:22-24**)
 - b. The President of the United States is elected for a four-year term.
 - c. All elected officials have term limits.
 - d. Parents are legally responsible for their children for 18 years, at which

time the child is then considered a legal adult.

- e. Employees are authorized to accomplish work for their boss as long as they are employed. All authority is terminated with their employment.
- f. A teacher or professor is only authorized over a person as long as they are their student.

When God delegated a measure of His authority to man in general, His instructions included all three of these limitations:

1. **Domain of Authority:** *and let them [mankind] have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
 - Mankind's dominion was both geographical and biological. It included every living creature and the entire earth, not just the Garden of Eden.
2. **Scope of Work:** *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it [to keep under].*
 - Mankind was authorized to be fruitful, multiply, repopulate the earth, and keep everything in order.
3. **Time Limit:** *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*
 - Man was created to outrank the other works of God's hands. This implies that the time limit to man's authority over the earth stands as long as this earth does. Even during the millennial reign of Christ, mankind will still have authority over the beasts of the field and every fish of the sea.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, visualizing authority as a river flowing from the highest of elevations to the lowest of basins may help us with the concept of authority. All authority finds its headwaters at the throne of God. From there it flows into the earth for the purpose of creating and maintaining peace in homes, churches, schools, businesses, individuals, and society. Authority is a gift from God. Its ultimate purpose is PEACE! Our next lesson will discuss how to acquire authority.

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

Lesson 2

Stewarding Authority

- **Authority:** *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience.*
- **Authority has three limiters:** domain, scope, and time limit.
- **The premier purpose of authority is to create and maintain peace and harmony wherever men are found.**

The doctrines of free will and authority are interwoven. The concept of free will implies that every human has been authorized to make decisions—good or bad. This is the authorization to choose. Mercifully, the Bible then aids us in our decision making by commanding “**choose life.**” However, the opportunity to foolishly “choose death” presents yet two more doctrinal concepts: **Personal Responsibility** and **Stewardship of Authority**.

Personal Responsibility implies that every decision made has a consequence or reward for which the individual is solely responsible.

The **Stewardship of Authority** then naturally extends from **Personal Responsibility** and means that we will give an account for what we do or don’t do with our authority. Remember, all authority has been given to create and maintain peace and harmony.

Extreme **Predestinationism** (aka **Determinism**) is devoid of the concept of genuine authorization because everything that happens is predetermined. Determinism inherently incriminates God as the author of confusion, since it views all behavior as predetermined, and the world is clearly in a state of perpetual chaos. We reject Determinism and see man’s decision making as the cause of all disorder in the earth.

Remember, the premier purpose of authority is to create and maintain peace and harmony wherever men are found.

DEVELOPING AUTHORITY IN CHILDHOOD

As covered in the previous lesson, every human has been bequeathed a measure of authority. Over the course of an individual’s life, their initial measure of authority can be increased through stewardship or decreased through neglect. Part of the responsibility of parenting is to teach children how to use and steward their God-given authority. As a child develops, their authority (scope and domain) naturally increases. Consider the demonstrations of authority in the following parent/childhood development milestones:

- Children learn that crying draws parental aid.
- Children learn to reach up/out for parental aid.
- The parents’ first use of “no, no” initiates the concept of authority, much as God pointed to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and said, “No, no!”
- Children learn to hold a spoon and feed themselves, exercising dominion over their spoon, their food, and their hungry tummy.

- Children learn mobility and autonomous movement. They also learn to come when called or flee if so desired.
- When children learn to speak, a new realm of authority is opened, e.g., asking, commanding, declining, etc. Often the first demonstration of authority is the echo of the word “no.” This is a demonstration of the will and the understanding of domain and authority.
- Children learn to clean up after themselves and exercise authority over the domain of their room.
- Children (should) learn authority over their emotions and body.
- The child may grow to be entrusted with new authority over younger siblings. Or not.
- The child may grow to be entrusted with new authority over a job and a vehicle. Or not.

