



# LEADERSHIP

A Teaching Newsletter of Pastor Gregg Johnson and The Mission Church

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The Mission Church 4101 Rt. 52 Holmes NY 12531 U.S.A.  
845.878.3380 fax 845.878.3316 email@missionchurch.com

www.missionchurch.com



## A NEW RESOURCE FOR LEADERS

Leadership Teaching Newsletter is a great new resource for pastors, missionaries and all who are engaged in Christian Leadership. This monthly publication is developed by Pastor Gregg Johnson and staff of The Mission Church and is provided free to all leaders of ministries who strive toward greater effectiveness in the ministry they serve. Leadership endeavors to fulfill the following values:

- TO EQUIP by providing teachings, insights and information to Christian leaders in foreign lands who are unable to access mainstream media.
- TO ENCOURAGE the body of Christ around the world by inspiring the church's leaders to persevere through challenges, adversity and even persecution.
- TO EXHORT men and women in leadership to demonstrate the example of Christ through godly devotion, love of the brethren and commitment to the family.

If you are a leader in Christian ministry and would like to be added to our mailing list, Please contact the Mission Church.

## 13 PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY; part 1

Pastor Gregg Johnson

### 1. EVERYTHING GOD CREATED FUNCTIONS UNDER AUTHORITY

Our God is a God of order. This attribute is clearly seen from the beginning of creation. He did not create the fish before he created water, nor did He create vegetation before sunlight or man before there was first food to sustain him. Everything in nature has been intricately calculated with order. See Job. 38:4-5 & 8-11. When the Holy Spirit fashioned the earth by God's omnipotent decree, he did not just haphazardly throw things together, He did it with anticipatory design.

Even today, when the Holy Spirit moves in church services, He does not just throw prophecies and revelatory messages out to the body randomly. People are not led to burst out with dancing, shouting or singing impulsively; the Spirit releases and administrates with order. I Cor. 14:40 emphatically states that all things are to be done decently and in order because God is not the author of confusion but of peace (I Cor. 14:33).

It is out of this attribute of God's orderliness that structures of authority are established. Nature is under authority;

God created it and put it under man's dominion (Gen. 1:28). Angels are under authority. Scripture reveals an organized hierarchy in the heavenlies that consists of archangels, angels governing as princes, principalities and ministering spirits that interact with men. In fact it is this structure of authority that Lucifer rebelled against (Is. 14:13-14) and later became known as

Satan. We see structures of authority in government. Pr. 21:1 indicates that these structures come from God and man is commanded to submit to them (Rom. 13:1-2). The institution of marriage and family is also a structure of authority established by God as seen in Eph. 5:22-6:1. And finally, the church, the body of Christ on this earth, has been designed to operate under a system of spiritual authority (Eph. 2:19-22, 2 Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11).

### 2. GOD OPERATES WITHIN THE STRUCTURES OF AUTHORITY HE HAS SET UP

God is righteous. If He were to go against the very structures He set up, it would be a violation of His own righteousness and He would unjust. This principle is seen in the economy of God from creation to the cross. C. Peter Wagner says it like this: "When God created the world, He entrusted it to Adam, who lost it to Satan. At that point in time Satan became the 'god of this world,' and the

kingdoms of this world became His possession. Even though God could retake the world easily, he allowed His power to be limited by moral law. Satan had a 'right' to control the world he had legally dispossessed from man. God would be trespassing if He intervened directly. Since the govern-

**YOU ARE EITHER UNDER AUTHORITY OR UNDER REBELLION. EITHER YOU ARE OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS THAT SAYS, "NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE BE DONE." OR YOU ARE OF THE SPIRIT OF SATAN THAT SAYS, "I WILL ASCEND TO THE HILL OF GOD, I WILL MAKE A THRONE FOR MYSELF."**

ment of earth was lost by Adam, a man, only another man could recover it. Therefore, the Father sent Jesus Christ, as a bonafide member of the human race, to defeat Satan by His sinlessness and resurrection. Jesus 'disarmed principalities and powers' and reestablished His lordship over mankind and creation—in the positional sense. All who are in Christ, have been given the authority to overcome the kingdom of darkness and establish the will of God on the earth in a real and actual sense."

