**Ability Does Not Mean Authority**

Jarrod Jacobs

Authority is something that is needed in every walk of life. When we talk about certain people having the “right” to do this or that, we are saying that they have the authority to do it. For example, only those “duly authorized” can wear a policeman’s badge. What about when it comes to the Bible? Should there be a demand for authority in the Scriptures?

In the Scriptures, God has authorized us to do certain things. Please read Colossians 3:17. This passage declares that whatever we do or say, must be done “in the name of” Jesus Christ. This phrase means to do all things by the authority of Christ. If God has not given us authority, then we cannot do it!

Before Jesus ascended back to His Father, He said, “All authority (power - KJV) in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18). Therefore, how much authority does that leave for anyone else? Whatever we do or say must come as a direct result of what our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed in His word (I Pet. 4:11). It is through divine authority that we act. Without divine authority, we have no “right” to do anything!

Therefore, just because we have the ability to do something does not mean that we have authority to do it. For example, just because the family car has the ability to go 110 mph does not mean that we are authorized to go that fast when driving. If we attempt such a thing, we will be cited for breaking the law. Similarly, when we act in a way that is not authorized by God, we transgress God’s law and sin (I Jn. 3:4).

Let us understand that God does not have to say, “Thou shalt not” for an act to be unauthorized. If God is silent on a subject, then this means we cannot act. For example, Nadab and Abihu were put to death because they acted when God was silent (Lev. 10:1-2). In the New Testament, we learn that Jesus, while upon this earth, could not have been a priest. Why? Because Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah, “and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests” (Heb. 7:14).

Therefore, in my religious, social, governmental, family, and business relationships, I must make sure I am acting according to the authority of God, and not according to my own opinions. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12). Jeremiah said, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Friend, how will you respond? Do you realize that ability does not mean authority? Some may wonder whether or not we can know a thing is authorized. Remember that God has “given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” in His word (II Pet. 1:3). When we spend time in God’s book, we will be aware of what is authorized as well as unauthorized. When God’s word is in us (Col. 3:16), and we practice it, we will stay away from things unauthorized of God. Regardless of my feelings, if I do not have the authority from God to act or speak, then I must not do it!

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