

# **The Exercise of Authority**

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## I. Introduction.

## II. Authority is legitimate.

A. It is given as a reward in Scripture. (Luke 9:27, 22:24-48)

B. This is because God is interested in character, character is interested in choices, authority is the right to choose and right choices mean right character. Therefore, right character is rewarded by the opportunity for more choices and character development.

C. The way we respond in submission also determines character. (James 1:2-4)

## III. Obligations of authority.

A. He who has authority must accept responsibility.

1. Authority is the obligation to perform—one must function.

2. A leader must function within his own sphere to be qualified for spiritual responsibility—the leader must function. (1 Timothy 3:4-5, Titus 2:15)

B. Authority must function within its limits - biblical or agreed upon.

C. Authority must be exercised redemptively. (2 Samuel 23:3)

D. Authority brings accountability. (Luke 12:41-48)

1. The tyrannical servant would be punished severely.

2. The negligent servant would receive a hard beating..

3. The ignorant servant would receive a light beating.

4. One's knowledge is taken into consideration. There is some responsibility acquired in knowing a thing.

E. Accountability is at the source of responsibility and authority.

1. We have two accountabilities: intermediate (men) and ultimate (God).

2. Authority can come from the top down and the bottom up, so there can be a responsibility in more than one direction. One can be a servant in many directions - this is what Jesus said. (Luke 16)

F. One's perspective on authority changes when God is put in the picture.

1. Husbands must relate properly to their wives so their prayers are not hindered.
2. Wives are to submit as to the Lord.
3. Parents are to bring up children in the nurture of the Lord.
4. Children are to obey in the Lord.
5. The governors are to govern in the fear of the Lord.
6. The governed are not to resist as to God.
7. Employers have a master in heaven.
8. Employees are to work as to Christ.
9. Spiritual leaders are to lead in the Lord.
10. Followers. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

G. Choices are what we are held accountable to. (Romans 14:12)

#### IV. Power.

##### A. Dealing with it.

1. Power can be a poison, but it is not fatal to the person who has faith in a power over him.
2. There is no anecdote for those who do not hold a power over them - therefore, our job is to bring God into everything. (1 Peter 3:15)

##### B. What it is.

1. There is physical, financial, moral and spiritual power.
2. Authority is influence and the right to decide. Power is energy and ability to make something happen.

#### V. Illustrative decision making in the book of Acts.

##### A. Preliminary statements.

1. The ultimate right to decide resides in the nature of the individual.
2. The right to decide for or with others is derived from one's functional relationships, which are dynamic.

B. Individual decisions (e.g. to receive Christ as Savior). (Acts 2:41, 2 Corinthians 4:2)

C. Organizational decisions or managerial decisions. (Acts 6)

1. This is a necessity with growth.
2. The most difficult decisions are the functional ones.
3. The Apostles set the guidelines, the qualifications and the job description.
4. Moses delegated after the people chose leaders - bottom up and top down. (Deuteronomy 1:12-13)
5. A top down and bottom up approach tends towards stability.
6. Since all authority is limited, all commitments should be limited as well.
7. Working relationships can be dissolved if they are not working.

D. Policy decisions. (Acts 15)

E. Operating decisions - ministry decisions.

**Application questions**

1. Summarize the obligations that are placed upon authority.

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2. Why is all authority limited? Why is it important to recognize this?

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3. What one thing can you take from this message that will change your view on leadership or change the way you go about it?

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