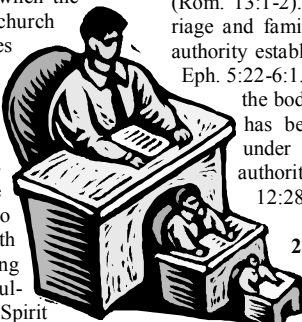
This is what Jesus meant in Matt. 16:18-19 when He said, "I give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven." Authority over creation has been recovered by Jesus Christ and delegated to His body—the church. We are now His viceroys, His ambassadors establishing His will on the earth (Matt. 6:10).

**This emphasizes the point that God establishes laws and principles and because He is righteous, works within them.** He doesn't arbitrarily violate them when convenient; if He did He could be accused of

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## 13 PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY; part 1, continued

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unlawfulness.

Consider a state or government constitution. People through their legislators set up bylaws. Once these laws are established, the people (even though they enacted them) must be governed by them. Furthermore, people go to jail when they break them. It doesn't matter if the law breaker is a cop, a lawyer, a judge or even a president who signed the law into existence—if one breaks the law they are punished for their unrighteousness.

The same principle applies to a holy God. Once He sets up structures of authority, He, Himself, works within them. In 1

**If there is no leader with true spiritual authority present, there will be no order, no discipline and the body becomes aimless, unproductive and ultimately suffer decline.**

Sam. 2, when the priesthood became corrupt, God did not disregard it. He still required Israel to submit to the jurisdiction of the priests and bring the required offerings. When God wanted to bring a prophetic word of judgment, He did not bypass the authority, He brought it to Eli the high priest (1 Sam. 2:27). Later in 1 Sam. 8, when Israel demanded a king, God basically said to the people (through Samuel), "I don't want you to have a king, but I will give you one. And when I do, this is how the authority will rule you; and further, you will be required to submit to it." In Acts 15, after the authority of the church had been established under the apostles and eldership, a question of Jewish law arose. God did not send an angel or appear in person to resolve the conflict. He allowed the authorities he established to operate under the guidance of the Holy Spirit settle the issue.

**It is important also to understand that God often defers to the spiritual dynamics initiated by authorities.** In other words, God has limited certain of His activities on earth to responding to the prayers or initiatives of the authorities He has set up. Why did Jesus tell the apostles to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?" Why doesn't God just do His will regardless of how people pray? He is saying that unless they pray, He will not act. Heaven may "will" something to happen, but heaven waits and

encourages earth's initiative to desire that will and then to pray that it happens. The will of God is not done on earth by God's sovereign omnipotence "out there" over-riding or ignoring the will of people on earth. On the contrary, God has willed that His hand be held back while he seeks for an intercessor or an authority to plead, "Thy will be done on earth" in this or that situation.

God allows the authority to have the free will to establish an agenda and then limits Himself to it. Eli and His sons walked in darkness and led the nation into darkness. In fact, under their leadership, God allowed that which represented His glory (the Ark of the Covenant) to be stolen by the enemy plunging the nation into even greater distress. In

much the same way there are churches, families and organizations all around whose leaders are spiritually blind. Because of their authority, God has allowed the whole entity to slip into darkness. See Isaiah 9:13-16.

On the contrary, when authorities are walking in the light, blessing comes. The New Testament church enjoyed the manifest glory of God because spiritual authorities provided a cover of spiritual release (Acts 2:42-27). When sin arose in the body, it was convicted and purged because of the righteous dynamics initiated by the leadership.

### 3. GOD RECOGNIZES SPIRITUAL LEADERS AS EXTENSIONS OF HIS AUTHORITY

Authority is all around us. It is a part of our lives and we accepted it. Most have accepted the authority structure of the family: wives submitting to husbands and children to parents. We respect the authority of our employers every day at work. When we drive our cars, we are under the authority of the state driving laws. Because we are designed to exist under God's structures of authority, we understand and accept it.

