

# BIBLICAL AUTHORITY FOR BELIEVERS

*(Mat 7:28-29 NCV) When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at his teaching, because he did not teach like their teachers of the law. He taught like a person who had authority.*

The Christian is one who is \_\_\_\_\_ to minister. Authorised to minister entails being given *authority*. Jesus gave His disciples *authority* to minister (Matt. 10:1). Without the LORD's authority, we are only pretenders.

Any person may wear a police uniform. But this does not make them a policeman. Unless they are given the authority of a policeman by the police hierarchy, they are only pretending. God takes the issue of authority very seriously. When He gives someone authority, He also gives them His \_\_\_\_\_. We see this in the following examples-

One Authorised	Opposed By	Divine Response
Joseph (Gen. 37)	His brothers	Brothers humbled, Joseph made ruler of Egypt. (Ps. 105:15)
Moses	Israel, Korah, Miriam	The generation of Israel that came out of Egypt was destroyed; Korah was swallowed by an earthquake; and Miriam got leprosy.
Jesus	Israel (its leaders)	They were cut off from being God's people (Rom. 11:17)

*(Rom 13:2 NIV) Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

Paul, the apostle, \_\_\_\_\_ his authority repeatedly. But he did so, not in an authoritarian manner, but in such a way that \_\_\_\_\_ his authority. Authority can be \_\_\_\_\_ . And Paul says the evidence of his authority is in what he suffered -

*(2Cor. 11:23-28) 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. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 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; 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; 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.*

The test of authority is in what a person is prepared to \_\_\_\_\_. There can be no greater example of this than Christ. We could also examine the other Biblical characters and discover that their authority was also tested through suffering. A false minister will hardly be prepared to suffer for what they know is not genuine, that is, their ministry.

## **How Authority Is Used**

God has \_\_\_\_\_ degrees of authority into believers to accomplish His purpose. We have seen the purpose of specific ministries. While each of these ministries carries with it a degree of authority, God has established authority in each local setting. Every believer should experience the \_\_\_\_\_ of being under authority.

The expression “first”, speaks of authority.

*(1 Cor 12:28 NKJV) 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.*

It is clear that the early church didn't view the church as a collective of fragmented communities each doing their own thing, completely isolated in geography and spirit. Neither did they consider themselves bound to some central controlling body. While

each assembly was \_\_\_\_\_ to conduct themselves as the Spirit led them, there was an external authority to which they were subject. This fact is borne out by understanding the nature of Paul's epistles. He wrote as an external authority to \_\_\_\_\_ churches. Within his epistles we see that he appointed authorities.

*(Titus 1:5 NKJV) For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you;*

Therefore authority is for \_\_\_\_\_ within the local church (NB. 1Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:15). It is done at two levels. Firstly, the apostolic authority (usually external, unless resident). Secondly, the pastoral authority (always within the assembly). The writer of Hebrews told his readers to -

*(Heb 13:17 NCV) Obey your leaders and act under their authority. They are watching over you, because they are responsible for your souls. Obey them so that they will do this work with joy, not sadness. It will not help you to make their work hard.*



- Secondly, authority within the church is for the building and strengthening of the church (2Cor. 10:8; 13:10).
- Thirdly, it is for relationship. This entails relationships within the assembly and outside it (2Cor. 10:14).
- Fourthly, it is an example. Those in authority are to serve as examples for the rest of the church (2Thess. 3:9).
- Fifthly, it is to feed the church (1Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7; 17). This also incorporates guarding the church against false doctrine.

## Our Greatest Enemy

*(1 Sam 15:17 NKJV) So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?"*

Self dependence; self congratulations; self importance; manipulated indispensability; attention demanding; self promotion; isolation from fellowship; and rejection of authority are all signs of \_\_\_\_\_ .

The greatest enemy of any believer is pride. To be a Christian in Christ's church is to be a humble \_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 9:35). Of all the insidious attacks of the enemy, pride is the most violent. It dethrones God and deifies self. It is the worst crime in the cosmos. It is a subtle crime. It is a lying ruthless murderous sin.

Without question, more ministries have been \_\_\_\_\_ because of pride, than for any other reason. Therefore it is important to keep yourself \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Be real in the eyes of those that watch you.
2. Be accountable.
3. Be a good steward of your time, resources and talents.

God may have blessed you with a powerful gift, which He has designed for His glory. Pride will seek to enter in and convince you of the best way to utilise this gift so that *you* gain the maximum exposure. Many a gifted singer has gone off the rails because they succumbed to the deception of pride.

## Character Is Not Optional

Godly character is the mark of proven maturity (Phil. 2:22). No professional tennis player would use an untried tennis racquet at a crucial part of a high pressure match. The racquet must first be broken in. It may incur a few scratches, nicks, and broken strings, but once the player has worn it in he has *proven* the racquet for match play.

Job 23:10; Psalm 66:10; Isa. 48:10; 1Tim. 3:10

No servant in God's kingdom can avoid character building. The key ingredient to character building is patience. (*Rom 5:4 NCV*) *And patience produces character, and character produces hope.* Before God fully utilises us, He tries us.