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POWER & AUTHORITY

STUDY GUIDE



POWER AND AUTHORITY

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 10:19

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Ephesians 3:20

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,...

THEME

Power and authority are too often seen as synonymous, or they are altogether disregarded; hence, we find ourselves in undesirable predicaments. Understanding the difference between power and authority will aid and assist us in our daily lives. There are laws and principles that govern power and authority; consequently, when we violate these laws or principles, we find ourselves ineffective in certain situations. It is imperative that we recognize power and authority, and we must properly distinguish between the two. We must also constantly abide by their respective rules.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Jesus. (Matthew 28:18)
 1. Jesus has given unto us, the believers, the right and privilege to use His authority in earth. (Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; II Corinthians 5:20)
 2. We are the Body of Christ; therefore, we possess the same authority in earth that the Head possesses. (Colossians 1:18)

- B. Many people try to exercise power and authority, only to realize failure.
- C. There are laws and principles that govern both power and authority.
- D. When laws and principles are violated, power and authority become ineffective.

II. POWER MUST ACCOMPANY AUTHORITY (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8)

- A. Authority is no greater than the power enforcing it.
 - 1. A police officer has authority, but his badge alone does not always get the job done.
 - 2. The power of the police officer is usually worn on his hip, in the form of a pistol.
 - 3. The police officer's authority gives him the right to use his power, but that power must not exceed the predetermined parameters set by a higher authority.
- B. The Holy Spirit is the power we need to enforce our authority.
 - 1. We receive power **after** that the Holy Spirit is come upon us.
 - 2. We must have the power to "be" before we are given the privilege to act.
 - 3. Without the Holy Spirit, we are powerless in the spirit world.
 - 4. In Ephesians 3:20, the doing "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" is according to the power that is at work in us.
 - a. If the Holy Spirit is not in us, the work cannot be done in us.
 - b. What the Lord is doing for and with us is directly related to the operation of the Holy Spirit within us.
 - c. We must allow the Holy Spirit to work freely within us.
- C. According to Luke 10:19, we have the authority to put the devil under our feet; however, without the Holy Spirit working in and through us, that is an impossible task.

- D. By definition, authority is the power or right to command, act, enforce obedience, or make final decisions; it is also jurisdiction.
- E. By definition, power is the ability to do, or the capacity to act; it is also the capability of performing or producing.
- F. *Dunamis* and *exousia* are two Greek words that have been translated “power” in the KJV of the Bible.
 - 1. *Dunamis* relates to force and strength.
 - 2. *Exousia* relates to authority and privilege.
- G. Force is of very little value unless it has a legal avenue to operate.
- H. Authority is the legal avenue for force to operate.
- I. Authority is of very little value unless it has the power to enforce.
- J. In Luke 10:19 (KJV), the word “power” is used twice. It is translated from the Greek word *exousia* (ex-oo-see'-ah), which means authority or privilege and *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is), which means force or strength. In Acts 1:8, the word “power” is translated from the Greek word *dunamis*.
 - 1. Both *exousia* (ex-oo-see'-ah) and *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is) must work together in order to get the job done.
 - 2. In Luke 9:1, Jesus gave “the twelve” power (*dunamis*) and authority (*exousia*) over all devils. He also gave them the power and authority to cure diseases, but in Luke 9:37-40, the disciples were unable to cast the devil out of the lunatic son.
 - a. Both power (force) and authority (legal right) had been given to the disciples.
 - b. The disciples experienced failure as a result of their inability to enforce their authority, yet power had been given unto them.
 - c. The inability of the disciples to produce the desired results is explained by Ephesians 3:20, which states, “according to the power that worketh in us.”

- d. The deficiency in the disciples came as a result of inadequate fellowship with the power source, which resulted in unbelief. (Matthew 17:19-21)

III. WORD POWER DETERMINES AUTHORITY

- A. Hebrews 1:3 and Hebrews 11:3 give us insight into the operation of “word power” and authority.
 1. Jesus is upholding all things by the “word of His **power**” (*dunamis*).
 2. The **authority** (*exousia*) of Jesus’ words is determined by His ability to enforce His words.
 3. The world was framed by the Word of God, which came forth as a result of His power and authority.
- B. Matthew 8:5-10 is an excellent example of the operation of power and authority in relation to words.
 1. The centurion in this passage of scripture realizes the relationship between authority and force.
 2. The centurion obeys his superiors because he understands the power behind their authority.
 3. The centurion’s soldiers and servants obey him because they understand the power behind his authority.
 4. The centurion recognizes the power and authority Jesus has over sickness and disease, and he is satisfied that Jesus’ word will be sufficient for the recovery of his sick servant.
- C. We must always be mindful **not to speak** things we do not have the power to enforce and **to speak boldly** the things we can enforce.
 1. We must have a good understanding of authority, and we must not violate the parameters of our authority, which are set by God.
 2. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit, Who gives us the power to enforce our authority.

