

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Timothy 5:17

Introduction: Sadly many people don't grasp the truth that the "Church" is nothing apart from spiritual authority. All the popes and priests and pastors in the world can't do a thing for God apart from spiritual authority. Without proper understanding, growth in the Lord is impossible. Spiritual authority is not some sort of a "boss" but is the "guide", the basis for Christian growth. God is the final, ultimate authority and His Word is the channel of that authority.

God gives leaders to His Church and His authority rests in them as they themselves submit to God's authority. Any/all Church/s that grow are the ones submitting to God's authority and not doing things their own way.

I. SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY (vv7, 17)

1. "Submit" through the Word of God.
 - Some think that home bible study groups or worshipping at the lake is the same as assembling together in a house of worship but it's not. (**Hebrews 10:25**) "*...forsake not the assembling together...*"
 - The main purpose of assembling together in an assigned place of worship is to listen to God's Word and then to submit to it - to learn how to apply it.
2. Follow the faith of Church Leaders.
 - One is not to follow everything about his/her Church leaders but to look at their faith and attitudes toward Godly things - attitudes toward life, death, material things.
 - Is their faith in Jesus Christ well anchored? If so, then follow their example of faith.
3. Follow the direction of Church Leaders. (v24) (**1 Corinthians 14:33**)
 - God directs His Church leaders and if they are under His authority they will not give one message that contradicts another.
 - Submit to the direction of Church leaders in Christian sweetness.

II. THE BASIS FOR AUTHORITY (v7)

1. Think of the New Testament Disciples and their lives, their faith, their teachings and how God used them. The world was changed through them.
2. Study the lives of God's leaders - study the faith they exercised.
3. Most of the Church difficulties occur when there is a refusal to submit to spiritual authority.
4. God has a "chain of authority" much like within a home. The husband/man is over the family. Thus the pastor is over the Church. All authority however is under Jesus Christ.
5. Most spiritual unhappiness occurs because the knee is not bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - One does not follow God's appointed Church leaders.

6. Jesus Christ is the basis of all authority because He never changes! He is permanent.
 - Jesus still walks with us, blesses His children, feeds His own, calms the storms, touches lives, heals souls and bodies. (*John 25:26*)
 - The Gospel is alive! Jesus Christ is not only of the past, but is of the NOW as well.
7. Until one bows in total submission to Jesus Christ, he/she will never submit to any of God's leaders.
 - All rebellion against pastors, teachers, any God-appointed leader is against God, Himself.
8. Think about this: Your best interest, your needs, etc., is what God cares about. God says to be submissive for your own good.

III. THE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY (v17) (*Acts 20:28-31*)

1. It is one thing to have God's authority and using it is something else. (*Luke 15:3-7*)
2. A pastor is given charge over souls belonging to God (pastorate-Church). It is a heavenly assignment.
 - God keeps records and pastors will give an accounting of their pastoring.
3. There are many ups and downs, joys and heartaches of being a pastor/Church leader.
 - There is a lack of submission/participation of some.
 - There is so much that could be done, but isn't being done.
 - God's children have to be begged to even think of God, etc.

CONCLUSION:

1. God is supreme authority and God speaks that authority through His Word.
2. God places leaders in His Church and gives them authority to care for His Children.
3. All Christians are to submit to God's authority and to God's appointed Church leaders in sweet Christian fellowship.
4. God is supreme, God's Word is through which He reveals His authority, God appoints Leaders to lead, teach, encourage, help, protect, be an example to His Family/Children/Church.