Through trial, error, and parenting, children naturally learn what authority is and how to use it. Children that learn authority will be trusted sooner and further by their parents because they can be trusted to be a source of peace and not chaos. Failure to learn to exercise authority and communicate will severely hinder one’s destiny. Their lives will be filled with chaos and confusion. Failure to learn authority over one’s emotions will lead to a life of crippling instability. Conversely, learning to use and stewardship authority in childhood will result in a successful, confident, victorious adulthood. Their pathway will be filled with peace. Successful, authoritative parenting results in successful, authoritative children.

STEWARDED AUTHORITY IN ADULTHOOD

Everything in life rises and falls on levels of authority and how well they are stewarded. Remember, the purpose of authority is to produce peace. Consider some other key elements to stewarding authority:

- **Knowledge**—To properly steward authority requires a knowledge of the domain, scope, and time limit of the entrusted power. Evaluate where, what, and for how long are you currently responsible for peace?
 - Scope and domain inform us of when and how we’re failing.
 - Knowing your domain will prevent you from becoming a busybody. Busybodies mind everyone’s business but their own.
 - Knowing your scope will prevent you from becoming an overworked Martha. Marthas exhaust themselves doing work that was never assigned to them. See **Luke 10:40-41**.
- **Oversight**—To properly steward authority requires a keen eye for what’s out of sorts and therefore lacking peace. Overseeing a domain requires constant judgment and correction: judging the domain, then correcting what is out of line. Oversight takes diligence and enforcement. Can you see where peace is lacking in your domain?
- **Diligence**—To properly steward authority requires great diligence. Creating and maintaining peace is hard work. Could you be doing more to manifest peace in your domain? **Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. (Proverbs 27:23)**
- **Enforcement**—It’s one thing to know, another to watch, a third to stay vigilant, but something altogether to confront the problem and resolve the issue depriving

your domain of peace. Where do you cower from enforcing peace? **Seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:11)**

Fail any of these four areas long enough (knowledge, oversight, diligence, enforcement) and peace will be compromised. When peace is absent, chaos will fill the void. Any steward consistently derelict in their duties will undoubtedly face replacement. Should the derelict be a business owner, for example, their rivals will gain their market share, eventually putting the negligent individual out of business. They will then be demoted to working for someone else in hopes of learning how to steward authority.

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF PEACE

Authority creates and maintains peace differently depending upon the situation over which it presides. Whether it's a family, a church, a sports team, a business, a platoon, the pattern is the same. When stewarded properly, authority creates the following things:

- **A Hierarchy**—By nature, if someone is in charge, everyone else is not. Without a clear hierarchy, subordinates don't know who to turn to or for what. Anything with two heads is a freak, and a commune's equally authorized leaders quickly descend into confusion and chaos. Usually the loudest mouth wins. Is your realm clear on who's in charge? No hierarchy, no peace.
- **Organization of Vision**—Leadership establishes both long-term and short-term vision. What's the purpose of day-to-day existence? Where are we going? How soon do we want to get there? Vision drives everything else. Without a vision, **"the people cast off restraint."** (Proverbs 29:18 NIV) Does your realm have clear vision? No vision, no peace.
- **Protocols**—Protocols are reverse-engineered from vision. Protocols ensure the bigger picture is accomplished. Without protocols, subordinates don't know what to do or how to do it. It is the leadership's responsibility to establish organizational protocols. A lack of protocol will always result in chaos. Does your realm have clear and enforced protocols? No protocols, no peace.
- **Organization of People**—Protocols will always help to organize people. Organized people are more disciplined, better utilized, feel secure, help advance the vision, and produce a harmonious peace. Organized people easily maintain unity. Are those in your domain organized? **Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)** No organization, no peace.
- **Organization of Items**—Protocols will always include tidiness because disorganization is materialistic chaos. Hoarders and clutterers lack internal peace. Is your realm organized materialistically? No organization, no peace.

Authority is a stewardship. Well-stewarded authority is rewarded with more authority. Poorly stewarded or failed authority will almost always be met with demotion.

- ²⁴And [Jesus] said unto them that stood by, **Take from him the pound [authority], and give it to him that hath ten pounds.** ²⁵(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) ²⁶For I say unto you, **That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.** **Luke 19:24-26**



Just exactly what demotion looks like varies. Will it be demotion? Loss of business? Loss of finances? Loss of influence? Loss of reputation? Loss of life? All of the above? Only God knows, but none of it will be pleasurable or praiseworthy. We must learn to master the level of authority we've been given today so that we can be entrusted with more authority tomorrow. Amen!