It is no different in the kingdom of God. Heb. 13:17 says "obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls." Read also 1 Thes. 5:12. God has given us leaders as extensions of His authority not to dominate or control

us, but to help us. Bill Gothard give 3 main purposes of authority: 1. To help us grow in wisdom and character. 2. To provide protection from destructive temptations. 3. To offer direction for life's difficult decisions. When there is an active spiritual authority in our lives, we have help to turn to for counsel, advice, correction and support during crises.

If you are under authority, you are under the covering of what God created. You will have a better chance of navigating safely through distress as God guides through the authorities. However, if you are resisting authority, you are following the example of Lucifer and will most likely fall prey to attack, deception and decrease.

### 4. WHERE AUTHORITY IS ABSENT, DISORDER PREAILS

**Without authority, there will be chaos.** Before God took authority over the earth it was without form and void. God raises up leaders to impart vision and help bring people into their destinies. Without leaders imparting vision, many people flounder and decline. The well known scripture asserts, "Without vision the people perish." Another translation says, "Without revelation the people cast off restraint." This was seen in Ex. 32 when Moses went into the mountain. The people lost sight of their authority and chaos ensued. If there is no leader with true spiritual authority present, there will be no order, no discipline and the body becomes aimless, unproductive and ultimately suffer decline. On the contrary, when there is a leader present

**The 3 main purposes of spiritual authority:**  
1. To help us grow in wisdom and character.  
2. To provide protection from destructive temptations.  
3. To offer direction for life's difficult decisions.

**Bill Gothard**

who walks confidently in his authority, order and productivity will follow. The reverse of the above scripture is equally true: "When there is revelation, the people put on restraint." In other words, when there is authority and vision, the people will embrace discipline, restrain themselves and follow the vision of the leader. Is your organization a mess? Is your family out of order? Do you and the people under you lack discipline and focus? The reason may be found in the lack of authority you administer. The kingdom of God is in need of leaders of authority. This is not to say we need authoritative leaders who tyrannize their followers. Instead, it means we need

leaders who walk confidently with a mantle of leadership, and can motivate, rally and inspire their followers to embrace a significant vision.

**Without Authority, there will be perversion.** When there is no

**In instances where authority is lacking, a void or vacuum in leadership occurs—and there is always someone who will flow into that vacuum. Usually it is the wrong person.**

true spiritual authority, a perversion of leadership occurs. In the book of Judges there was an ongoing cycle that wavered from strong leadership to "every man did what was right in his own sight." Without strong leadership, each person resorts to adopting their own perverted vision of what is right. In instances where authority is lacking, a void or vacuum in leadership occurs—and there is always someone who will flow into that vacuum. Usually it is the wrong person. They may not be evil or ill intended, they are just wrong. When the wrong people have been elevated to leadership by default, the vision they have is not the vision God intended. Hence, a perversion. The body drifts into a function that is not in line the mantle of authority God has ordained for them. In such cases, it is only a matter of time until frustration and contention take over.

**Without Authority, there will be barrenness.** Psalm 133:1-2 indicates that the body's anointing flows down from the head, not up from the body. When the body is not united to the true spiritual authority, it will be disconnected from the corporate blessing. Some churches lack a fresh anointing because the leader has either failed to initiate an open heaven or the body has not submitted to him once he has.

### 5. AUTHORITY CAN ONLY BE GIVEN, IT IS NEVER ASSUMED

It does not matter what your gift, office, calling or ministry; you cannot assume authority upon yourself. Self proclaimed prophets are false prophets. Self proclaimed apostles are false apostles. Self proclaimed pastors are false pastors. Whoever you are, whatever office you hold, regardless of how gift you are, authority must be given to you by a higher authority to which you remain accountable.

This is how the economy of God is set up. Jesus Himself validated His office by the testimony of the authorities that endorsed Him. In John 5:31-47,

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Jesus did not proclaim Himself as a rogue authority standing alone; instead,

## FAITH FOUNDATIONS: Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone

**Rich Langford**

If you were to travel by boat or ship through a busy harbor you would see an enormous number of navigation buoys of various colors, sizes and shapes bobbing in the water. If you paid careful attention or if you had the aid of the harbor chart you would recognize a pattern and realize that the buoys actually marked lanes or "streets" on the water through which the ships and boats traveled in order to avoid running into each other or onto the shoals. Finally, if your ship's pilot were a competent navigator, you would notice that he actually paid little attention to the buoys and was far more interested in the unique land formations, buildings, smokestacks or the like that were much further away from your ship than the buoys.

