

# The Authority of the Believer

## I. What is the authority of the believer?

- A. The word authority [*exousia*] in scripture means “ability, privilege, force, capacity, delegated influence, jurisdiction.”

A traffic policeman does not pray, “Oh Lord, in the name of the city fathers please make this traffic stop.” No, he exercises the authority he knows he has. In the same way, believers need to learn what authority is and use it boldly.

## B. Authority is often confused with other things in scripture (Luke 10:19).

1. Authority is not the same as power.

In Luke 10:19 many Bible translations use the word power twice but two different words are used in the Greek. The first one speaks of authority while the second speaks of power. A traffic policeman often faces large crowds and fast moving vehicles. They are all more powerful than he is, but they stop at the raising of his hand. This is because he has authority and they are compelled to recognize it.

2. Authority is not the same as being filled with the Spirit.
3. Authority is not the same as exercising spiritual gifts.
4. Authority is not the same as prevailing prayer.

## C. The believer’s authority is the inherent right of the believer because of his position with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6).

### **Ephesians 2:4-7**

*<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

We experience spiritual authority as believers because we were raised with Christ at His resurrection. This position and authority is not something that we have earned or deserve by virtue of our own works.

When we use His name we must do so responsibly. I don’t mind someone using my signature or name (power of attorney) for something that advances my cause. It becomes a problem when they do so outside my will and desire. Using Christ’s name and carrying His authority is something we do responsibly.

## II. What is the nature of authority?

### A. God ultimately possesses all authority (1 Chr. 29:10b-12).

#### 1 Chr. 29:10b-12

<sup>10</sup> *Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.*

Because of the new covenant, the devil has illegitimate authority. Jesus redeemed us and we are to exercise this authority. He remains in authority over those who don't know Christ and to the degree to which Christians do not exercise their authority. It's the Lord's harvest that He bought back. We now have to fetch them and help them to agree with God's salvation agenda. What doesn't look like God's Kingdom in my life? I have authority to take things back so my life reflects God's Kingdom.

Kainos (New) Creation is what I am. Eg John G Lake's healing breakthroughs. Man had ceded his rights to the devil but through Christ we can take this back.

### B. God delegates His authority to man (Mt. 9:8; Rom. 13:1-2).

#### Matthew 9:8

*When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.*

As a leader I delegate authority to people, some take it and some don't. Help me Lord to maximize the use of the name of Jesus. If Bill Gates gave you the power of attorney for all his assets how excited would you be?

#### Romans 13:1-2

<sup>1</sup> *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

### C. All human authority is delegated authority and therefore accountable to God's authority (Rom. 13:1-2; 14:12).

#### Romans 14:12

*So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

**D. All delegated authority is limited authority (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29).**

**Acts 4:18-20; 5:29**

*18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"... 29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"*

It's important to know that we have not been given authority over another's will. We see from Genesis that God created man for dominion and not to be dominated by another man. Satan's desire is to take people captive to his will. God's desire is to liberate our wills so that we freely choose to obey and glorify Him. That's why in deliverance your will needs to be aligned with the person praying for you. This has implications when we pray for your family or your business.

**III. What is the nature of Christ's authority?**

**A. Christ's authority includes all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18).**

**Mt. 28:18**

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

A lot of Christians are trying to evangelize without understanding authority. A lot of evangelism involves warfare.

**B. Christ's authority is far above all other authority (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; 2:10).**

**Ephesians 1:20-22**

*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 ...*

Believers that understand this are very dangerous!

**C. All authority is subject to Christ's authority (1 Pet. 3:22; Jude 25).**

**1 Peter 3:22**

*[Christ] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

#### **D. Christ demonstrated authority while on earth.**

The devil had authority after the fall of man. Now after Christ He only has power. His authority is limited based on our will and ignorance. It's like a bully at school that you don't stand up to.

1. This is seen in Christ's teaching

##### **Mark 1:22**

*And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

2. This is seen in His forgiving of sins

##### **Mt. 9:6**

*But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."*

3. This is seen in His commanding of evil spirits

##### **Mark 1:27**

*Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."*

4. This is seen in His control over elements of nature

##### **Luke 8:25**

*And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"*

#### **E. Christ's authority extends into the ages to come.**

1. This includes authority over life and death

##### **John 10:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*

<sup>18</sup> *No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*

2. This includes authority to grant eternal life

##### **John 17:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> *Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, <sup>2</sup> as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.*

3. This includes executing judgment

**John 5:26-27**

*<sup>26</sup> For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, <sup>27</sup> and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.*

**IV. What authority is given to the believer in Christ?**

- A. Jesus authorized believers to function in His authority when he gave them authority to use His name (Mark 16).**

**Mark 16:15-18**

*<sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> 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."*

- B. The leaders of the Early Church used this authority in their life and ministry.**

1. **The Early Church demonstrated power over nature.**

Jesus had walked on the water. Jesus had calmed the storms. But Philip was transported supernaturally from one location to another (Acts 8:39). What a tremendous miracle that took place as Philip walked in obedience to the voice of the Holy Spirit. As Philip positioned himself to be God's instrument to preach the Gospel, the Holy Spirit worked with him with signs following.