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

Lesson 3

Delegating Authority

- **Authority:** *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience.*
- **Authority has three limiters: domain, scope, and time limit.**
- **The premier purpose of authority is to create and maintain peace and harmony wherever men are found.**
- **Authority must be stewarded. Possessing authority creates immediate responsibility—the responsibility to create and maintain peace and harmony.**

NO ONE HAS THEIR OWN AUTHORITY

All authority is delegated. It is on loan. If you have any authority, it is only because someone with more authority than you has given it to you. This is the **River of Authority** principle. All authority begins with God and is passed down to man.

- When a boss promotes you, he gives you more of his authority.
 - When a father promotes you, he gives you more of his authority.
 - When a church leader promotes you, you are given more of their authority.
 - When the government promotes you, you are given more of its authority.
-
- **⁹For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.**
Matthew 8:9

Authority is designed to be distributed, not withheld. This is because the burden of authority is often too heavy and the assignment for which it has been given too great for one person to accomplish. The need for power delegation further proves the purpose of authority—to create and maintain peace. Every leader is required by God to use the power in their possession to create and maintain peace.

MOSES—The Archetype Leader

If we evaluate Moses as the biblical archetype of delegated executive authority, many patterns become apparent and applicable. We would do well to study his example if we hope to enjoy the blessings of peace and ultimately the honor of promotion. His ministry presents several leadership keys to consider in our endeavors to create and maintain peace in our lives:

1. Moses was authorized by God to lead God's people into peace. He tried to use fear to excuse himself from this responsibility. This only angered God. Our assignment is also bigger than our personal fear.
2. God sent Moses help in the form of his brother Aaron. Moses delegated authority to his brother, and Aaron served as a translator and intermediary. God will likewise send us the help we need. We must be sure to delegate a portion of our authority so the help can actually help.

3. Peace was not obtained by Moses the first nine attempts (plagues). Finally, after the tenth plague, liberty was obtained. We will not always easily obtain the peace we've been commanded to acquire. God will not allow us to quit.
4. Moses' first real victory was instantly met with more opposition at the Red Sea. His authority and vision did not waver, and God made a way through the Sea. Our victories will be met with new oppositions. Likewise, we cannot waver either. God will make a way if we use our authority to obtain and maintain peace.
5. The Exodus entered new phases requiring new plans and new help.
 - a. Elders were appointed to oversee the Tribes.
 - b. A building crew was assembled to construct the Tabernacle.
 - c. Aaron was appointed as High Priest.
 - d. Joshua was appointed as military general.
 - e. Judges were appointed to adjudicate disputes.

Moses' calling granted him authority to fulfill that assignment. The calling also drew people to him, but those people had to then be organized and commanded before they could be a help. The same anointing that draws people also authorizes the leader to organize and command. It is possible to have people under you and never command them; and it is possible to command people that are not under your authority.

AUTHORIZED LEADERSHIP

Leading is the ability to utilize the authority given to accomplish the assignment at hand. It is possible to be authorized to lead and fail to lead. In most scenarios, failed leadership will eventually be replaced. All leaders, especially failing leaders, should look to delegate a measure of their authority to subordinates and allow them to help.

Consider how and why authority is delegated in the following scenarios:

- **Family**—Successfully leading a family through life. When a man takes a wife (she also takes him as her husband), he is granted authorization to lead her (**1 Corinthians 8:5**) in the vision and direction for their life. The wife is given authority to be governess of the home. As their family grows, authority is delegated to the man to be a father and to the wife to be a mother to the children. Any grandparent entering the household is under the father's authority. Children may grow and earn authority to help in the home. The end goal is to create and maintain peace in the home as the family grows and lives life. Righteousness demands that any breakdown in peace be remedied by the authority ASAP.
- **Education**—Education management over a classroom. As the class grows, the teacher may require the assistance of a teacher's aide. If the one-room schoolhouse continues to grow, the first teacher may become the principal overseeing a new five-room school with five separate teachers and a janitor under her. The end goal is to create and maintain peace in that school as the students are educated. Righteousness demands that any breakdown in peace be remedied by the authority ASAP.
- **Police**—Law enforcement over a city or town. As that city or town grows, it may be divided into precincts. Those precincts may then be further policed by traffic cops, patrol cops, and detectives who will require management and oversight. The end goal is to create and maintain peace in those precincts as people go about their

lives. Righteousness demands that any breakdown in peace be remedied by the authority ASAP.

