

Spiritual Authority

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Introduction:

When a pastor begins to speak about “spiritual authority” in a church, there is always a cringe on the part of the congregation. Women expect a sermon about “submission,” deacons expect a message on “getting in line behind the pastor’s vision,” youth imagine being told they better “stop dying their hair purple,” and most protestants envision a papal decree.

As I researched this message, I found that spiritual authority had much less to do with “submission” to those in authority over them than it did to understand the nature of Jesus and how he gained and used authority in His ministry. We are so used to someone abusing authority, ruling over someone else, that we cannot imagine there is an alternative.

This morning I hope to guide you in an understanding of what spiritual authority is and isn’t, how you get it, how you use it and how you can lose it.

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY:

1. Definition:

- a. The dictionary defines *'authority'* as *the power or right to give orders and make others obey, or to take specific action*. Authority is usually conferred upon a person by someone of higher rank. Democratic leaders are voted into authority. To be of any value authority must be coupled with power and proved valid by worthwhile results. Indeed, authority is the right to exercise power. It is the ability to control and influence people and events.

2. The Centurion:- Lets look at a Centurion who understood the nature of authority and expressed his faith based upon that understanding.

- a. Matthew 8: *5 When Jesus arrived in Capernaum, a Roman officer came and pleaded with him, 6 "Lord, my young servant lies in bed, paralyzed and racked with pain." 7 Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." 8 Then the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed! 9 I know, because I am under the authority of my superior officers and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this or that,' they do it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd, he said, "I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all the land of Israel! 11 And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. 12 But many Israelites – those for whom the Kingdom was prepared – will be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, "Go on home. What you have believed has happened." And the young servant was healed that same hour*
- i. The Centurion is a gentile, a non-Jew, and is equally despised for his being an occupying soldier in Israel. He is what some might call a “God Fearer” ...that is, a Gentile who worships the God of Israel.

- ii. The Centurion doesn't seek out witches, wizards, or diviners for his servant's cure, but comes to Jesus.
- iii. His servant has palsy, which in this case is a form of painful paralysis. The Centurion says he is "senseless with pain."
- iv. And at the same time, he has a humility that understands his place in the Jewish world...that he would be asking too much to ask a Jew to defile himself by entering a Gentile household.
- v. And here is where he not only expresses his faith, but also his understanding of spiritual realities and authority. Look at verse 8 and 9:
- vi. *"Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed! I know, because I am under the authority of my superior officers and I have authority over my soldiers"*
- vii. He knows the dominion he has over people as a military leader; he understands that when he gives an order it is obeyed, and obeyed instantly and absolutely. And it is clear that he understands that Jesus has that kind of absolute authority over all of creation!
 - 1. And in this case...Over disease
 - 2. He understood that Jesus has that absolute authority to command sickness to be healed. He understood that Jesus had the authority of God Himself.
 - 3. He believed correctly, that Jesus had the right AND ability to exercise power in this arena of life.

b. Let's take a look at God's Authority

- i. To understand God's authority, we must realize that the conflict of the universe and of eternity is based upon WHO will have the authority.
- ii. God's primary goal in creation is to demonstrate and establish His own authority in all of creation.
- iii. Remember, because God is God, all should be subject to Him, unfortunately, men and angels have refused to be subject to Him and have been in **REBELLION** toward God's authority.
 - 1. Rebellion is evidenced in the Fall of Adam and Eve.
 - 2. Rebellion is evidenced in the very nature of sin.
 - a. Sin is choosing my own way over God's.
 - b. Sin is saying, "I want to be my own God."
 - c. Sin is saying, "I want no-one else over me"
 - d. Sin and rebellion says, "I want to be my own **authority**."
 - e. **It is this way everywhere.** In researching this sermon, I searched for quotations on authority, and found a web site filled with quotea that express hostility to a belief in God.
 - i. Writers such as Isaac Asimov, Frederick Neitzche, and Carl Sagan ranted and railed – and the crux of their hostility toward God was that there might be an authority outside of themselves.