The reason for his focus being somewhere other than "on the road", he might explain if you were curious, is that in order to fix his position and be certain he is not headed for dangerous waters, he must use objects that are fixed to the earth and not able to move. Objects in the water are subject to the currents and tides. Even objects that are anchored, like buoys, have been known to drag their anchors as the force of the sea acted on them. Many ships, the wise pilot would say, have run aground by following a buoy that moved, but those that correctly identify immovable objects, and use them to fix their position, steer a safe

course.

In the same way it is vital for those whom God has entrusted with the responsibility of piloting a church through turbulent seas of doctrine with hidden reefs and other dangers (1Tim 1:19; Jude 12) to navigate by immovable objects. This is the idea behind the doctrine known as "sola scriptura," Latin for "scripture alone."

In 2 Timothy 3:16,17 we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped

such as kings, philosophers, popes, and the heads of other major denominations. In the most extreme cases today there are cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses

**It is easy to be swept into the fervor of a popular new teaching, especially if people in your church are excited about it; but the pastor must be on guard.**

and the Mormons that claim to be Christian but adhere to false doctrines taught by men claiming a gift of prophesy.

It is easy to be swept into the fervor of a popular new teaching, especially if people in your church are excited about it; but the pastor must be on guard. The lesson of the Bereans (Acts 17:10,11) testifies to the necessity of holding new teaching up to the standard of the Bible. This does not mean we should be cynical, but we must be responsible and we must exercise wisdom. The apostle Paul guides us in our approach to these instances when he says,

1 Thess 5:20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test all things; hold fast what is good. Because God does not change (Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8) and He does not lie (Num 23:19), the Scriptures can be seen as complete and valid reflections of the mind and heart of God today. Furthermore, the Scriptures have stood the test of time with regard to the truth of their prophetic nature.

The Scriptures can also be proven to have been copied verbatim from the original texts written by the prophets themselves. Jewish scribes responsible for copying scripture were trained rigorously and held to exact standards for making copies. Every letter was assigned a numerical value and the sum of all of the values of the letters was calculated and recorded at the bottom of the page. If the count did not match the number on the original, the copy was destroyed.

Only the Scriptures can make these claims. They represent for us the only immovable and unimpeachable representation of the direct Word of God. Therefore, when we apply Paul's words and "Test all things," the standard of the Scripture must be the principal test we use.

The Scripture provides the faithful pastor with the fixed navigation aids necessary to guide the local church, but just as a harbor chart is difficult for a novice to interpret correctly, the pastor must become an expert.

Gaining expertise in using the Scriptures in this way requires more than reading. To use the Bible as a navigation aid requires a disciplined effort to engage in topical study diligently. An understanding of the teaching of the whole Scripture on a variety of subjects must be acquired. It is dangerous to take a single verse or a disjointed collection of verses and develop doctrine. We must read them in context and with a determination to draw from them an understanding of the principles of God that apply so that we can then apply those principles to the

**The Scripture provides the faithful pastor with the fixed navigation aids necessary to guide the local church, but just as a harbor chart is difficult for a novice to interpret correctly, the pastor must become an expert.**

situation at hand. Sola scriptura is a valuable principle for the man or woman of God to use in ministry.

Rich Langford serves as a Deacon overseeing Christian Education Ministries in The Mission Church

### The Leader's Daily Ethics Evaluation

- **Have I attended to my emotional and spiritual needs, and integrated them into my daily walk with God?**
- **Have I harbored unconfessed sin or unforgiven hurts?**
- **Have I been totally honest in my dealings with people today?**
- **Have I acted appropriately toward members of the opposite sex?**
- **Have I indulged unsavory thoughts or sexual images, or fostered uncharitable feelings toward others?**
- **Have I been above reproach in my financial dealings?**
- **Have I fulfilled my obligation without compromise and with a willing spirit?**
- **Have I worked too long or too hard without evaluating my true motives?**
- **Have I spent sufficient time with my family?**
- **Have I spent sufficient time on my spiritual needs?**

for every good work."

