

# PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

STUDY GUIDE



# SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

## SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

Luke 9:1

Then He called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

Luke 10:19

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

## THEME

Spiritual authority must be backed by spiritual power; consequently, the children of God must recognize and learn the authority which has been given unto them and the power available to enforce that authority. Our effectiveness as believers is dependent upon our knowledge of spiritual authority and our willingness to allow God's power to flow through us.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We must first understand spiritual authority before we can effectively operate in it.
  - 1. The Greek definition of "spiritual" is non-carnal.
    - a. Carnal means pertaining to the flesh.
    - b. Spiritual means pertaining to the spirit.
  - 2. The Greek definition of "authority" is privilege.
    - a. Privilege means special right or advantage.
    - b. Privilege is granted through delegation.

3. Because of Jesus, believers have certain rights and privileges in the spiritual world.
- B. Spiritual authority is exercised beyond the realm of the natural. (Ephesians 6:12)
  - C. It is not **who we are**, but **Whose we are** that gives us spiritual authority.
  - D. There are two worlds operating simultaneously, the natural world and the spiritual world; consequently, we must learn our authority and responsibilities in both worlds.

## II. RECEIVING SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

- A. God Himself has established the rules which govern both the physical and spiritual worlds.
- B. Satan has been given certain rights and privileges in the spiritual world. (II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2)
  1. It is vital that we know the rights and privileges of our enemy.
  2. Legality is crucial when confronting the devil; after all, he is the accuser of the brethren. (Revelation 12:9-10)
- C. Every born-again believer has been given rights and privileges in the spiritual world. (Luke 10:19; II Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-18)
  1. It is vital that the believer know his rights and privileges in the spiritual world.
  2. The authority of the believer is governed by the predetermined rules and principles set forth by God. (Matthew 18:18; Mark 9:23)
  3. Faith plays a key role in the effectiveness of the believer's authority. Binding and loosing require faith.
- D. The believer's authority has been delegated unto him by Jesus.
  1. Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and in earth; therefore, the believer must go forth as a representative of Jesus. (Matthew 28:18-20)

2. The authority of the believer does not exceed his representation of Jesus.

### III. OPERATING WITH SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

- A. Many people who have spiritual authority do not recognize their authority; consequently, they never operate in the authority which has been granted unto them.
- B. The procedure of both physical and spiritual authorities follows the same principles.
  1. Authority is received by virtue of appointment or position.
  2. When authority is delegated, parameters in which the delegated authority must operate are set.
  3. Authority is valid only when it is operating within its parameters.
  4. One cannot exceed his authority in the physical or spiritual worlds and be successful in his commands.
- C. The authority of the believer is **in** Jesus, not aside from Jesus.
  1. The effectiveness of the believer's authority is contingent upon his relationship with Jesus.
    - a. A believer who is estranged from Jesus has dramatically affected his rights and privileges.
    - b. The effectiveness of the believer's authority is directly related to his fellowship with the Lord.
  2. The power to produce comes from the vine, not the branch. Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. (John 15:1-5)
  3. One who attempts to operate in the authority of Jesus without spending time with Jesus is destined for trouble and failure.
- D. Spiritual authority must be backed by spiritual power. (Ephesians 3:20)
  1. The success of an authority is dependent upon the power behind the authority.

2. Authority is no greater than the power enforcing it.
    - a. A police officer's authority is verified by his badge.
    - b. The power of a police officer is verified by the weapon he carries.
    - c. Two ingredients that are absolutely essential to successful authority are the ability and accuracy of the police officer to use his power.
    - d. The authority of the police officer is backed by power; the power of the police officer is controlled by responsibility and accountability; the ability and accuracy of the police officer when using his power are the results of training and practice.
  3. According to Luke 10:19, we have the authority to tread upon the opposition; however, without the power of God working in us and through us, we will never enjoy this privilege.
  4. Authority is the power and right to command; power is the ability to do or the capacity to act.
  5. Authority is the legal avenue through which force operates, but we must realize that privilege without power is of little value.
- E. The believer's spiritual authority is a representative authority. (John 17:18)
1. The believer must represent Jesus as he operates in the name of Jesus.
  2. "In the name of Jesus" is not a formula to be learned; it is a statement that must be made with understanding and in faith.
    - a. "In the name of Jesus" actually means in the place of Jesus, or in His stead, or in His authority.
    - b. One operating in the name of Jesus is acting as though Jesus Himself were on the scene.

- F. One who operates in the name of Jesus must do exactly as Jesus would do if He were there in person.

#### IV. SPIRITUAL WARFARE (II Corinthians 10:3-5)

- A. Spiritual force can be defeated only by spiritual force.
- B. Satan constantly attacks the minds and bodies of the believers; therefore, it is imperative that the believers know what God says concerning their minds and bodies.
- C. The mind of the believer is Satan's prized battlefield, for the mind determines the actions of the body. (II Corinthians 10:5)
  - 1. "Casting down imaginations" is a process that takes place in the mind.
  - 2. Casting down "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" is also a process that takes place in the mind.
  - 3. "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" reveals the process that Satan uses against the mind.
    - a. Satan brings thoughts to our minds which are in direct opposition to the Word of God; these thoughts appeal to reason.
    - b. We must compare every thought to the Word of God. Any thought that is contrary to the Word of God must be brought into subjection to the Word of God.
  - 4. The believer must always compare his thoughts to the Word of God, which can only be accomplished by knowing the Word of God.
- D. The success of the believer's warfare is dependent upon how well the believer knows and executes the Word of God.