- **Church**—Ecclesiastical care over a local flock. As that flock grows, elders and deacons may be appointed to help care for the needs of the congregation. If the flock continues to grow, it may be split in order to start a new assembly in another part of town with separate authorized pastor, elders, and deacons. The end goal is to create and maintain peace for the congregation as the saints serve and are disciplined. Righteousness demands that any breakdown in peace be remedied by the authority ASAP.
- **Business**—Management over a local business. As an entrepreneur's basement start-up grows, he will need to hire helpers to manufacture his product and eventually move into a larger location. One exceptional employee will be promoted to manage the other newer workers so that the visionary can continue to produce work and grow the business. A second location would require a whole new set of employees filling the exact same roles for the exact same purpose. The end goal is to create and maintain peace for the employees as they manufacture their product so the business can fill orders, earn a profit, and grow. Righteousness demands that any breakdown in peace be remedied by the authority ASAP.
- **Restaurant**—Management over a local diner. A "mom-and-pop" diner that only employees one cook and one server will need to add more employees as their business grows. If it grows large enough, an eventual kitchen manager and wait manager will be needed to oversee the two different categories of employees needed to fulfill the business model. The end goal is to create and maintain peace for the employees so the patrons can enjoy their meal, so they will want to return, and so the business can grow. Righteousness demands that any breakdown in peace be remedied by the authority ASAP.

It should be apparent how important and great the burden of responsibility that comes with all delegated authority is. Wise leaders delegate measures of their authority to help get the job done, while micromanagers make everyone miserable. May God help us with the authorization we currently have. Amen!

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

Lesson 4

Obtaining Authority

- **Authority:** *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience.*
- **Authority has three limiters: domain, scope, and time limit.**
- **The premier purpose of authority is to create and maintain peace and harmony wherever men are found.**
- **Authority must be stewarded. Possessing authority creates immediate responsibility—the responsibility to create and maintain peace and harmony.**
- **Authority is designed to be delegated to accomplish the purpose at hand.**

Authority is one of the greatest gifts God has given to mankind. That God would entrust a human with the right or power to make decisions, give orders, and enforce obedience in the earth is hard to fathom. Every human enjoys a common base-level of authority: authority over personal domain—mind, will, emotions, flesh, family, possessions, etc. However, there are still greater levels of authorization to be obtained, such as in a career or personal business, in the realm of civil governments, and in the Kingdom.

Because authority is power and allows one to accomplish great things, carnal men and women will always strive to acquire it. There are only three ways to acquire authority:

1. Submit to it,
2. Steal it, or
3. Fabricate it.

Only the first option is biblical and God-honoring. The other two are rooted in rebellion and result in damage and destruction. We will begin with the proper way to obtain authority. (And shame on any believer who does not seek more influence for the glory of God and the advancement of the Gospel!)

SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

The only biblical way to acquire authority is to submit to it and thereby be promoted into a greater measure of it. By our biblical definition, all legitimate authority is earned and then delegated. Because authority proceeds from the throne of God, the promotion into a higher level of authority is a promotion from God. Conversely, any demotion from ordained authority needs to be judged as a demotion by God.

- **⁶For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.** **Psalm 75:6-7**
- **¹⁷Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls . . .** **Hebrews 13:17**

The divine promotion into more authority will always bring with it a higher level of accountability and stewardship. This is because authority exists for the purpose of bringing about organization and peace. If someone with authority fails to accomplish its assigned mandate, they will be judged by God as ineffective or derelict in their duty and face demotion out of the seat of authorization. Someone else will then be promoted into the vacated seat. This was the judgment against Eli the high priest.

