

Authority means “means “the rightful, actual and unimpeded power to act, or to possess, control, use or dispose of, something or somebody.” Webster defines it as “the power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior”.

Question: What are your thoughts or reactions to this topic of “authority”?

Seven biblical authority-submission relationships: (found in the Scriptures)

1. God and Man
2. Man and Nature
3. Husband and Wife
4. Parents and Children
5. Governors and Governed
6. Employers and Employees
7. Spiritually Leaders and the Spiritually Led

Jesus submitted to the authorities in his life:

Luke 2:49-52. ⁴⁹“But why did you need to search?” he asked. “Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰But they didn’t understand what he meant. ⁵¹Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart. ⁵²Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people. (NLT)

Luke 20:22-25. ²²Now tell us—is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” ²³He saw through their trickery and said, ²⁴“Show me a Roman coin. Whose picture and title are stamped on it?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. ²⁵“Well then,” he said, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.” (NLT)

John 12:49-50. ⁴⁹I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.” (NLT)

Jesus also faced the temptation of authority throughout his life.

Luke 4:5-6. ⁵Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶“I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. (NLT)

John 6:15. ¹⁵When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself. (NLT)

Yet, Jesus knew how to exert authority when necessary.

Mark 4:39. ³⁹When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. (NLT)

Luke 8:29. ²⁹For Jesus had already commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. (NLT)

Matthew 26:53. ⁵³Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? (NLT)

Matthew 21:6. ⁶The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. (NLT)

Ultimately, Jesus completely redefined the authority-submission relationship.

Mark 10:42-45. ⁴²So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ⁴³But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." (NLT)

John 13:1-7. ¹Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ...

³Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." (NLT)

John 14:15. ¹⁵"If you love me, obey my commandments. (NLT)

The greatest man to ever live, the one man who had every right to claim authority out of a position of power ("I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth." – Matthew 28:18) asked only to be served out of love. Can we do any less?