Through the centuries many teachings on Christian doctrine have been articulated by men who were held in high esteem by many in church at the time only to be found later to be false. The list includes many noteworthy names

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## TO THE TIMOTHY: Real Leaders

Pastor Nikil Adwalpalker

All pastors want to do ministry that has an impact on the world they live in. The problem that often occurs is that they are so busy feeding their sheep that they tend to overlook the needs of the leaders that serve under them, and worse, their own need to receive ministry. Let's face it, if we want to be real leaders, we need to examine our own hearts and see if what we are teaching is what we truly are living. We will never have an impact on people unless we ourselves are practicing what we are preaching.

In his book, "Student Ministry for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Bo Boschers, Willow Creek Community Church Student Ministries Pastor, offers the acronym "R.E.A.L." that has greatly helped my leaders and I to maintain an authentic connection with God and each other. These four key areas will help you stay real, or true in your heart to Christ: **Recognize** your fatal flaws and seek accountability with a trusted leader or

We all have fatal flaws; things like anger, lust, pride, and jealousy that if left to linger in our hearts for too long, will destroy us. If we want to see these areas of sin defeated, then we must confess them to the Lord on a

***"It is an incontrovertible fact that some Christians seem to experience a much closer intimacy with God than others. Both Scripture and experience teach that it is we, not God, who determine the degree of intimacy with Him that we enjoy. We are at this moment as close to God as we really choose to be."***

***J. Oswald Sanders***

daily basis and submit to the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. However, this is not enough. We also need to **seek weekly accountability with another trusted brother or sister** (if you are a female) and confess our sins to one another (ref. James 5:16). There is nothing like being honest with a brother who can pray for, encourage, and help you through

our ministry, we cannot afford to neglect our daily devotions with the Lord. The most important relationship you have is the one you have with Jesus! The apostles summarized their call to the ministry in these words: "...But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Acts 6:4

**3) Adjust your gauges.** Like a car has a gas gauge that tells you when you need to refill your tank, we too have gauges that, when low, will keep us from being effective. They are the spiritual, physical and emotional gauges. **Spiritually**, we need ask ourselves; are we praying? Reading the word? Fasting? **Physically**, we need to make sure we are being honest with our feelings and doing things like spending time with our families or watching the cricket match. These activities allow us to relax and have fun. Remember, if one gauge is low, you need to refill lest you become tired, frustrated and burnt out.

**4 )**

**Learn discipline.** Bo explains that, "discipline and discipleship are the same word. Once you have made the choice to say, 'Yes, I want to follow Jesus,'

the question is, 'What disciplines will help me to remain faithful to that choice?' If we want to remain faithful to Jesus, we need to lead a disciplined life." Christianity takes discipline because there are so many things that will distract us from doing the things that the Lord has called us to do. The man or woman who maintains discipline will walk in all the Fruits of the Spirit.

Nikil Adwalpalker is the Youth Pastor overseeing the Youth Ministries in the Mission Church.

### Camille Illustration

In order to illustrate what Jesus did for us on the cross, consider the story of a Russian Revolutionary who lived in the last century before the Communists Revolution. His name was Camille. He lived in the mountains with a group of men and they would ride down out of the mountains on their horses and raid the Czarists forces. Then they would ride back into the mountains and there they would live in caves. It was vitally important that these men depend on one another and trust one another.

One day something terrible happened in the camp of Camille. Someone began to steal. In order to stop the stealing Camille said that when the thief was caught he would be stripped to his waist, tied to a stake in the center of the camp and beaten with thirty lashes on his back with a black snake whip. Camille thought this would stop the stealing but the stealing continued.

Finally the thief was caught and it was Camille's mother. Imagine his consternation. He loved his mother but if he did not punish her every man in the camp would look at him and say, "If it had been one of us you would have punished us. You must punish your mother."

Camille resolved his problem the next day by walking into the center of the camp taking off his own shirt and ordering that he himself be tied to the stake and beaten with the whip. In doing this Camille did three things that were very similar to what Christ did for us on the cross.