- **³⁰Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy [Eli's] house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹Behold the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house . . . ³⁵And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.**

1 Samuel 2:30-31, 35

Eli's failure to properly steward the authority inherent in the high priest's office and discipline his wicked sons cost him his life and his sons' lives. It also forfeited his lineage from ever being priests. Eli was demoted and another was promoted. Samuel, Eli's disciple, became a leader over Israel in place of Eli. The same thing happened to King Saul.

- **²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.**

1 Samuel 15:23

King Saul admitted to being intimidated by the people, saying "**I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.**" He failed to accurately execute the responsibilities required of his office. The judgment against Saul was identical to Eli's:

- **²⁸And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.**

1 Samuel 15:28

The kingdom of Israel was given to David; howbeit it would be several years before David would officially sit upon the king's throne. We know David did a much better job stewarding the seat of authority than did Saul.

STEALING AUTHORITY

The Bible wholeheartedly condemns the theft of authority. This act takes the form of insurrections, usurpations, manipulation, and even marital tension. In terms of civil governments, coups typically produce despots and dictators. The Bible records several stories cataloging such actions and their tragic endings:

- **Gainsaying of Korah (Numbers 16)**—Korah gathered two brothers, Dathan and Abiram, and 250 chief princes of Israel in an ecclesiastical and political coup of

sorts. They were not content to follow Moses as executive and Aaron as High Priest. Their attempted theft ended in judgment—death.

- **Insurrection of Absalom (2 Samuel 15-18)**—Absalom stole the hearts of much of Israel away from his father King David and then tried to steal the throne. His attempted theft ended in judgment—death.
- **Insurrection of Adonijah (1 Kings 1)**—Adonijah proclaimed himself the new king of Israel while his father David was still alive and without his approval. His attempted theft ended in a severe rebuke at first and then death.
- **Manipulations of Jezebel (1 Kings 21)**—Jezebel used her husband’s authority to get what she wanted. Her treachery saw many righteous people murdered. God never acknowledged her as any kind of leader; neither did the prophets who were sent to judge her. Her theft of authority ended in death.

The New Testament commands us to “**submit to those who have the rule over [us]**” (Hebrews 13:7) and “**be subject unto the higher powers**” and to give “**honor to whom honor is due**” (Romans 13:1, 7 NET). Stolen authority always ends tragically because:

- **¹ . . . There is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.**

Romans 13:1b-2 NASB95

FABRICATING AUTHORITY

Some people foolishly think that they can gain authority by creating it. This too is dangerous. The motives behind authority fabrication vary but generally range from insecurity and the need to feel important to impatience and insubordination. Fabricators include the following:

- **Hirelings/Illegitimate Pastors**—These men or women typically abandon the churches they were assigned to by God and “start” their own work. They weren’t sent out by ordained authority; they went out driven by their insubordination.
 - **Ephesian Sectarians (Acts 20:30)**—Men arose from within the Ephesian church who drew disciples after themselves and away from the ordained leadership. They did so by speaking perverse things, e.g., things contrary to biblical decorum. They fabricated a leadership role in the lives of other believers.
- **Boss Pets**—These individuals typically work under someone but create an imaginary position of authority just to make themselves feel grandiose. Imaginary seats of authority might include “keeper of the bathroom key,” “manager of the equipment sign-in sheet,” “inspector of fleet vehicle tire-pressure,” “parking lot overseer,” etc.
- **Busybodies**—These individuals are under the delusion that it is their official obligation to inquire about the affairs of others. Three different Greek words are employed to describe this fabricated authority. They reveal that busybodies are hard workers but not concerning the task to which they have truly been assigned. They take upon themselves the supervision of affairs that belong to others while neglecting their own business. This behavior is not praiseworthy.

- **¹¹For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.** **2 Thessalonians 3:11**

- **¹³And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. 1 Timothy 5:13**
- **¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 1 Peter 4:15**

CONCLUSION

Authority is given to create and maintain peace and order wherever people are found. Authority is used to advance institutions, be they families, businesses, churches, militaries, etc. God desires to grant every one of us more authority. The only biblical and ethical way to obtain authority is to submit to it. Successful submission to and use of authority will result in promotion into more authority. Rebellion to or dereliction of authority will result in demotion and another taking your office. Selah!