#### V. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER

- A. The spiritual authority of the believer manifests itself in the physical realm.

- B. The believer, as a representative of Jesus, has the same authority Jesus utilized in His earthly ministry. (Matthew 28:18; John 17:18; John 20:21)
- C. The believer has authority over devils and diseases. (Luke 9:1)
- D. The believer has authority over all the power of the enemy. (Luke 10:19)
  - 1. The believer has authority over the force of the enemy.
  - 2. The force of the enemy is no match for the authority of the believer, which is backed by the power of God.
- E. The believer has authority; God has power; therefore, it is vital that the believer stay in constant communication with God. (Matthew 6:13; Matthew 28:18-19)
  - 1. It is imperative that the disciples of Jesus be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)
  - 2. The Holy Spirit, Who is the power of God, takes up residence in the hearts of the believers. (Acts 1:8)
  - 3. The gospel is the power of God that sets men free. (Romans 1:16)
- F. The believer's authority must be backed by the power of God; otherwise, the authority of the believer is ineffective.
- G. The effectiveness of the believer's authority is also contingent upon the believer's knowledge of his authority.
- H. The believer has authority over sin, sickness, and poverty, but the defeat of these three is not automatic.
  - 1. Faith plays a major role in the life and ministry of the believer.
  - 2. The Spirit of God also plays a major role in the life and ministry of the believer.

## VI. RESISTANCE TO AUTHORITY

- A. Resistance is opposition; authority is the right or privilege to act; therefore, to resist authority is to oppose one's right or privilege to act.
- B. The believer's authority is delegated to him by Jesus; consequently, one who opposes the believer's authority sets himself in opposition to Jesus.
- C. We, as believers, must recognize the source of the opposition, and also we must realize Whom the opposition is resisting.
- D. Power is needed when authority is opposed.
  - 1. The authority of the believer is spiritual; therefore, the power of the believer must also be spiritual.
  - 2. Too often, believers attempt to use physical power against spiritual force.
  - 3. The believer's weapons are not carnal; they are mighty! (II Corinthians 10:3-5)
- E. Resistance can be overcome through submission. (James 4:7)
  - 1. When the authority of the believer is resisted, the believer must submit to God, Who, in turn, gives power to the believer.
  - 2. We must always realize that the opposition of the enemy is no match for the power of God.
  - 3. When authority and power unite, the opposition will be defeated.

## VII. AUTHORITY IN JESUS

- A. The believer's authority can be related to rank and position in the military service.
  - 1. Authority is limited by position and rank.
  - 2. Authority is preceded by training and experience, which are necessary for advancement in rank.

3. One who is separated or discharged from the military service loses his authority.
- B. We, as believers, have enlisted in the army of the Lord.
1. Although every believer has certain rights and privileges, authority varies according to position.
    - a. The bishop (Senior Minister) of the local church is the highest resident authority in the church; consequently, he can allow or disallow certain spiritual activity in the church.
    - b. A member of the local church does not have the right or privilege to usurp the authority of the bishop, but intercession can be made for the bishop and the church.
  2. In order to maintain our spiritual authority, we must not separate ourselves from the Lord's army.
- C. The name of Jesus is the legal authority of the believer in the spiritual world.
1. Man's body gives him authority to function in the earth, but it is Jesus Who relegates authority in the spiritual world.
  2. Jesus stated that all authority is given unto Him in heaven and in earth; consequently, Jesus controls and delegates authority in the spiritual world.
  3. The physical body of the believer gives Jesus authority in earth; the name of Jesus gives the believer authority in the spiritual world.

## VIII. SUMMARY

- A. Our effectiveness with spiritual authority is contingent upon our understanding spiritual authority.
- B. Spiritual authority is received by faith.
- C. Spiritual authority must be backed by spiritual power.
- D. The authority of the believer must be coupled with the power of God in order to get the intended results.

- E. The believer has authority over sin, sickness, and poverty, but these opponents must be confronted with the power of God.
- F. Opposition to authority is inevitable, but opposition can and must be overcome by the believer.
- G. The authority of the believer is **in** Jesus, not aside from Jesus.

## IX. CONCLUSION

- A. Satan is going about **as** a roaring lion seeking to devour; therefore, it is imperative that every believer learn and exercise his spiritual authority.
- B. Spiritual authority is not automatic; one must be trained and developed in order to be effective.
- C. The authority with which Satan operates is a delegated authority; consequently, the believer's authority exceeds the authority of the devil.
- D. Satan has authority in the world system; consequently, it is vital that believers submit to the kingdom of God.
- E. We who are born-again have authority; we who are baptized in the Holy Spirit have power.
- F. It is time for the believers to go forth in power, exercising their God-given authority in the earth.
- G. Authority without power is little more than a false, bold front.
- H. Power without authority is destined for trouble.