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LESSON 10 - THE BELIEVER'S AUTHORITY
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Lesson 10 – The Believer’s Authority

God has commanded believers to do certain things. With these commands comes the delegated authority to accomplish what He has commanded. With this authority comes responsibility and with responsibility comes accountability.

The source of this authority is God. It is through this authority that we can have victory through Jesus Christ. What are some of the areas over which we have been given authority? We know that Jesus is Lord over demons, disease and death, to name just a few. Through Christ, we also have authority over what He has authority over. We need to discover and learn about the authority and privileges we have been given from God through Jesus. In this lesson we will explore what the believer’s authority is.

WHAT IS AUTHORITY?

Authority is delegated power, not from yourself but given from another. If you are a person in authority, it means you have full rights and privileges as the person with the power. This is like a police officer who has the authority to govern, but that one officer is not acting on his own, he has the power of the police department on his side.

The value of authority comes from the power that is behind the authority. When I speak of the word “authority”, I speak of the rights and privileges we have in Christ. We have been given authority because of our relationship with God. To understand this authority, we must look back to the beginning and see the desires of God and what He intended for mankind.

WHAT WAS GOD’S ORIGINAL PURPOSE FOR MAN?

God gave man total dominion over the earth and everything in it. He desired that His children would live abundant, fruitful lives, lacking nothing and enjoying all that He created for mankind.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So, the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Gen 1:26-31

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As we see here, not only did God create everything for His pleasure, but He also created mankind to have dominion over all that He created. So, from the very beginning, mankind was destined to rule over the earth and all that is in it. This does not refer to ruling over other people but rather over natural things. God gave man authority to rule over the earth.

HOW DID MAN LOSE THIS AUTHORITY GIVEN BY GOD?

Man is a created being, created in the likeness and image of God.

So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Gen 1:27

God intended His children to be just like Him, having power and authority.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Gen 2:15-17

But through Adam’s transgression and fall, sin came into the world. This account is found in Genesis, Chapter 3. Adam and Eve’s sinning is often referred to as the fall of man.

What did God say to Adam?

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Gen 2:15-17

What did the devil say to Eve? *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.*

Gen 3:1-7

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Notice how the devil deceived Eve. He questioned what God said, and what God would do, and he questioned God’s motive. This is much like how the devil tries to work in our lives today. He will try to make you question God’s Word. When you need something, and you are standing on God’s Word in faith, the devil comes along and tries to question you in one of these areas:

“Did God really promise that he would take care of you? Will God really take care of you? Does God really want to take care of you?” He might try to remind you of past failures that would support his case and then tell you, “you prayed last time, and nothing happened.” We all can believe God or listen to the lies of the enemy. Depending on which choice we make, it will bring either life or death.

This is what happened with Adam and Eve. They chose to listen to the lies of the enemy and it brought death. When they sinned in the garden it brought spiritual death upon mankind.

The fall of man is not just about Adam, but rather all of mankind. Man fell out of fellowship with God because of sin, and because he was no longer in fellowship, he lost the place of authority that God had given him.

All of mankind was now identified with the sin of Adam.

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. Cor 15:21-22

When man transgressed in the Garden of Eden, Satan took away the authority and dominion that God had given him, it wasn’t taken away, man gave it over to Satan.

With the temptation of Christ, the devil speaks of his authority.

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Luke 4:5-6

Who gave the authority to the devil? Adam did when he sinned. As soon as Adam & Eve sinned, they lost all the authority & dominion that God wanted them to have.

But even despite the sin of man, we see a picture of the mercy and love of God.

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So, He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. Gen 3:22-24

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God removed the man from the garden so that he would not be able to partake of the tree of life. Why is this an important detail? The tree of life gave everlasting life. God did not want man to have everlasting life in his current fallen state. If man partook of the tree of life in his fallen state, he would have been forever lost and separated from God. So, God in His mercy removed him from the garden.

HOW DID WE GET OUR AUTHORITY AND DOMINION BACK?

Jesus purchased it back for us. When Jesus died, He overcame the devil and all the powers of darkness.

...having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Col 2:14-15

When He overcame Satan and defeated him, Jesus stripped Satan of all authority & dominion. Look at what Jesus accomplished upon being raised from the dead:

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Gal 3:13-14

How did Jesus do it? Jesus, as a man on the earth, had to defeat the devil. For Jesus to legally undo the sin of Adam, He had to come into the earth as a man but could not be born of a man. That is why we have the virgin birth.