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

Lesson 5

The Four Spheres of Authority

Authority: *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience.*

Authority has three limitations:

1. Domain of Authority
2. Scope of Work
3. Time Limit

Authority is designed to be delegated but can be obtained three different ways, only one of which is biblical and God-honoring:

1. Submission to authority
2. Fabrication of authority
3. Stealing authority

Authority is a stewardship. When properly stewarded, it is rewarded with promotion and more authority. If neglected, punishment will include demotion and loss of authority. As stated in a previous lesson, it may help to view authority as a river proceeding from the throne of God. From the Lord Jesus Christ, the river forks in four different directions, authorizing four spheres of government for the benefit of humanity:

1. The spiritual family
2. Personal authority
3. The natural family
4. Civil governments

THE SPIRITUAL FAMILY

We define **spiritual family** as: *the preeminent spiritual unit on planet earth, consisting of God Almighty and His servant(s).* In the beginning, it was just God and Adam, then God, Adam, and Eve. It eventually grew to become Israel, and then the Church. The spiritual family is the group of people authorized by God to work His will in the earth. They obtain authority by their covenant with and submitted relationship to God Almighty.

God established the spiritual family when He created Adam with a divine purpose. **Lesson 1** covered the fact that God wanted mankind to have dominion. The first manifestation of this dominion, or delegated authority, appears when God placed man in the Garden of Eden and set him over the works of His hands. God quickly delegated authority to man so man would be authorized to do things for God. This made Adam the first co-laborer with God. (See **1 Corinthians 3:9**.)

Throughout time, anyone who submitted to God and sought to advance His will and purpose was incorporated into God's spiritual family (**2 Corinthians 6:17-18**), congregation, or

church. The purpose of spiritual family is to know and work with God to accomplish His will in the earth, producing peace and harmony.

PERSONAL AUTHORITY

God established personal authority when He set two trees in the Garden and determined one to be off-limits. Adam had to exercise authority over his will to keep that commandment. After the Fall and excommunication from the Garden, God re-established personal authority when He addressed Cain's fallen countenance: **And unto thee shall be his [sin's] desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (Genesis 4:7)** Almost all success in life stems from this authority. Personal authority has been given to produce peace and harmony for the individual's mind, will, emotions, and appetites.

THE NATURAL FAMILY

The **natural family** is just what we would assume it to be. The natural family was developed when God built Eve and instituted marriage, commanding the first couple to **"be fruitful and multiply."** Authority in the natural family is inherent in the husband's seat as the head of the family. Husband and wife are to work in tandem to accomplish the will of God for their family.

After God made Adam, He determined man needed help. God built a helper for Adam, Eve, simultaneously instituting marriage (one man and one woman as one flesh) and establishing the natural family. The sinless, natural family only lasted until the Original Sin, and then Adam and Eve were thrust out of the Garden. Authority in the natural family is innate in the husband/father position. Husband and wife are equal as joint-heirs together of the grace of life, but there is an economic subordination necessary for the success of the home, i.e., **"the head of every woman is her husband." (1 Corinthians 11:3)** Father/husband and mother/wife share authority over their children and raise them together in the fear of God that God might **"obtain godly seed." (Malachi 2:15)** The purpose of natural family is to replenish the earth with people who know and work with God, accomplishing His will in the earth, producing peace and harmony.

CIVIL GOVERNMENTS

The greater a population, the greater its need to be governed, thus **Civil Governments** become the natural creation of family growth. Civil government refers to the system of rule by which any group of people are governed. Civil governments were not necessary until after the Fall. Civil governments make and enforce laws protecting the God-given rights of mankind. Righteous governments do not bestow rights; they protect rights. All authority outside of the spiritual and natural family will fall under civil governments; this includes schools, universities, businesses, etc. The sole purpose of civil governments is to create and maintain peace and harmony for its populace, students, employees, etc.

TRIFOLD MASTERY

Christians serve the Prince of Peace, therefore it should not come as a surprise that we are expected to manifest peace through the authority God has delegated to us. This includes all four jurisdictions of authority: spiritual, personal, familial, and civil. It should also not surprise us that many of God's people fail to master all four areas of authorization.