First, he satisfied his love for his mother. Forever his mother would know that her son loved her, because of what he had done for her. In the same way; when Christ died on the cross he said, "I LOVE YOU."

Secondly, Camille satisfied justice. Although the punishment was not given to the one who deserved it, it was meted out. Camille took the punishment for his mother. So justice was met. In the same way CHRIST has taken the punishment for your sins and my sins on himself on the cross. God's justice is satisfied.

The final thing that Camille did was that he stopped his mother from stealing. Anytime after that when Camille's mother was tempted to steal she would see in her mind's eye the bloodied back of her son and would think, "I cannot steal again after the price he paid for me." CHRIST, likewise, had done the same for me and for you. If we truly trust Him as Savior and realize that he has borne the punishment of our sins upon the cruel cross we must live better lives! Not because it saves us or gets us into

***"The size of a church is not the issue. You can be big and healthy, or big and flabby. You can be small and healthy, or small and wimpy. Big isn't better; small isn't better. Healthy is better. There is no correlation between the size of a church and the strength of a church."***

***Rick Warren, Author of "The Purpose Driven Church"***

friend. Experience God daily; Adjust your gauges; Learn discipline.

**1) Recognize your fatal flaws.** Bo says that, "A fatal flaw is a private, hidden place we know that the Enemy is working on, trying to tempt us to take small steps away from innocence and into sin. People don't fall into sin: they walk away from innocence and the Lord step by step." (ref. James 3:13-16)

your struggles by giving godly support to your soul.

**2) Experience God daily.** How many ties do we resist the most basic part of our calling; spending daily time with God? I know that finding time to pray and seek the Lord is a battle because of our busy family and "ministry" schedules. Our flesh wants us to do everything else in our day but pray. However, if we really want to see God move in

**Prayer Corner:** Please pray for Kenya, East Africa. Pray for Pastor Charles Mulema of Nairobi and the congregation of Nairobi Gospel Centre as they have relocated to their new property and will be starting construction soon. Pray also for Pastor Bishop John Adawo and the pastors of Pastors One Accord in Migori as The Mission Church is making plans to raise up a Pastor's Training Center here.

## WORSHIP HIGHLIGHTS: Acceptable Offerings

### Derrick Hoffman

When Solomon offered an acceptable sacrifice, the fire of God fell and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. When Elijah offered an acceptable sacrifice, the fire of God fell and the nation of Israel was turned back to God. When David offered an acceptable sacrifice, a plague was turned back. Do we really expect anything to happen when we offer our sacrifices of praise and worship? What kind of offerings do we bring? As instructed in Romans 12:1,2—we're to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Offering our bodies as living sacrifices? When we look back at old covenant sacrifices, animal sacrifices were meant to be tokens of lives given to God (Psalm 40:6-8). A sacrifice is simply a symbol of giving yourself to God! We are exhorted in Hebrews 13:15, to continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess His name. In Philippians 4:18, Paul speaks of fragrant offerings, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. Again, what

kind of offerings do we bring?

Did you know that, as outlined in 1 Peter 2:5, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Wow! A holy priesthood! In Hebrews 8:3, we're told that every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. As we read the story in Matthew 2 about the Magi visiting the baby Jesus, verse 11 says they bowed down and worshiped him. Then opened



their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and myrrh. They brought their best; they're most valuable gold, and incense and myrrh. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:18? A fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

So what is our act of worship? Nothing less than the act and attitude of wholeheartedly giving ourselves to God—spirit, soul, and body (Mark 12:30). So let's bring our best, our first fruits, a sweet smelling fragrance. Again I ask, do we really expect anything to happen when we offer our sacrifices of praise and worship? What kind of offerings do we bring?

Derrick Hoffman is the Worship Leader at the Mission Church.

## 13 PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY; part 1, continued

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Jesus did not proclaim Himself as a rogue authority standing alone; instead, He offered the validation of several other authorities: John the Baptist, the miracles He worked, the announcement of the Father and the Old Testament Scriptures written by Moses. Of course Jesus Christ was God the Son and needed no one to validate Him. However, He came not as the omnipotent second person of the Trinity, he came as the son of man to identify with humanity. In doing that He became our perfect example of how to walk righteously. If Jesus avoided assuming authority on Himself without validation, how much more must we be connected to worthy institutions and rely upon their validation and delegation.