3. A large part of the universe is in a state of rebellion against God. We are compelled to face the fact that God is not having His perfect way. Although God is the Ruler of the universe. He is not having His perfect way.
4. I cannot agree with that poet who says, "God's in the heavens all's right with the world." All is not right with the world. All is not right with the world in business or in physical things, or we would not have our hospitals full of sick people.
 - a. It is a lovely world, but all is not right with it.
 - b. There is something very wrong with the world, and I think most thoughtful men and women agree that they are conscious at times of something very wrong with them.
5. Open resistance to authority is a popular pastime of the human race; and, sad to say, at some time or the other we have all been rebels.
 - a. We have chafed under authority, stamped our feet, pouted, cried, thrown a tantrum, shouted and screamed to indicate that we do not wish to comply.
 - b. Babies, school children, youths, men and women of all ages have, at some times in their lives, openly resisted authority.
 - c. We humans just do not like being told what to do; so we resist
6. If we are in rebellion against God's authority, then we can certainly not understand the benefits of living under His authority. "There is no authority except from God; by tracing authorities back to their source, we invariably end up with God.

HOW DO WE GET AUTHORITY?

I think that for us to understand this we need to look at one who wielded authority properly and see what He did with it and how he obtained his authority.

c. Jesus's Authority

- i. Jesus had the Authority of God: The very nature of Jesus (as God clothed in human form) expresses the authority of God.
 1. In John we are told that He was in the beginning and everything was created through Him.
 2. He has the authority of God the creator because that is who He is.
- ii. Matthew 7:29 says that the people were amazed because Jesus was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes.
- iii. Mark 1:27 says that they were amazed because he commanded even the unclean spirits and they obey him.
- iv. The Pharisees wanted to know where He got his authority.
- v. Others wanted to know how he could have the authority to forgive sins, so he proved that he did by healing the person physically as well. (Mt. 9:6)

- vi. In Matthew 8:26, we are told he amazed his own disciples with his authority over the elements, calming the howling wind and driving rain.
- vii. He has absolute authority over demons and devils, as we are told when he drives out demons and they whine and grovel at his feet.
- viii. 1Cor. 15:21-27 *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, **then {comes} the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.** For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all*
- ix. We have seen how Christ has authority, and yet the secret of it all is that He Himself is under authority
- x. The authority of Jesus Christ is dependent upon His obedience to the Father.
 - 1. And as His obedience to the Father is complete He has all power over that which is beneath
- xi. Notice: John 5:19-23 "Jesus replied, "I assure you, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and tells him everything he is doing, and the Son will do far greater things than healing this man. You will be astonished at what he does. He will even raise from the dead anyone he wants to, just as the Father does. And the Father leaves all judgment to his Son, **23** so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. ***But I do nothing without consulting the Father. I judge as I am told. And my judgment is absolutely just, because it is according to the will of God who sent me; it is not merely my own.***
- xii. ***Doesn't that sound like submission to the Father's authority? Why do we have such a tough time with authority? The secret to authority lies in learning to obey and submit to God's authority in our lives.***
 - d. **Human Authority – 3 types: Governmental, Believers, and Churches.**
 - i. Governmental Authority
 - 1. **Romans 13:1-6 *Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.*** Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of

God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for {rulers} are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

2. What this says is that every authority comes from God.

3. Even those regimes that are ungodly, still gain their authority from God and will be judged by God. The Old Testament prophets are filled with pages of declarations by God against even the pagan nations for leaders abusing their authority and promising to bring judgment upon them.
4. The apostle Paul encouraged believers to submit to the authority of the secular rulers except where perhaps it violated their beliefs, such as emperor worship.
 - a. The principle is that government was established by God for the order and good of people, even if some governments are not submitting themselves to God's rule.

ii. Believers – God places people over us for

1. Jesus even gave his disciples authority (Mt. 10:1) *“Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them **authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness*
 - a. Do you have any idea what awesome authority you and I have been given?
 - b. You and I have been given the authority to heal disease and every kind of sickness. His disciples. Not just the twelve, or seventy two. All of us. It is part of our calling and our commissioning. It isn't just for the first century. His giving authority to the church was for all time for all believers to possess.
2. "In Mark 16 it says: "In My Name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new languages: they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."
 - a. *He says "In My Name" they shall do amazing things*1.
 - b. God has designed that we should have His authority by the very use of His Name.
 - c. We must understand that Jesus gave you and I His authority when He authorized you and I to use His Name. This means that as we speak His Name in accordance to His will, in overcoming darkness, evil, sin, hatred, rebellion, and even illness...He has AUTHORIZED IT... meaning, we are writing in the “amount” on the check He has signed.

iii. How do you and I get this authority??