- **Abraham**—The Father of Faith was a successful business owner, military strategist (at the battle of the Kings), and tribal negotiator demonstrating **civil** authority prowess. He left Ur of the Chaldees to obey and worship God demonstrating a commitment to **spiritual** authority. But it appears that his marriage to Sarah was continuously strained. At the time of Sarah's death in **Genesis 23**, she and Abraham were living apart: he in Beersheba and she in Hebron. Abraham had to travel to mourn for her. There would seem to have been a short-circuit in his marriage (**family** authority).
- **Moses**—The meekest of all men was a phenomenal Egyptian leader then the first national shepherd of Israel (**civil** leader). He received and implemented God's Old Covenant worship system during the Exodus (**spiritual** leader). However, his first wife divorced him, and his sons showed no interest in God (**family**). It is even widely believed that his grandson Jonathan, son of Gershom, became the false priest of a cult in Dan during the Time of the Judges. (**Judges 18:30-31**)
- **Eli**—The high priest that lost the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines faithfully fulfilled his role as priest (**spiritual** leadership) and trained Samuel the boy prophet (arguably a **civil** duty) but failed to discipline his sons (**family**). His failure at home led to the downfall of Israel in battle and the death of himself and his two wicked sons.
- **Samuel**—Israel's last judge also successfully served as a national prophet (**civil** and **spiritual** authority). However, it was his failure as a parent (**family** authority), resulting in his sons becoming men of Belial, that caused Israel to desire a king. Perhaps the thought of Samuel's wicked sons one day being the next judge or prophet was too horrific for the people to imagine. Samuel's failure at home shifted the entire history of Israel.
- **David**—Israel's greatest king excelled at **civil** and **spiritual** leadership, expanding Israel, establishing her sovereignty, writing scores of psalms, and establishing the Tabernacle of David, but failed miserably at **family** leadership. He was a horrible husband (adultery) and a distracted father (all of his sons failed God), always more eager to execute justice on behalf of his people rather than his children.

From these five examples, a pattern very quickly arises: quite often we can successfully steward in some areas but not others. Though successful national and spiritual leaders, each of these men had family failures, some of which severely hurt the larger group of people they were leading. The Apostle Paul, seemingly aware of these facts, addressed the potential for the churches to repeat the same issue when he said of elders:

- **⁴One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)**
1 Timothy 3:4-5

Be encouraged!! God wants us to master authority that we glorify Him, establish His peace and harmony all around us, and receive the promotions of the Kingdom! Amen!

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

Lesson 6

Exercising Authority

We have consistently reviewed the definition of **authority**: *the right or power to make decisions, to give orders, and to enforce obedience*. The previous lesson introduced the four spheres of authority: spiritual family, personal authority, natural family, and civil governments. We learned that these are the four areas where God has given authority to produce and maintain peace and harmony. What remains is a discussion concerning how to execute or exercise our given authority. Generally speaking, all authority is demonstrated through communication, usually speaking. The four spheres of life are governed through words to accomplish the following:

- General communication
- Direction
- Instruction
- Encouragement
- Correction
- Rebuke
- Promotion
- Demotion

The preceding actions are necessary and should occur regularly for a church, individual, family, government, or business to become and stay healthy.

ONLY SPEAK THE WORD

Whether we are making decisions (which must then be communicated), giving orders, or enforcing obedience, authority cannot be demonstrated without communication.

- **⁸ . . . Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. ⁹For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. ¹⁰When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.** **Matthew 8:8c-10**

This passage provides great insight into both faith and authority. The Roman centurion was the personification of authority. His authorization came down from Caesar himself and was bestowed to accomplish the emperor's will throughout the empire. Caesar's authority was exercised by simple verbal commands: do this, do that, come, go, etc. Obedience followed, or there would be consequences.

The centurion impressed Christ because this was exactly how the Son of God operated while ministering in the earth—He exercised His authority by speaking.

- He demonstrated authority over the devil when He said, "**Get thee behind me, Satan.**" (Luke 4:8) Obedience followed.

