



God Given Authority...

Authority is one of those topics that is sometimes neglected, often times because it necessitates reviewing what we do to ensure it is permitted of us. Surprising to me in this study was the fact that the word ‘authority’ is found more often in the texts of the New Testament than the Old. Jesus was asked by the chief priests and Elders “By what authority do you do what you do, and who gave you that authority?” (Matt 21:23). At the time, Jesus opted not to tell them because of their refusal to acknowledge the hand of God in what was occurring. Their demand for knowing the authority for these actions was not wrong, just as we would do well knowing by what authority God’s people continue to do what we do.

I say this to remind us of the two types of authority, those being intrinsic and derived, or delegated. The lesson this week reviewed the authority God has delegated to various entities or positions. Each of these is found in the pages of scripture and they include; government (Romans 13:1ff), employers (1 Peter 2:18), husbands (Ephesians 5:22-23), parents (Ephesians 6:1-3) and the elders of the church (Hebrews 13:17). Each of these addresses the authority delegated by God for particular purposes that are obvious to the casual observer. One thing that may not be as obvious is the fact that these passages are not directed to the ones in authority, rather to those who are subject to that authority. This, I believe is in keeping with scripture’s teaching of submitting, or being subject, to one another. Jesus said the ways of the Gentiles were to lord over those in their charge, but this would not be so with the children of God.

Jesus has been given all authority in Heaven and on earth and our response is to be one of submission to Him. This is clearly noted in the text of Luke 6 when He asked why those who did not do what He said called Him, “Lord, Lord.” If they would have submitted to Him as their Lord they would be doing what He said in His Word. The same is true today of those who do not submit to His authority, calling Him Lord, Lord and not doing what He says. A noteworthy observation here would be to see is that failure to submit to the ordinance of God is rebellion and the penalty is judgment (Romans 13:2). Accept the authority of God in the ways He has indicated and then accept the gift of God’s grace!