2. **The Early Church demonstrated power over evil spirits (Acts 8:7; 13:4-12; 16:16-20; 19:11-20).**

**Acts 8:6-8**

*<sup>6</sup> And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. <sup>7</sup> For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. <sup>8</sup> And there was great joy in that city.*

3. **The Early Church demonstrated power over sickness and disease (Acts 9:33-34).**

**Luke 9:1-2**

*Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*

#### **4. The Early Church demonstrated power over death.**

This does not mean that the early church leaders prayed for every person who died, but at times they ministered this way at the leading of the Holy Spirit. Dorcas was raised from the dead by Peter who followed the example of Jesus (Acts 9:40). Paul and a company of believers prayed over Eutychus who had fallen to his death in a church gathering and he was brought back to life (Acts 20:7-12).

#### **C. All believers can walk in the same authority as the Early Church.**

We believe miracles are for today.

### **V. What is the basis of the believer's authority?**

#### **A. The basis for the believer's authority is the work of Christ on the cross**

##### **Col. 2:15 NLT**

*In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.*

#### **B. The basis for the believer's authority is their being "in Christ"**

##### **2 Cor. 5:17-18**

*<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. <sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation...*

#### **C. The basis for the believer's authority is their being genuinely submitted to Christ and other delegated authorities in their life (Mt. 8:9-13).**

We only have authority when we submit to the authorities in our lives. The army corporal only has authority when he submits to the captain who is over him.

#### **D. The basis for the believer's authority is being called or appointed by the Lord (Mark 6:7; John 15:16).**

##### **John 15:16**

*You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.*

#### **E. The basis for the believer's authority and spiritual authority is operating in God's ordained area of rule in our life (2 Cor. 10:12-16).**

##### **2 Corinthians 10:13**

*We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.*

## **VI. What guidelines should govern the exercise of our authority?**

### **A. We should begin by exercising authority over our own heart and our own will (2 Cor. 10:3-6).**

I can exercise authority to the degree to which I am under Christ's authority.

### **B. We should use our authority for the well-being of others (1 Cor. 9:18).**

1. Our authority should be used to build people up rather than tear them down

#### **2 Cor. 10:8 NLT**

*I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But this authority is to build you up, not to tear you down. And I will not be put to shame by having my work among you destroyed.*

2. Our authority should be used to feed or provide for others rather than to feed or provide for ourselves (1 Pet. 5:2-3; Ezek. 34:2-3).

#### **1 Peter 5:2-3 NLT**

*Care for the flock of God entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly--not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example.*

3. Our authority should be used to protect the vulnerable rather than expose the vulnerable to danger.
4. Our authority should be used to advance God's kingdom rather than advancing our personal agenda.

### **C. We should use our authority to overcome the works of the darkness (Eph. 6:12).**

### **D. We should expect to be given more authority as we are faithful with the authority that we have been given (Luke 19:17).**

### **E. We should expect our authority to be enhanced as we function in unity with other believers (Mt. 18:18-20).**

## **VII. How do I qualify to use my authority?**

- A. I qualify to use my authority by receiving it (Mark 10:15; John 1:12).

#### **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.*

We should not run away from our responsibilities as believers, but we should embrace the call of God in our lives.

- B. I qualify to use my authority by believing (I John 4:4).

Satan's greatest weapon in our lives is deception. If he can convince us that he is more powerful and that we must yield to him we have lost the battle. A believer who understands his or her authority is a threat to the kingdom of darkness.

- C. I qualify to use my authority by walking in humility (Phil. 2:5-11).

It is important for us to remember that all authority is delegated. It comes from God. When we start to exercise our authority and see the results we must not yield to the idea that we have authority in and of ourselves. We are representing Christ and hence operating in His name.

- D. I qualify to use my authority by walking with boldness (Acts 4:29-31).

Humility is not timidity. Humility involves agreeing with the truth about what God says about us and expressing it boldly. It is important for the believer to consciously stay in his seat of authority.

- E. I qualify to use my authority by having my armor in place and standing my ground (Eph. 6:10-18).

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## Reflection Questions

1. What do you think are the key hindrances to believers walking in their authority?
2. How can one's life change when one discovers one's authority in Christ?  
Can you give personal examples of this?
3. What are some of the possible cautions in our use of the believer's authority?