In 2 Cor. 10:12 Paul says that we must not exceed the limit of authority God has given to us. Too many in the body of Christ have done that. They have assumed titles and positions of authority upon themselves without submitting to authority themselves. Staff leaders and church members who decide on their own, without the support of their pastor or other authority, to venture out on their own are circumnavigating the structures that God has set up. As a result, they are removing themselves from God's umbrella of

protection and will be subject to great attack.

Scripture clearly indicates that authority must be delegated. In Titus 1:5, Paul said, "Appoint elders in every city as I commanded you." In 1 Tim. 3 He said, "appoint elders and deacons who (meet certain qualifications)." In Acts, when the apostles traveled throughout Asia Minor, they ap-

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pointed authorities in various cities. The point is clearly made. Spiritual authorities are not self proclaimed and independent; they are appointed and delegated.

Some try to sound super spiritual—as though they are "above" denominations or organized churches. What they fail to recognize is that all the churches in the New Testament were "tied" together and organized under the authority of the apostles whose headquarters were in Jerusalem. Being under authority is scriptural. What is unscriptural (actually anti-scriptural) is assuming authority upon one's self when it hasn't been delegated by a proper, higher authority. This is why I am affiliated with the Assemblies of God and

why I chose to affiliate my church with the Assemblies of God. Independence is unscriptural. We all need to be under authority.

### 6. YOU ARE EITHER UNDER AUTHORITY OR IN REBELLION

Either you are of the Spirit of Jesus that says, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Or you are of the spirit of Satan that says, "I will ascend to the hill of God, I will make a throne for myself." Are you in submission to authority or are you on your own? Have you submitted to the leadership of those over you, do you accept their counsel and value their guidance or do you resist them? Here are several questions that will indicate if you truly are under authority.

1. Do I have consistent contact with those in authority over me?
2. Do I communicate my personal vision and ministry goals to my authorities and value their feedback?
3. Do I seek my leaders out for guidance when faced with difficult decisions or challenges?
4. Do I have a clear conscience regarding my private loyalty to my leaders, e.g. have I refused to gossip, malign or repeat bad reports about them?
5. Do I believe that those in authority over me are more spiritual than I am?
6. Do I accept my leader's opinions

*without trying to argue or debate them into agreeing with me?*

7. Do I remain non-critical of my spiritual authorities when they disagree with me?
8. Do I perform what my leaders want even when I don't agree with them?
9. Do I change authorities frequently—more than once in the past 5 years?
10. Do I let go of resentment or unforgiveness in my heart toward my leaders?

If you've answered "no" to any one of these questions, you may not be as submitted to authority as you would like to think. If you answered "no" to three or more, then you probably have an unsubmitive disposition. If you answer "no" to five or more, then you probably have a rebellious spirit and need to break a cycle of resistance to authority.

Next month will bring an even closer examination of spiritual authority as we consider the remaining seven points of this teaching.



Rev. Gregg Johnson is Sr. Pastor of The Mission Church in NY.

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**The Mission Church**  
**4101 Rt. 52 Holmes NY 12531**  
**USA**

**www.missionchurch.com**

**Phone: 845.878.3380**

**Fax: 845.878.3316**

**email@missionchurch.com**

Place address label here

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## FAMILY FOCUS: Divided Houses; part 1

### Pastor Gregg Johnson

*"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand." Matt. 12:25*

Most marriages are not destroyed because husbands and wives are fighting against the devil or some other outside force. Most marriages die because the husband and wife are fighting one another. They are divided. Each perceiving the other to be an enemy they must contend with to preserve their individual well being.

Unfortunately the outcome of this struggle is the exact opposite of what either spouse desires. The wife usually ends up depressed, feeling unloved and a failure at the very thing she holds dearest. The husband is no better off. Stripped of his dignity and manhood, he retreats to a place of emotional isolation and regret. The children suffer the worst. They lose a sense of personal security that effects them for the rest of their lives.