1. We must first of all be under Jesus' authority, walking in obedience that we get to possess His authority as our own.

2. In Military circles, this is called the “chain of command.”
 - a. A subordinate officer cannot issue orders without those orders being part of the larger game plan of his superiors.
 - b. A platoon leader of US Infantry in Kuwait cannot suddenly decide that he is going to attack Iraq. He is under the command of other leaders ultimately under the command of the Commander In Chief.
 3. Our Commander in Chief is Jesus. He declares the war zones, the areas to be taken back and brought under His authority. And if you and I desire to have authority we must first be under His authority.
 - a. “For authority to be expressed, there must be subjection. And if there is to be subjection, self must be excluded.”
 - i. The self is that part of us that seeks its own way. In Military circles, a leader cannot become a leader until he learns to follow. He must learn to take orders before he can give them.
 - ii. It is the same with us. We must learn to be submitted to God’s direction in our lives on a continuous, day by day, hour by hour and moment by moment basis.
 - iii. If we are off doing our own thing, doing things designed to please ourselves but not serving and obeying our Savior, then we should not be surprised that our prayers are not being answered and that miracles are not coming through our lives.
 - b. “
 4. *Watchman Nee* says, “When nothing in me wants to go my own way, but everything in me wants to go His way, when all that defending myself, and all that ambition, and all that love of prominence and love of place goes, and I am submitted to Him; that is the man God gives authority to. That is the only man. He can trust it with, because that is the principal on which Jesus Himself has His authority. He has His authority on the principal of His submission.
 5. *You and I cannot have authority that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 10:1* if our lives are not in subjection to Him. In fact, “The one who is not subject to authority will eventually be a slave to him who does not obey authority. (Gn 9:20-27)
 6. God gives authority only to those who have an awareness of their own incompetence. We must humble ourselves to be exalted and used.
 - a. It is as if those who seek authority to wield it will discover they have none. Just as one who tries to have “positional” authority instead of relational authority (which is earned).
- e. How do we USE this authority?

- i. This is the question of the ages. We must look carefully at the mission of the 12 and the 72 and see that their job was to declare the Kingdom of God had come, to invite people to enter it and to become a part of it.
 - a. In Matthew 10, Jesus tells His disciples as he sent them out, “As you go, preach this message, ‘the kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.”
 - b. In Luke 10, Jesus tells the 70 disciples he sends out, “If a town welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you and heal the sick. As you heal them, say, ‘The Kingdom of God is near you now.’”
 - c. And concludes their return with this statement in verse 17: “When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, ‘Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!’” “Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan falling from heaven as a flash of lightning! And I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. But don’t rejoice just because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered as citizens of heaven
2. What does this tell us about our use of His authority? We only need to look at Matthew 28 to be certain.
 - a. Beginning in verse 18: *“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”*
 - b. Have you figured it out yet? We get to use His name to bring His authority to the entire earth! Remember in the beginning of this sermon, when I said, “The battle of the cosmos is over who is in charge?” God has enlisted you to bring the world under His reign. That is what the Kingdom of God is!
 - c. But if you and I desire to do that, we must first become under His reign ourselves.
3. God calls us to ministry that impacts and changes people’s lives in miraculous ways. He doesn’t just want us to do it on our own strength, there is no life changing power in that. No, He desires that we watch what He is doing, get on board and use the authority He has given us to move mountains, change lives, free people from slavery and cast out the demonic causes of people’s curses. Bring the kingdom of God where we go! That is your mission.

f. How do we lose authority?

