

Christians and Authority

Matt. 20:25-28

Introduction:

- A. Authority is basic to civilization.
 - 1. Chaos is the alternative.
 - 2. True of any social unit: Home, state, church, organizations.
- B. We want to consider several aspects of authority that Christians should recognize and respect:

Discussion:

I. We must Recognize the *Source* of Authority.

- A. God is sovereign. (Acts 17:24-26; Rom. 9:20-21)
- B. Son given all authority. (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 15:24-28).
- C. Men given various kinds and degrees of authority.
 - 1. Civil authority (John 19:10-11; Heb. 13:1-5; 1 Tim. 2:2)
 - 2. Domestic authority. (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
 - 3. Spiritual authority.
 - a. Apostles. (2 Cor. 10:8)
 - b. Elders rule or exercise oversight. (1 Pet. 5:1-5).
 - c. Evangelists. (Tit. 2:15).
 - d. Men over women. (1 Tim. 2:11,12).

II. We must Recognize the *Order* of Authority.

- A. God's authority always first. (Acts 5:29).
- B. Order of headship or authority.
 - 1. God, Christ, man, woman. (1 Cor. 11:3)
 - a. Reflected in the home: Husband, wife, and children (Eph. 5:23,24; 6:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).
 - b. Reflected in the church: Men and women in general (1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Cor. 14:34,35)
 - (1) What about woman teaching a class of men?
 - (2) What about women in business meetings?
 - 2. Elders over congregation. (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:7)
 - 3. Older men over young men. (1 Pet. 5:5).

III. We must Recognize Proper *Use* of Authority.

- A. Text does not condemn authority but its abuse.
 - 1. Elders not to lord it over - kind of rule in text. (1 Pet. 5:1-5).
 - 2. Christians submit voluntarily rather by force or coercion.
- B. Christians in authority make themselves servants of subjects rather than lords.
 - 1. Christian husbands told to be gentle. (1 Pet. 3:7)
 - 2. Elders told to rule not as lords, but examples. (1 Pet. 5:3).
 - 3. Christian parents told not to be unduly harsh. (Col. 3:21).
 - 4. Christian Masters told to be just and fair. (Col. 4:1)

IV. We must Recognize the *Instrument* of Authority.

- A. All authority expressed in the gospel. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16).
- B. Scriptures furnish us unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Conclusion:

- A. Let us recognize and respect authority.
 - 1. As those under authority.
 - 2. As those with authority.
- B. Let us realize that all authority ultimately rest in the Godhead to whom we all give account.