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:34-35

Jesus was born of a virgin woman so that He could enter the world without sin. Anyone born naturally is born into the sin nature of man.

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Rom 3:23

Therefore, Jesus was the only one who was able to save mankind. He was the perfect mediator between God and man. He was all God and He was all man.

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For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Tim 2:5-6

Legally, in the beginning, mankind was given all spiritual authority. The devil stole that authority when he deceived the woman and Adam & Eve sinned. In legal terms, man was the one who God had put in charge.

Therefore, Jesus had to come as man and operate in His authority as a man. But He was also God, being without sin or imperfection, which enabled Him and qualified Him to be a spotless sacrifice for mankind. Jesus paid the penalty for sin.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Rom 8:3-4

Therefore, just as through one-man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned, for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Rom 5:12-19

We see that God’s plan for redemption of mankind was spoken of in the very beginning.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:15

This passage was speaking of the woman and the serpent (the devil). It said that there would be a seed of the woman (a child), which would crush his head (devil), head speaking of authority. Jesus would crush the authority and power of the devil and He would come through a woman to do it. It goes on to say that you, (the devil) shall bruise his heel (meaning that Jesus will taste of death).

The devil had partial knowledge that a seed coming from the woman would defeat him. Therefore, we see so many attempts by the devil throughout Bible history to kill children. The devil only

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knew part of this though. He didn’t know the time this would happen, so he made several attempts to wipe out the seed of the woman. Even at the time that Christ was born, all the male children in the area were put to death. Joseph, being warned in a dream by God, fled with his family to Egypt.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt. Matt 2:13-14

So, we see that in Christ we have been redeemed. Just as mankind was identified in the sin of Adam which brought death, mankind is also identified in Christ which brought dominion and life. *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Matt 28:18*

The keys of that dominion and authority were now in the hands of Jesus.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Heb 2:14

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8

Jesus took back the authority that the devil had taken from man.

WHAT DID JESUS DO WITH THE KEYS OF AUTHORITY & DOMINION?

He gave them to us! He gave the church, you and I, those keys so that the gates (government) of hell wouldn’t prevail against us.

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matt 16:18-19

"No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from Me," Says the LORD. Isa 54:17

Now we have all authority and dominion over Satan, over all powers of darkness, the earth, and everything in the earth. Those keys went from Adam, to Satan, to Jesus, to us!

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WHAT CAN WE USE THESE KEYS FOR?

We can use these keys to reign and overcome in this life. It’s God way of reigning on the earth through us. He can demonstrate His power and love toward mankind through His church.

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Rev 11:15

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Rev 12:10-11

Who overcame? The church! God uses us to overcome and reign in this world! We use those keys to be instruments of righteousness in the world.

And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. Rom 6:13

When we realize the authority we have through Christ, it transforms our lives and the world around us. We need to understand that we have to use the keys. They have been given to us, and Jesus can’t use them because He gave them to us. Mankind has the authority in the earthly realm.

HOW DO I USE THE KEYS?

And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matt 16:19

Notice that it says “keys” plural. There’s more than one key of authority that was given to us to reign on this earth. Let’s look at some of these keys:

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Rom 5:17

Two things have been given here: the abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness. The Word of God says that those who receive these gifts will reign in life. When you truly understand what has been given to you – grace, God’s unmerited favor and righteousness, being

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in right standing with God - the awareness of these gifts in your life will empower you to rule over circumstances and evil in your life.

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Luke 10:19

Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

We need to know that not only do we have authority, but also that we must use it.

We must also be aggressive with our faith.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt 11:12

Don’t settle for anything less than total victory in your life!

Faith is how we have access into God’s grace, therefore become good at using your faith!

... through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom 5:2

So, then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom 10:17

Feed your faith by studying God’s Word, reading books and listening to tapes that teach you how to develop strong faith. **Faith is the key to using your authority!**

MEMORY VERSES

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Luke 10:19

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Eph 6:10

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Matt 28:18

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Col 2:15

For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. John 12:49

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QUESTIONS FROM THIS LESSON

Please answer the following questions:

1) Can you define authority?

2) How did we get authority in Christ?

3) For what can I use my authority in Christ?