- i. One simple word: Abuse it.
 1. Use it for your own personal gain. I think often of the man in the book of Acts who saw the disciples casting demons out and wanted that power for himself.
 - a. **Ac 8:18** When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given when the apostles placed their hands upon people's heads, he offered money to buy this power. "Let me have this power, too," he exclaimed, "so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!" But Peter replied, "May your money perish with you for thinking God's gift can be bought! You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right before God. Turn from your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, **23** for I can see that you are full of bitterness and held captive by sin." "
 2. Reject God's subordinated authorities: Those who hearken to God's direct authority, but still reject delegated authority are nonetheless still under the principle of rebellion. That is, you cannot be trusted with authority if you cannot submit to authority.
 - a. This includes obedience to the just laws of the land in which we live.
 - b. This includes a proper attitude toward those who are over us in our employment.
 - c. This can include even rebellion within the home in which the chain of command for God's will is expressed through first Christ's covering of the husband, the husband's protective covering over the wife, and the parental covering for the children as well. When these are lines of order are perverted or torn, there will be an ineffectiveness in your spiritual authority as well.
 - d. Rejection of subordinated authority includes a respect for those God places over us in our church.
 - e. Story of my resistance to authority in 1990:
 - i. When we bought our home in Ft. Worth and joined Retta Baptist Church, I began to teach Sunday School there. But I hated meetings. The Minister of Education would call meetings on Sunday mornings before church at 8:30 for all the Sunday School teachers. I didn't like getting up that early. I didn't like sitting in on teachers meetings that were a rehash of the lesson I was going to teach. I spent hours studying the week before, what could I possibly gain by going.
 - ii. My attitude, in case you noticed, was all wrong. It was about me. What I was going to get or miss. I never thought about what others might get from my input and study.

- iii. And the crux of my attitude was the resistance toward the authority of the Minister of Education who was a very gentle and Godly man. The bottom line was...I should have gone out of OBEDIENCE to his authority under which I agreed to be when I signed on as a teacher; but instead wanted to do my own thing, my own way. That was a spirit of rebellion. And I believe that I short-circuited God's work in my teaching ministry through my rebellion.
- iv. When we moved to our new church, Cityview Baptist, I recognized this glaring issue in my life. And while I still struggled with it, I resolved to submit to the leadership, even though I might not agree or like it. As I did, I was blessed. God provided me with more responsibility and allowed me to exercise His authority and power in the realms in which He led me.
- v.
- ii. Let me do an aside here for those of you who have had your share of spiritual abuse.
 - 1. Spiritual Authority is not the same as Ecclesiastical Authority.
 - a. Spiritual authority has more to do with the authority and power of Jesus in our lives than it does in the power we hold over PEOPLE's lives.
 - b. Eccl. Authority is that wielded by church hierarchies over the lives and minutiae of their congregation's lives.
 - c. Eccl. Authority is not spiritual authority. Eccl. Authority I believe is spiritual abuse. It is authority wielded on the basis of position.
 - 2. Mt 20:25-28 ***But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and {their} great men exercise authority over them. "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.***
 - 3. Much of what we think about "authority" in the church comes from our experiences as Christians and in the way that church leaders have wielded authority. The truth is that church leaders aren't to wield authority like a baseball bat.
 - a. If one must use authority, he proves he has none
 - b. Authority (outside of a totalitarian rule) is measured by the level to which people allow you to lead them. One gains authority only through service, and essentially authority over people is really not biblical authority but rather it is "influence."

