

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Leadership 1-Ecclesiology
Week 8 - Church Authority

Introduction

Bear in mind two common extremes or errors on this subject.

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The Concept of Authority in the Bible

1. God alone is the ultimate authority.

Matt. 6:13; Rom. 13:1; Dan. 2:20-21

2. Rebellion against God is a serious sin.

Num. 15:30; 1 Sam. 15:22,23; 27:8; 30:1,18; Rom. 1:28-29; Jude 8-9

3. Delegated authority is biblical and important.

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Dan. 2:37-38; Jer 27:6; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17

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Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:18

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Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6

When should a husband exercise this decision-making authority? In major decisions not clearly addressed in scripture, if after careful and prayerful discussion husband and wife cannot agree, the husband should assume the responsibility to make the decision that he thinks will best advance God's glory and the family's good.

- “In major decision not clearly addressed in scripture...”
- “...if after careful and prayerful discussion...”
- “...the husband should assume the responsibility...”

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Eph. 6:1-4; Col 3:20

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1 Cor. 16:15-18; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Titus 2:15; Heb. 13:17*; 1 Pet. 5:5

4. Unjustified disobedience to delegated authorities is disobedience to God.

Numbers 12,16; Rom. 13:2

5. Three limiting features for delegated authorities

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Acts 4:19,20; 5:29

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Mark 10:41-45; Rom 13:4

6. Attitudes and actions for those under authority:

Titus 3:1-6 Consider the following principles:

- An attitude of submission is commanded regardless of the character of the delegated authority (1 Pet. 2:18).
- Submission should be active--not passive.
- Whenever possible, we should be sure that we understand *why* we are being asked to do something by the delegated authority.

Eph. 6:5,7; Col. 3:22,23

- The burden of proof is on the one under authority to justify why he should not obey, not vice-versa.
- When we cannot obey the command of a delegated authority because we believe this would constitute disobedience to God, we should seek for a constructive alternative which will fulfill the righteous desires of the delegated authority and also enable us to obey God (Dan. 1:8-16).
- When disobedience to a delegated authority is necessary, we should do so respectfully, not rebelliously or maliciously.

Acts 4:19,20; 5:29

- Within the church, dissent is different than rebellion or disobedience.

Some issues are important enough that our conscience tells us that we need to take further measures.

If we think that we may be disobeying God or our conscience to follow the leadership, we should either:



Five Principles of Godly Leadership

1 Tim. 3:1

Consider the following biblical principles for godly and authoritative church leadership:

1. *Model godly behavior, values, and attitudes.* See 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:20,21.
Serving others within the group.

Willingly following the authorities above you.

Humility about our own opinions and need for growth.

2. *Teach scripture and persuade through biblical principles, priorities, and example.* See 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2.

3. *Provide direction and vision for the people under your leadership.* Jn. 10

4. *Work toward consensus on extra-biblical issues within your sphere of authority when possible.* See 2 Cor. 2:6; Acts 15:4-29

5. *Exercise command authority on extra-biblical issues within your sphere of authority only when necessary.* See 1 Cor. 5:3-5 and 1 Tim. 1:20 for examples of this in church discipline.

Memory Verses

Mark 10:40-45**

Heb. 13:17*

Assignment

Read Chapters 22 and 23 on ministry to the poor and missions from *Members of One Another*. Summarize the main points in a paragraph for each chapter.

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Be able to explain three limiting features for delegated authorities.
2. Be able to explain three of the seven essential attitudes and actions for those under authority.