

DMin 760 Advanced Leadership Cohort
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Authority and Leadership

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Mat 28:18-20

How did Jesus relate to authority?

The people saw the power that Jesus had...

⁴ After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. John 6:14-15

Jesus shrank from gathering around Himself evidences of authority.

Did not gather popular authority around him.
Did not seek political office.
Did not accumulate wealth.
Didn't hang around folks to drop names.

Jesus did not seek authority; because when they wanted to make Him king, he left.

How about when He cleansed the temple?

¹² Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" Mat 21:12-13

When Jesus did this, it appears that Jesus recognized His authority.

²³ Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Mat 21:23-24

²⁵ John's baptism-- where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶ But if we say, 'From men'-- we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We don't know." Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Mat 21:25-27

Why did Jesus avoid identifying where His authority was from?

The people were looking for an endorsement of right power—they were not ready for Jesus to say where His authority was from.

When Jesus cleansed the temple, the Holy Spirit was impressing the people, not necessarily Jesus' authority.

Leadership Without Easy Answers by Ronald Heifetz

Authority: Greek = exousia

The literal meaning is to have the freedom to choose to do. It implies the ability. Think about the term ability. The community authorizes you. The church authorizes/gives such authority.

Power is from the Greek = dunamis: the capacity to carry out something. Now, what is the capacity that I bring in the church? It is based upon giftedness.

Wonderfully distinct from business because we work with the Holy Spirit who dispenses the gifts.

The term power in scripture is closely associated with authority.

In the service of God, the authority to do ministry is spoken of as receiving spiritual gifts. That assigning is done in the context of the community rather than individually. Might suggest that the giftedness would be removed if one stepped outside the church.

The linking of power and authority is done under the operation of the Holy Spirit = the Biblical basis for authority in the church.

The Holy Spirit grants to the community its authority and power. If we are not in the Body of Christ, the Holy Spirit does not gift us individually, but for the community.

We are not just independent people, but operate with permission from community and power from the Holy Spirit.

Is it possible that the community gives authority to the wrong person? Yes

The authorization is a recognition that the power is from God.

Jesus could not operate with the authority of the religious leaders

Let's think about authority and how it relates to society.

Look at primate society.

Animals resolve conflicts in the group
Maintain the spatial center of the group.
They set direction of the movement.

When Skip was teaching in Romania, he wanted to see how authority was established in the groups of children that roam about the city?

Suspicious that those who give the most kindness and listening, may be the ones that have the most authority.

Went to a small church where conflict was brewing over a school with the physical hunk of a 6' 6" man who was head elder.

Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott (book recommended by Tim Nichols)

Authority in human society

Children manifest much the same authority role as animals.

In young adults, groups establish roles, tasks, assign authority, achieve cohesive bonding
Authority provides a coordinating and problem solving mechanism.

Adults determine authority and retain the power to reassign authority

We build systems to manage authority among ourselves.

Community is always retaining the ability to assign and distribute authority.

Great temptation is for the church to forget the Holy Spirit—we can be so zealous in the process of mission that we forget the Holy Spirit.

How humans manage authority...

- It is given not taken

Change doesn't happen by taking authority—it means a change of heart.

- It is taken away
- It is conferred as part of an exchange
- It is voluntary and conscious
- When these principles are transgressed a population is handicapped for generations.
- This can happen if a controlling or dominating pastor has been in a congregation.

If the SDA Church drift towards congregationalism, it is our responsibility that caused that—

Ultimately, authority is internalized as conscience.

Heifetz suggests that the person is busy working together as they are moved inside to accomplish a shared mission.

Gets away from heroic leadership.

If you are a good leader, you can work yourself out of a job.

Ideally, members give you less stress.

They come running to you and your cheer-lead them on.

Spiritual leadership would mean that ideas are being nurtured and fostered.

The end is the internalization of authority.

When stress increases people regress and give away authority and freedom

When mismanaged, dependency on authority lessens human capacity and degenerates into bureaucratic institutions that rely on central planning.

We often equate leadership with authority.

We frequently call people in positions of authority leaders.

Leadership does not require authority.