- c. Authority in the church is the same as in the individual believer. It is not over people that we are given authority,. We aren't to control people. We aren't to manipulate people.
 - d. The Apostles affirm that others desire power over us. Paul speaks of Christians who will live in complacency and have no desire to learn for themselves, but rather entrust their faith to others. He says they gather around themselves a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear and they turn from truth and regard the fables spoken by their teachers (2Tim4:3-4). Paul speaks to churches, which succumb to human authority, and gives examples such as, "they command believers not to marry and order them to abstain from certain meats" (1Tim4:3). They promise the church a reward for submitting to rules, touch not, taste not, handle not; which have a visual appearance of humility and humbleness, so others will see, but Paul calls it self-willed worship brought about by the doctrines of men (Col.2:18-23
 - e. Some leaders counsel the church to submit to their doctrines. They generously quote Hebrews, "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Heb.13:17). They twist this scripture, "must give account," by implying they are accountable to God for our spiritual walk, when it clearly means they are charged to preach the written word. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God" (13:7). We are to remember, and obey, those who speak God's word only, so we won't follow strange doctrines (13:9). Even Paul charges men to preach God's word only (2 Tim. 4:1-2), because of the doctrines of men (v.4). Be assured, every one of us will give an account of ourselves to God, (Rom. 14:12) even for the words we choose to speak (Mat.12: 36), whether the word of God, or our own teaching (Titus 2:1).
4. My brothers and sisters, there is but one head of the church, and that is Jesus. Your pastor and deacons are His servants and your servants. We have been set aside to listen to God but we don't have a perfect ear and we don't have the doctrine of infallibility. We are here to serve you and to build you up and to enable you to discover God's plan for your life and to empower you to do it. We are not here to govern your life!
 5. Anytime someone begins to tell you that "God told me that you should..." you ought to be wary.
 6. Anytime someone tries to tell you what you MUST believe, or MUST do other than the essential gospel, be careful.

7. The reason so many people are spiritually abused is that spiritual power is the greatest power a person can wield.
- g. The third way we can give up our spiritual authority is to GIVE IT to someone else in the form of ecclesiastical authority.

Lets summarize:

1. Our authority is God, but His will is expressed through His Word and His Holy Spirit. At Here's Hope, we believe that God's word is the ultimate authority for our lives.
2. We have been brought back from rebellion, and God desires to establish His reign in creation, and has begun this process in the first coming of Jesus, and will culminate in the return of Christ.
3. You and I obtain authority from God through our becoming disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. His name becomes our name. His authority becomes our authority.
4. You and I use that authority properly when we spread the kingdom of God to the world in which we live. That is where Jesus desires to see His authority exercised. Not in trying to see our home team win. But in the places where darkness needs to be pushed back.
5. You can lose your authority by abusing it...by using it for your personal gain, or by rejecting the authorities God places in our lives – including secular, family and in the church.

Jesus as Functional Head of the Church Notes:

1. Perhaps the common understanding is that Jesus functions today in His "headship" capacity somewhat like the head of a large corporation.
 - a. Probably He is there somewhere in the background, making high-level, executive decisions, holding conferences from time to time with the big, important leaders, and in general orchestrating the whole endeavor from afar.
 - b. No doubt the common "worker" will see Him in the halls occasionally or even at a meeting of the whole corporation, but in general,
 - c. His job is done on a high level which impacts the daily lives of those on the lower echelons only indirectly.
 - d. This conception is supported perhaps by the fact that Jesus did ascend into heaven. He is indeed "far above all" (Eph 4:10).
 - e. Adding to this notion that the "Head" is somewhat remote is the fact that He is invisible. He is not perceived or understood by the natural man.
 - f. These things can lead many to the following conclusion:
 - i. Jesus came to earth, died for our sins and then rose to be seated with the Father.
 - ii. Now our job is to carry out the instructions which He has left us in the Bible until He decides to return and reward us for our labors.
3. This assumption brings people to a position which is perhaps the greatest deficiency in the church today. Very few believers know and experience the headship of God in their lives.
 - i. Perhaps the best way to grasp the true meaning of this relationship is to look at what it means to be His body. We, God's people, are the "body of Christ" (Eph 1:23).
 - ii. The church as a whole is the "body" and Jesus is the Head. The individuals then are seen as "members" of this body (Eph 5:30).
 - iii. God chose to explain things to us in this way because it is an extremely accurate analogy.
 1. In a human body, all the parts are controlled by the brain.
 2. No muscle or organ functions on its own according to its own ideas.
 3. Neither is the head asking for opinions or ideas from the various parts.
 4. The whole works smoothly only when each part is in intimate communication with and obedience to the brain.
 5. In this way, the body serves to be an expression of the will of the head.
 6. The various muscles and body parts, including the mouth and eyes, respond to the direction of the brain and form an expression of what the head has in mind.
 7. This then is exactly what the Bible means to say when it states that we are His body and that He is the head.
 8. Each one of us is a member of this body with some kind of function to perform.
 9. When we do so according to the moment by moment impulses from the Head, we are then an expression of Him.

