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Jesus spoke (and demonstrated) many times in the Gospels of the **authority** and **power** He gives to those who follow Him. This authority and power are available for all God’s children, but we need to understand how the two work together if we hope to be effective in the ministry we do!

The authority that is extended to us is God-given authorisation in a particular time, place and space to carry out the instructions of God.

Authority is always in submission to

- the scrutiny of the Lord,
- godly brothers and sisters,
- the scriptures.

When people act on their authority they are rarely open to allow others to test the validity of their authority.

When Jesus was questioned concerning His authority to heal people on the Sabbath, He was never offended (Matthew 12:9-12). He answered truthfully and was open to transparency. This is because people of the Kingdom of Light are willing for their deeds to be exposed so that those around them can confirm the Lord is with them in what they are doing (John 3:20-21).

Paul the Apostle was also willing to “demonstrate” His God-given authority to do the work assigned to him.

Authority remains a situational matter. If God authorises us to act in a situation, we should do so, provided that we have healthy spiritual peers observing and giving input to prevent Satan from deceiving or misleading us.

When we cross boundaries without authority or with misunderstanding concerning our assignment from God—we can get ourselves into a serious mess. Authority does not give us the freedom to act recklessly. Rather, listen carefully to the Holy Spirit, seek God’s face, and if needs be - ask spiritual peers for some guidance before acting out what you think is acceptable.

In an Old Testament account, we read of Uzzah who thought he was doing the right thing and he acted without godly authority. He went beyond his assignment and because of this, the Lord struck him down (2 Samuel 6:1-8; 1 Chronicles 13:9-11). This is an extreme example that God has given us to illustrate how serious it can be to act without proper authority from the Father.

In the New Testament, we read of King Herod who pressed Jesus to show him a miracle during an interrogation (Luke 23:8-9). Jesus simply stayed silent and did not answer Herod. Jesus had the power of God with Him. He refused to act using that power because His Father did not give Him authority to reveal anything to Herod. During Jesus’ early ministry He taught that an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign (Matthew 16:4). Had Jesus responded to Herod’s request, He would have invalidated His teachings (Matthew 7:21; John 5:19). The authority given

to us is not to restrict us from doing God's work but rather, to protect us from interfering in lives God has been working in already.

We should also consider the account of the seven sons of Sceva. The priests tried to invoke authority not given to them and they were attacked by evil spirits (Acts 19:13-20). This should serve as a warning when working to undo the works of the enemy. Without God-given authority, we can give a foothold for the enemy to place us in harm's way.

Power is the God-given (supernatural) ability to carry out what we are authorised to do. It is the raw energy of heaven channelled through the weak clay jars that we are.

With the guidance of our Holy and moral God, the Holy Spirit helps us by infusing us with the power of heaven to do the supernatural work of God. When working hand-in-hand with godly authority, we are equipped to “turn the world upside down” or should we rather say “the right side up”!

Hebrews 2:4 NLT, tells us that “*God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose*”. The Holy Spirit chooses to confirm the Gospel of the Kingdom with power. It is not up to people or institutional Christianity to make that choice. We just need to be willing channels of this Holy Spirit power – and God will use you!

Paul the Apostle made it clear that preaching the COMPLETE GOSPEL was essential. Romans 15:19 (NLT) says: “*They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.*” The message of the Gospel of the Kingdom is only considered complete when it was accompanied by demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's power.

Mark 16:20, Acts 14:3 and 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 confirms the power of God was at work as the full message of the Gospel was preached!

Too many Christians operate in powerlessness. We are warned by Paul the Apostle in 2 Timothy 3:5 (NIV) that in the last days many will have “*a form of godliness but denying its power*”. They have a form of godliness but the power to change the spiritual fabric of their community and nation is absent. Power needs to be demonstrated. Powerless Christianity of all forms must be put behind us. “*Have nothing to do with such people*” – this is what Paul commanded Timothy. This is not a competition between “traditional” or “Charismatic / Pentecostal” streams of Christianity. It doesn’t matter what denomination or Christian background you are in, if it remains powerless then it is time to ask God where to go and what to do!

Many people are ashamed of the Gospel (not just about the message but mostly with the power). They feel the power of God is unpredictable, or it challenges their lukewarmness, or it exposes them to outcomes (persecution) and spiritual dangers. If they cannot control it or channel it to their liking then they prefer to ignore it or resist it completely. The famous Scottish preacher Andrew Murray became part of the mighty move of God in South Africa. When he saw that he couldn’t control it he decided to go with the flow of God’s Spirit and because of that, God did something beautiful in the nation at a time when many challenges were facing the country. Paul the Apostle says “*I am not ashamed of this (complete) Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile*” Romans 1:16 (NLT emphasis added).

It is contrary to the Scriptures for us to equate power with authority. They are two different concepts – understanding them correctly can equip us to powerfully change the world. God has boundaries in place for us (authority) so we can move and work with freedom in the power of God. Many people have confused authority with power and have placed themselves in difficult situations by overstepping the boundaries of their assignments. Or they have worked without God’s power and have produced little to no results!

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