
Words of Truth

Abuse Of Power

By: Brian A. Yeager

The word of God establishes that there is an order of those in authority. That order is that God the Father is above all, Christ is above man, and man is above woman (I Corinthians 11:3). Prior to Christ giving the kingdom back to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24-28), Jesus has been given authority over all things (Matthew 28:18). In everything we say and do, we are supposed to do so by the authority of Christ (Colossians 3:17; cf. I Thessalonians 4:1-2).

Notice how clear God has been in stating that Jesus has authority over all things: *“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, **Far above all** principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all... Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth**; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father... Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For 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**: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell”* (Ephesians 1:19-23, Philippians 2:9-11, and Colossians 1:12-19).

Mankind has a HUGE problem with the subject of authority. Most of humanity, including so-called “Christians”, refuses to be submissive to the authority of the Lord. Some do not realize that they will stand before Christ in Judgment. Some don’t care. Others despise our Lord and do all that they can to show such. Some just deceive themselves by thinking that they can get away with not submitting to God. Yet, God has been clear in telling us not to try to take His place of authority.

God Is Not Okay With Us Overstepping Our Bounds

Notice what God has stated in setting forth our boundaries: *“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for*

one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ... But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many... And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (Matthew 23:8-10, Mark 10:42-45, and Acts 12:20-23).

Clearly, an honest Bible student can see that God wants man to be submissive to His authority above all else (Luke 6:46, John 15:10, Acts 5:29, James 2:10-12, and I John 2:17). It is the whole duty of man to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Since God expects man to be submissive to His authority, He has left us with some boundaries.

God Drew The Lines

Even for those whom God has placed in positions of authority, He has given them boundaries. For example, God has given authority to elders to feed, oversee, and protect the church (Acts 20:28-31 and I Peter 5:1-2). Yet, He says this to elders: *"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock"* (I Peter 5:3). The Apostles had authority (Matthew 16:19, II Corinthians 10:8, and Ephesians 6:20). Yet, they had boundaries wherein they could not just say, do, or teach anything they wanted to (I Corinthians 16:7 and Galatians 1:8-9).

Honest men and women realize these lines. Paul understood that though he was an apostle that didn't mean that he was or is greater than anyone else (I Corinthians 3:5 and II Corinthians 4:5). On the other hand, there are those who know the boundaries and choose to overstep them for their own glory. Men such as Diotrephes are those who want to have the preeminence and take steps to gain it (III John 9-11). We each have to choose whether we want to follow the examples like that of Paul or like those such as Diotrephes.

Conclusion

When Paul, as an Apostle, wrote the church of Christ in Corinth he had authority. The words he spoke were the commandments of God (I Corinthians 14:37). However, he did not abuse his power. He did not seek to have dominion over the faith of others (II Corinthians 1:24). We'd all do well to follow that example. No matter what level of authority each of us have in the church, at home, in the workplace, etc.; we should not lose sight of the fact that we are servants of God (Romans 6:22). No matter what you become in the flesh, you and I are also servants to one another (Galatians 5:13). No matter how great we think we have become we are still merely unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10). Therefore, let's remember our places and not abuse whatever power God has given us.