10. The body of Christ is not an automaton, simply following written instructions. It is a living organism manifesting the life within it. It is an extremely serious error to suppose that we can perform our part on our own.
11. In a human being, when the head loses control over its own members and they begin acting independently, we identify that body as spastic. It begins behaving in an ungoverned, uncoordinated manner
12. How often does Christ's body appear in this way?
13. Perhaps we have supposed that we can act for God and that will be enough. But God is not wanting us to act on His behalf. He does not wish us "to do things" for Him. Instead, He greatly desires to act through us. His will is for us to submit ourselves to Him in such a way that He has control over all of our being and can use us as vessels to manifest Himself. In this way, and only in this way, can we experience what it really means to be His body
 - b. all authority in the church is reserved for the Head. There is no room for any other. Any other authority will simply substitute for or get in the way of the flow of authority from Jesus. Unless the "leadership" in the church is simply a manifestation of God's own authority, it will hinder instead of help the process.
 - i. Dear friends, this is a very serious consideration. Jesus' body is His! We are not free to construct some kind of imitation.
 - ii. We simply cannot set up any other kind of authority in our meetings besides that which the Father has already instituted. We must allow Jesus to be our Head. Only in this way will we experience the reality of church and satisfy God's requirements.
 - iii. Only in this way can the body grow and minister to itself in the way which God has designed.
 - iv. The place then for leaders in the church meetings could best be understood as a kind of supervisor. Those who are mature and intimate with God, watch over the proceedings. In fact, the Bible uses the word "overseers" to indicate this function. Those who are less mature are free to exercise their gifts and abilities because there are qualified members who can gently correct any problems. True spiritual leadership can be exercised in a very unobtrusive way. A mere word or prayer at the appropriate time, spoken by the leading of the Holy Spirit, can bring the meeting back from some sidetrack it has taken. Those who would wish to dominate the meetings with their ideas and opinions can be carefully admonished. The leaders are present not to control or use the meetings as a forum for their own ministries, but to serve the body by helping everything be done according to the inclination of the Head.
 - v. Of course, no meeting is going to be perfect. There will always be times when someone is praying or testifying from their own heart. A leader who has been truly broken and qualified by the Holy Spirit will know from God when it is necessary to say or do something or when the Lord would simply allow an imperfection to go uncorrected. All of us have imperfections in our lives and God alone knows the time and place for these deficiencies to be addressed. This

wisdom is a result of experience and maturity. Perhaps this is why the scriptures use the word "elders" to describe such people.

vi.

4. *What is the ultimate authority for us?*

a. *Unitarians – self. Just like the book of Judges. They claim that having another source of truth other than their conscience is to submit to someone else’s version of truth.*

1.

ii. Other notes:

1. Those who hearken to God’s direct authority, but still reject delegated authority are nonetheless still under the principle of rebellion.

2. ...though we should submit to any person who has received delegated authority from God, we should disobey any order that offends Him.”

3. All authority is established by God; therefore no delegated authority need try to secure his authority by striving with men. For the more authority God has entrusted to us, the more liberty we grant to other people.

4. If we have experienced and understand God’s authority over us, we are less afraid of giving others authority and liberty to make choices without micromanagement.

b. **Judges 21:25**

i. In those days Israel had no king, so the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes

c. For the world it also is themselves. There is no standard of truth for the world. And that leads to chaos. the postmodern person who refuses to accept any absolute claim (except that it is absolutely true that there are no absolute truths).

d. *For us it is the Word of God. It is the final authority for Protestants. Not a man or a system of religious thought. It is the Word of God. We take it to be the standard of truth.*

5.

6.