3. Speaking beyond our power is like writing a check without having sufficient funds in the bank to cover it.
 - a. We may have the authority to write a check, but our authority is going to be challenged.
 - b. The bank does not accept authority alone; it also requires power to support the check.
 - c. The spirit world operates like the bank: power must be coupled with authority; otherwise, our words are futile.
- D. Saying what God has not said always leads to trouble. That is one of the reasons it is so important to know God's Word.

IV. COMMISSION PRECEDES AUTHORITY

- A. God's call and commission are not the same. (Matthew 22:1-14)
 1. Many are called, but few are commissioned.
 - a. God's preparation requirements must be met before one is commissioned.
 - b. One who will not submit to God's will and purpose will never be commissioned by God.
 2. The call of God carries no authority with it.
 3. One who has not been commissioned is not entrusted with authority.
- B. The commission of man is not necessarily the commission of God.
 1. Education is neither call nor commission; a theological or divinity degree is the idea and work of man, not God.
 2. Man's commission does not give one authority in the spirit world.
 3. Only God is able to commission one to go forth with authority and power over evil spirits. (John 15:16)
- C. One who goes forth without God's commission is also going forth without God's power; consequently, his work and results will be natural rather than supernatural.

- D. The authority in the name of Jesus is limited to those who have entered into a relationship with Jesus.
 - 1. Imitating others can have adverse effects. (Acts 19:13-16)
 - 2. In order to use the name of Jesus effectively, we must know the person of Jesus intimately.

- E. We must also know and understand that commission is not all-inclusive. Even the commissioned must be attentive to the voice of God.
 - 1. God's divine commission does not license one to act presumptuously, but it does give one the permission to act in place of Jesus.
 - 2. Commission in ministering is simply hearing God speak concerning a particular person or situation.
 - 3. Acting without hearing is presumption; consequently, one who acts without hearing is acting independently of God.

V. REPRESENTING JESUS WITH POWER AND AUTHORITY

- A. According to II Corinthians 5:20, we are ambassadors for Christ; therefore, we represent deity.
 - 1. We are not deity, but we certainly represent deity.
 - 2. An ambassador for the United States is not the United States, but he certainly represents the United States.
 - a. Although the ambassador is not the United States, he speaks with the power and authority of the United States.
 - b. The ambassador presents himself as the United States and conducts himself as the United States; consequently, others see the United States through the actions of the ambassador.
 - 3. We are ambassadors for the kingdom of God; consequently, we speak with the power and authority of the kingdom of God.

4. As representatives of deity, we must conduct ourselves as deity.
 - a. Our thoughts, our conversation, and our actions should be a reflection of Jesus Christ.
 - b. We must always be mindful of the origin and purpose of the power and authority that have been given unto us.
 - c. We must live our lives in such a way that Jesus is revealed in our conduct, in our power, and in our authority to those with whom we come in contact.
- B. Matthew 6:10 tells us that God wants His will done in earth as it is in heaven; the only way God's will can be accomplished in earth is for the Body of Christ to exercise its power and authority in earth.

VI. SUMMARY

- A. Laws and principles govern power and authority.
- B. Power must accompany authority; otherwise, authority will be ineffective.
- C. Authority is the right to act; power is the ability to act.
- D. Force must have a legal avenue for operation; authority is the legal avenue for force to operate.
- E. Authority must have the power to enforce; otherwise, authority is of little value.
- F. Word power cannot exceed the authority and force behind the words spoken.
- G. The Holy Spirit at work in us is our power.
- H. God's commission gives one the authority to act.
- I. Our power is contingent upon our fellowship with the power source, which is God.
- J. We represent God by exercising the power and authority He has given unto us.

- K. Although we are not deity, we must act like deity by reflecting the conduct, power, and authority of God's kingdom here on earth.
- L. God's will is to be done here on earth, as it is in heaven.

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. Satan is not moved by our power and authority, per se.
 - 1. Many born-again believers with power and authority over the devil are being tormented and harassed by the devil.
 - 2. Once we understand our power and authority, we can mount an offensive that will put the devil on the run.
- B. It is vital that we understand authority; otherwise, we may find ourselves operating outside the legal parameters set by God.
 - 1. God has not called us to be bullies; He has called us to be conquerors.
 - 2. Ignorance of God's Word and an insensitive heart are the two major causes for violation of authority.
- C. It is also vital that we understand power and its origin.
 - 1. Power is not the result of one's physical strength, nor is it determined by one's arsenal of carnal weapons.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit is the only power that is effective against the devil; consequently, everyone needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- D. Power is force; the force used against the devil must be a spiritual force.
- E. Jesus has given unto us power and authority; it is imperative that we use these resources for the glory of God.
- F. The authority of the believer is the name of Jesus; the power of the believer is realized through the Holy Spirit.