

The Highest Authority

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

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Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

The word “authority” conjures many images in people’s minds. It is something many feel a great need to question and challenge. Ultimately, perceptions of authority are colored by experiences—both bad and good.

Few things have done more damage to the perception of bona fide authority than the abuse of power by those in positions of authority. Families, churches, and governments have been crushed by it, as it leaves behind broken hearts and lives.

As this booklet will show, there is an authority beyond all human authority. It is God and His righteousness. When His Kingdom is first in our lives, we gain the proper perspective of life and the ability to make real commitments that last, even in the face of adversity.

Chapter One

WHAT DO I PUT FIRST?

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:33-34).

“Seek ye first....” Consider what the Lord Jesus Christ was saying when He made this simple yet profound statement. “There are many things you could seek, but I am asking you to seek My Kingdom *first*.”

I may have a very real need—and I must be responsible to make myself available to God’s provision, whatever it may be. Still, I am to seek His Kingdom first. All kinds of conflicts may come, but instead of keeping my mind on those conflicts, I seek first the Kingdom of God.

That little word “first” makes all the differ-

ence. The Kingdom, or the government, of God—the supreme authority of the triune Godhead represented in the written and Living Word—is to be first. I must seek first the Kingdom “*and His righteousness.*” It wouldn’t be of much value for me to seek the Kingdom and not seek *His* righteousness—the righteousness that is not my own, that is not based on my own capacity for goodness.

The Problem of Compromise

This morning I awoke with a tremendous burden for the lost. To me, there isn’t anything more satisfying than to go out on purpose with other believers to seek and to save lost souls. That is what we do every weekend here at our church. We plan to go out and seek the lost, because it is part of seeking His Kingdom first.

Sadly, certain Christian publications have released studies declaring that hell is not an effective topic to be preached in most pulpits these days. Preaching is being tailored to appeal to people. Compromises are made in order to boost attendance. Surveys are conducted. “What kind of church would you go to?” unsaved people are asked. The remarks and results of these conversations are accumulated and these churches sim-

ply accommodate what these people tell them.

This approach, however, is not one of seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

God made a promise that if we seek His Kingdom first, He will add unto us the things that we need (see Matthew 6:25-34). In seeking first the Kingdom of God, the gifts of righteousness, eternal life, and grace are already ours. Then, He will add other things—things we have wanted all of our lives. He will even add things that perhaps we didn't think were right for us. God is making a contract between Him and us.

We don't have to go around being worried about how something will get taken care of. Seek first the Kingdom. In whatever area this pertains to us, we seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness. The righteousness of the entire Kingdom is given as a free gift so that people can receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness as we reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Chapter Two

ENJOYING GOD'S ADDITIONS

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

“Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life” (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

God has given me such a hunger to pray, to seek, and to lead lost souls to Christ. It is such an intense hunger, and *He* has to relieve it. Only the Lord can save people, and only He can satisfy my desire to see them saved.

Real Authority Reigns

God has made soul winning so enjoyable for me. It doesn't require seeing people accept

Christ to make it fun. When I am “in the way,” going from house to house, I make so many quick friends, because I am able to introduce them to Someone who can meet their needs. The old sin nature may tell them that they have a need and suggest another way to satisfy it, but the Holy Spirit witnesses to their hearts that what I am telling them is right and that He will fulfill all their needs.

We have a witness who testifies of the truth. Our witness is the Holy Spirit. Once, while visiting door to door in the inner city, we came upon a large man who had his music turned way up loud. Yet, the moment the Gospel was mentioned to him, he went over and turned off the radio.

“You won’t have any problem leading me to Christ,” he said. “I have had a desperate need for what you’re sharing with me today. I have put it off again and again. I have lived in every kind of sin, and I have never been happy with my life.”

Gloriously, this man was led humbly to the Lord.

By sight, everything about that kind of situation could forecast another outcome. The music was blasting. The man had a terrifying appear-

ance. Yet, one word of the Gospel set things in motion. He went over on his own and turned off the distracting music. And then, he said, "I have delayed accepting Christ. I am convinced God sent you to me, and I am very grateful. Just lead me to Christ. There is no sense in your saying any more."

This is what happens when we seek His Kingdom first.

Righteousness Imparted through Us

When we seek the Kingdom of God first, He imparts His righteousness to us. What's more, He keeps giving us His righteousness so that we may experience it in our personal existence, in our personal conviction. We experience His righteousness and come to know that we are the objects of His righteousness imparted.

We never know how God is going to add to us. Once we seek the Kingdom of God with an attitude of faith-rest, get ready! We must realize that Jesus Christ is going to add to us.

The Lord has added so much to our ministry. He has added a Bible college and Christian day schools for our children. He has added so many friends to our lives. He just keeps adding and adding more blessings, and we thank Him for

all that He sends our way.

Chapter Three

AN AUTHORITY THAT NEVER FAILS

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:2-3).

“Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” (2 Corinthians 8:4-5).

God multiplies grace and peace through the doctrine of Jesus Christ. As He does this, a

Christian gives himself first to God, then unto the body of believers where God has called him. God's authority is supreme.

A person in delegated authority may fail and disappoint a believer, but there is always the next level of authority. A husband may fail his wife, and she may find out about it. He was the delegated authority in their home, but there is another level of authority—God Himself.

The Principle of Supreme Authority

All authority has its source in God. His is the supreme and most magnificent authority we could ever have. He will never fail us. He will not let us down. So when delegated authority lets us down, we should not get discouraged, withdraw, or quit. There is always another level of authority on this earth. Physically speaking, God will bring someone into our lives to take care of delegated authority. God always has another level.

This is a necessary principle for us to understand. It would be so easy to place blame and say, "That person ruined my life. I will never be the same. I can't trust anyone anymore." That attitude dismisses the whole principle of the authority of doctrine—the governance of the Word

of God in our lives. Doctrine doesn't stop governing us when a person fails. Instead, it ushers in a better level of authority that is sure and uncompromising.

Commit to Commitment

A commitment is like a guarantee. It is the basis for accountability in a relationship. The provision of a commitment must be made long before we need it. A good example is that of someone who is not married and not even dating. He can make a commitment to God at a young age that when he does marry, he will be committed to his spouse regardless of what happens in their relationship. He makes his commitment long before he meets the woman he will marry. In making that commitment, he is making sure that he won't have to deal with questions about his position when a situation comes up. The issue of faithfulness is settled before the commitment is challenged.

Our relationships with each other are based upon our relationship to the highest authority, which is God. When my relationship to God is right, I will have a good attitude toward people. It won't matter if they agree or disagree with me. My attitude toward them stays the same.

Maybe I have been in their shoes and maybe I haven't; however, my whole attitude to others is different because I have a right relationship with God, who is the highest authority.

CONCLUSION

Whatever we face in life, it all comes down to seeking first the Kingdom of God. By letting the authority of God and the rule of doctrine have preeminence in our lives, we develop the proper perspective for life. This perspective will govern our commitments and even our disagreements.

If we find at some point that we disagree, we do not gossip about it. Instead of maligning and hurting people behind their backs in the midst of disagreement, we can submit to one another in brotherly love (Ephesians 4:32 and 5:21). Our love may become much stronger because these are the times when Calvary must come in between us.

As Christians, God's righteousness has been given to each of us. This is the ultimate authority. Regardless of what we do, this righteousness must be the source of our identity. Understanding this enables us to face every situation in the

light of Truth.