How do men and women who begin their lives together with so much promise and hope end up so polarized and miserable? Simply stated, they allowed themselves to be divided against one another. Instead of building upon the "foundation of oneness" that began their marriage, they've allowed the enemy to take advantage of certain issues and pull them apart.

The following are three of six marital dynamics that the enemy attacks to try and bring division between husbands and wives. These are like cornerstones in the foundation of house that if removed, will cause that house to crumble. But if they are strengthened, will allow for the building of a strong, tall family household.

#### FOR THE WIFE

*"Every wise woman builds her house but every foolish woman tears it down with her own hands." Prov. 14:1*

##### 1. Submitting to Her Husband:

Eph. 5:22-24 clearly states that the wife is to be under the authority of her husband. Some homes are divided because the wife has a difficult time letting go of control. She feels a need to be the one with the power in the relationship.

This can be a struggle for wives who have issues stemming from past episodes abandonment, betrayal or rejection. Because she may

have been betrayed by one she entrusted herself to in the past, she fears (even subconsciously) that her spouse may also hurt or let her down. The result is a need to control her environment, the people around her and especially her husband.

Of course, this may be a safe comfort zone for her, but it can destroy the marriage. The husband usually interprets his wife's lack of submission as a distrust of his abilities and becomes resentful. In time, the love he once had for his wife will frustrate and ossify into bitterness.

Wives must see submission to their husband as, ultimately, submission to and trust in God. As they obey God's structure of authority, they can rest in the confidence that He will keep them safe.

##### 2. Giving Respect to Her Husband:

Eph. 5:33 says, "Let the wife see that she respects her husband." Respect means "to treat with special consideration or high regard." Many marriages are suffering simply because the wife does not respect her husband.

There are basically two sides to respect. One side is the respect we give someone because they've earned it and are worthy to be held in esteem. The other side consists of the respect we give someone simply because of the position of authority they hold. Almost everyone has worked for people they didn't admire personally, but had to respect because of their office. The same holds for marriage. While it may be true that the husband has flawed character, he must still be treated with regard because of the position of authority he holds.

Perhaps the greatest test of respect in a marriage lies in the arena of decision making. Some women are more capable of making decisions; as a result, they take over and disregard the husband's views. Or, the husband may state his opinion regarding an issue and the wife dismisses it as she does "her own thing."

It is completely acceptable for a wife to question her husband's views; it is another thing to challenge and resist them. When disagreements do

arise, it is important for the wife to approach her husband with a "meek and gentle spirit" willing to defer to his authority, rather than with a haughty and prideful demeanor that disregards and oversteps his convictions.

##### 3. Being Faithful to Her Husband:

Prov. 30:11 says the wife's virtue is revealed when "the heart of her husband safely trusts her."

Most wives define marital fidelity as sexual, romantic and emotional monogamy to their husband. They believe that because they've never had an extra-marital affair, they're loyal to their husband. However, this is not necessarily the case. It is possible for a wife to be loyal to her man sexually while betraying him in other ways.

The simplest and most basic expression of a wife's faithfulness is found how she regards her husband in the presence of others. A wife who complains, slanders or gossips about her husband—even to her close confidants—is hardly being faithful. On the contrary, she is betraying his emotional trust by uncovering his shame openly. Wives must be careful not to deceive themselves in believing they are loyal spouses when they serve up "roast husband" to their friends and "co-miserators."

If the heart of a husband cannot "safely trust" his wife, the marriage will be divided. The man who suspects that his partner is belittling and criticizing him to others, will retreat into isolation. He'll consider his spouse to be "unsafe" and cut himself off from her emotionally.

Rather than setting a tone of resentment in the home through gossip, the wife should be making declarations of faith to those who will agree with her in prayer. We serve a God who, "calls those things that don't exist as though they do." A wife who is frustrated by her man shouldn't be reinforcing his failures through negative confessions, she should be speaking life into her marriage by making prophetic declarations of what God is making her man to become. This will not only keep her attitude in check, it will inspire her man toward improvement as he sees his wife's confidence in him.

Next month, we will consider the three

