

Be Thankful for God's Authority

God is Creator. Because of Who He is, He has the inherent right to command and expect obedience. He has the right to tell us what to do, how to think, how to live, how to talk, and how to dress. Name it. God has the power to back it up. We, as His creatures have no right to kick back or demand answers from Him. Like it or not, we are under His authority. But now, why wouldn't we like it?

Rather than looking at this as some sort of drudgery, why not be thankful for God's authority? After all, if we wish to glorify God, we can only do so by recognizing the power that only belongs to Him.

“Sing to the Lord, all the earth;
Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.
Tell of His glory among the nations,
His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
He also is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
But the Lord made the heavens.
Splendor and majesty are before Him,
Strength and joy are in His place.” (1 Chron. 16:23-27)

If we “seek the Lord and His strength” (vs. 11), then we are necessarily seeking Him in all His authority and power. Shall we love the Lord and despise His authority as if it is a burden to us? May it never be!

Here, then, are some reasons we can be thankful for God's authority:

1. Because God's authority means He is the Judge, not me, or you, or anyone else. I

don't have to worry about untangling all the sticky questions about eternity. I don't need to worry about pleasing other people, especially those in the world. I just need to concern myself with pleasing and glorifying Him based on what He has revealed (2 Cor. 5:8-9; John 12:48).

Consequently, we may say with Paul, “to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord” (1 Cor. 4:3-4). In the final analysis, each of us as individuals will stand before God. What others think at that point will be irrelevant.

2. Because God's authority is what gives power to grace. Grace means nothing unless it comes from one who has the power to give it. Sometimes grace is pitted against a stress on authority, but the two go together. It is true that authority can exist without grace, but it is not possible for real grace to exist without authority. Recall Jesus' healing of the paralytic in Mark 2. When he saw the man's faith, Jesus told him that his sins were forgiven. The people reacted by saying that only God could forgive sins, to which Jesus responded, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.'" (Mark 2:8-11) Without the authority inherent in Jesus, the man's sins would have remained. God's authority means that He can provide the grace needed to forgive sins. Without His authority, our sins would remain.

3. Because God's authority means He has the power to fulfill His promises. People sometimes promise what they cannot give. Think of the empty promises given by fallible people who strive for political power, or the disappointment we feel when someone promised something without the ability to deliver. This will never happen with God. Because He has all authority, He has complete control over the promises that He has given, and He will not disappoint. Therefore, we may have the same faith as Paul when promised that the ship he was on would not lose anyone: "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told" (Acts 27:25). Paul began his epistle to Titus with these reassuring words: "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago" (Titus 1:1-2). Our trust in God's promises is the reason we have hope as an anchor of our soul (Heb. 6:13-20). All of this is possible because of the authority of God.

God's authority should never be seen as a burden. Rather, we have every reason to be thankful for who God is and the authority He possesses and shows. "O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You" (Psa. 89:8).

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