- He demonstrated authority to call mankind to repentance when He said, "**Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" (Matthew 4:17) Obedience followed.
- He demonstrated authority to call people to Himself when He said, "**Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**" (Matthew 4:19) Obedience followed.
- He demonstrated authority over sickness when He said, "**Be thou clean,**" "**Stretch forth thine hand,**" or "**Lazarus, come forth.**" (Matthew 8:3; 12:13; John 11:43) Obedience followed.
- He demonstrated authority over demons when he cast out spirits with his word. (Matthew 8:16) Obedience followed.
- He demonstrated authority to forgive sins when He said, "**Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.**" (Matthew 9:2) Obedience followed.
- He demonstrated authority over weather when He rebuked the storm saying, "**Peace, be still.**" (Mark 4:39) Obedience followed.

If Jesus, our example, exercised His authority by speaking the Word to the issue at hand, we would do well to follow His example. We are not better than our Master.

SPIRITUAL FAMILY

The spiritual family—be it the Congregation in the Wilderness, the Nation of Israel, or the Church—is ruled, directed, instructed, and strengthened by the authority of its leaders. This is all accomplished through communication, usually spoken words. God communicated His Edenic covenant with and expectations of Adam when He first made the man.

- ¹⁵**And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.** Genesis 2:15-17

The Law of Moses was spoken by God, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

- ¹**And God spake all these words, saying, ²I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³Thou shalt have no other gods before me.** Exodus 20:1-3

God presided over His spiritual family through the Law of Moses and by the Word of the Lord spoken by His Spirit to the prophets. In the fullness of time, He instituted the New Covenant though the preaching of the Gospel. Every person has been given authorization to "**call upon the name of the Lord**" and thereby be saved. Now, in the New Testament Church, church leaders still use words and the Word to lead and steer the present spiritual family.

- ²**Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and**

**correcting, warning *and* urging *and* encouraging them, being unflagging
and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.** 2 Timothy 4:2 AMPC

PERSONAL AUTHORITY

Self-government requires personal authority. Thankfully we have been given that by God. We exercise our authority over ourselves through words. It is necessary to communicate, direct, instruct, encourage, correct, and even rebuke oneself. Leaving yourself a personal note or reminder might aid on occasion, but it is not the same as “**encouraging yourself in the Lord,**” or “**speaking to yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.**” We flex our authoritative muscles over our appetites, flesh, and emotions through prayer, commandments, and declarations of faith.

- **²⁸Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.** Job 22:28
- **⁵Why are thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.** Psalm 42:5
- **¹⁰Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors.** Ecclesiastes 2:10 NLT

This is not a good verse. This verse explains how Solomon ruined everything—by never exercising personal authority over his appetites.

- **²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.** Romans 12:2
- **⁴That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.** 1 Thessalonians 4:4
- **²⁷But I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.** 1 Corinthians 9:27 NASB20

NATURAL FAMILY

Authority in the natural family is demonstrated through commands and directions. Instruction, correction, encouragement, and love are all communicated through words. The head of a home will not successfully lead it if their head is always buried in a book, a game console, or a smartphone. Leadership takes communication.

- **⁶These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be [written] on your heart *and* mind. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children [impressing God’s precepts on their minds and penetrating their hearts**

with His truths] and shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 AMP

- **⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to the point of resentment with demands that are trivial or unreasonable or humiliating or abusive; nor by showing favoritism or indifference to any of them], but bring them up [tenderly, with lovingkindness] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

Ephesians 6:4 AMPC

- **⁷... Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?**

Hebrews 12:7b NLT

The head of home (in most cases the husband) must be diligent to communicate the house vision and direction, love, encouragement, correction, and friendship. A quiet leader is no leader.

CIVIL GOVERNMENTS

Governments legislate laws, enforce laws, and administrate their own rank and file. The authority to do so cannot be realized without communication. This authority manifests as decrees, edicts, proclamations, and commands.

- **⁵So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan . . .**

2 Chronicles 30:5a

- **¹³But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.**

Ezra 5:13

- **³²And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.**

Esther 9:32

May God help every one of us learn both the authority we have been given, what we are to accomplish with it, and then how to realize those assignments. May we not be passive concerning God's will for our lives. Amen!