



The Good News

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Authority

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Webster's Dictionary defines authority as, "the power to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes; jurisdiction; the right to control command, or determine."

Virtually every single aspect of a person's life is governed by some type of authority. Any job a person can hold has some form of authority over that position—even CEO's have board members and stockholders to whom they must answer. That authority governs much of our daily lives: we get up at a certain time each day because our superior has the *authority* to require us to do so. The same authority determines our hours, our salary/wage, etc. How much control would a person's superiors have over that person if they could not determine when that person needed to be at their place of business? How successful would that person's company be if each employee could work when they wished or how much they wished or did whatever they wished instead of doing that for which they were hired? The authority given to the various levels of superiors in a business is necessary for the business to survive.

The branches of the U. S. military have perhaps one of the strongest structures of authority known to mankind. Soldiers, sailors, and Marines are taught, literally from the first moments they begin training, that adherence to authority is vital for survival. How effective would a military be if it chose to allow its soldiers to operate on their own authority, relied on soldiers that showed up for training when they chose to, if at all?

It doesn't take a lot of effort to realize that for man, the greater the importance something has for him, the greater his dependence upon authority. Cutting the grass because the homeowner's asso-

ciation writes you a letter is not nearly as important as stopping your vehicle if a police officer turns on his lights and pulls up behind you. Neither is it as important as getting the project done for your boss before the weekend is over so he—and your company—can make a presentation to a prospective client that will either save or sink your company.

So why, when we turn our attention to the Word of God, do some of us throw out the concept of "following the rules?" What value is the Word of God if it is misused for our own purposes and wishes? Why do some believe it is acceptable—*permitted*—to manipulate God's Word in such a manner as to appear to support what His teachings and His Will do not? God is the ultimate authority in our existence; there is none other Who holds over us the right to command our every action, every thought, every breath. Yet far too often, we are made aware of instances in which people choose to believe what they *want* rather than what *is*. There are many things that are matters of opinion; God's Will is not now, never has been and never will be one of those things. It is not our place to decide for *others or even ourselves* what the Word of God tells us; this is because we are not given the authority to do so. He is the Potter; the clay doesn't tell the potter what to make of it; the clay is made into a vessel, and the vessel is used. Rather, it is ours to read, to study, and to understand what His Word tells us. We are given the authority to listen, to adhere, to practice, and to teach what He has taught us through His Word, respecting also when He is silent. This is what we are commanded to do.