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## God's Authority Marriage "Only in the Lord"

Whenever any sort of authority is asserted, the response often questions the source and basis of that authority. We usually appeal to the scriptures for our authority. When asked where they received their authority, we would appeal to the inspiration they received from God. But where does God's authority come from? The following gives several reasons why He is the supreme and ultimate authority.

The most common source would be the fact that He is the creator of the heavens and the earth. As Isaiah wrote, "Woe to him who strives with his Maker, an earthen vessel with the potter!" (Is. 45:9). See also Is. 64:8, and Jer. 18:1-10. Paul said, "But who are you, a man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me this?'" (Rom: 9:20).

His continuing rule and omnipotence would further strengthen his authority. All of life is dependent upon him (Dt. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6-10), and nothing is "too hard for the Lord." (Gen. 18:14)

A third source of his authority is the fact that his commandments are true and righteous (Ps. 19:7-9; 119:144,151). As Burrows puts it, "What is right is not so because God commands it; he commands it because it is right." This would apply to all moral commands and many religious commands. By this we do not mean to imply that God is subject to anything beyond himself.

The fourth reason for God's authority is the most impressive. He has authority because of his superior knowledge. A teacher has authority over a pupil because of superior knowledge. Part of a doctor's authority comes from his superior knowledge. For example, Genesis 1 and 2 have precedence over evolution, because they obtain their authority from God. God has authority over the evolutionist, because he was there. He gives a first-hand, eye-witness account. Another example is the parent who has authority over a small child concerning how much ice cream to eat, because the parent has a superior knowledge concerning what will be good for the child's health. It is similar between us and God for "we are assured that what he wills is what we should

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From I Cor. 7:39, Paul instructs the widow that, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." Here, and in Romans 7, as well as any other teaching THIS SIDE THE CROSS, marriage is presented as a LIFE TIME proposition and NO reason is given for divorce and remarriage! Jesus, under the law of Moses, gave one reason for divorce and remarriage, Matt. 5:31-32. But here it is stated that a widow is to marry, "only in the Lord"! Now two questions are asked by many here and sometimes three.

### DOES THIS APPLY TO A WIDOWER (A MAN), OR JUST FOR WIDOWS?

Some have contended that this is ONLY for the woman and not for the man, BUT, let us see! In Mark 16:16 it is stated that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; there is NOTHING said about she, yet all accept this to include the woman also! There is no moral law which applies to only one sex, so surely the widow and widower are included in this command!

### BUT WHAT DOES "ONLY IN THE LORD" MEAN?

Well let the Bible SPEAK! From Romans 6:3-4 & Gal. 3:26-27, we learn that in order for one to be "in the Lord" (Christ), he must be "baptized into Christ". So if one marries "in the Lord", he must first have been baptized into him, and then must marry one who also has been "baptized into Christ". This is the ONLY way any one can get "in the Lord", so the widow must marry a baptized believer, not just any baptized believer (Acts 19:1-6) but a believer who was baptized "into the Lord"! Those in Acts 2, who believed, repented and were baptized; were "added to the church". The Lord and the church are ONE and the SAME, Col. 1:18. So to marry "in the Lord" is also to marry a member of the Lord's church (not just any church). Many are baptized to "join" some

church, and therefore are not baptized into the Lord, nor added to His church!

### WELL WHAT ABOUT THE FIRST MARRIAGE?

There is no Scripture in the New Testament which teaches a person in plain language that he must marry only a Christian the first time, but we know it is best, as there are Scriptures which imply this very strongly! In 2 Cor. 6:14-18 a principle of God's is violated when a person "in the Lord" marries "outside" the Lord. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or, what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Unequally yoked of course means to enter into a relationship where the unbeliever (he that is outside the Lord) (even the devils believe, James 2:19), influences, or controls God's child! I know of no relationship where one who is not God's child has a better opportunity to influence and control a Christian than in the marriage relationship! Yes "evil companions, corrupt good morals", I Cor. 15:33.

### MARRIAGE IS HARD AT THE BEST!

Yes, there are so many things which confront those who are married, to try their faith, even when both are "in the Lord", but there are so very many more when one is not in the Lord! Often the children are the victims, torn between loyalty for the Christian and the non-Christian. To those who read this, and one is not a Christian, or has been a Christian and fallen away under the Devil's blows, may I ask, "WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN"? Yes I know you love them, you feed them well, clothe them good, and are very concerned about their education and friends, and often furnish them a car so they can ride to the church building. BUT IF THE CHILD LOSES HIS SOUL, HOW WILL YOU BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN YOUR LOVE FOR HIM THEN?????

Lynn V. Purdy

### The Fulton County Gospel News

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and James E. Henley.

## Estate Versus State

Possession and pleasure are not necessarily joined together. To equate a person's state with his estate is thoughtless. The rich man may be unable to enjoy his wealth:

- He may be a miser, hoarding his riches.
- He may be in ill health. Money cannot buy relief from fear and pain.
- He may have family trouble, fracturing his happiness.

His fate is worse than that of a stillborn child: "I say that an untimely birth is better off than he" (Ecclesiastes 6:3). Better not to have known anything than to have known only unhappiness.

The grave is a great leveler. "Even though he should live a thousand years twice told... do not all go to the one place?" (Ecclesiastes 6:6). In the cemetery the rich man has no better lot than his poor neighbor. They feed the same sod.

Where then is happiness? Only in investing in eternity. God "has put eternity into man's mind" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We are not designed to be satisfied with the transient. Three things are evident:

- 1) God wants us to enjoy life. We should not feel guilt and shame in legitimate enjoyment of our possessions.
- 2) God wants us to be unselfish with out wealth. Talent for making money is from the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:18). Therefore, it should be shared for the alleviation of suffering and the expansion of the kingdom.
- 3) God wants us to be wise in the final distribution of our estate. Permitting our possessions to pass to "a stranger...is a sore affliction" (Ecclesiastes 6:2).

-Joe R. Barnett

## Commitment Is the Answer

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I Cor. 15:58.

It's easy to criticize the Lord's church. Almost at anytime a person can justly accuse the church of not living up to its teachings. The church of our Lord proclaims principles and ideals that our Lord left for us. The standard is high. The church cannot lower its standard to meet men--men are to come UP to the standard that Christ has set.

But still in all the church has its shortcomings, to be sure. Now it's one thing to say the church has its shortcomings and quite another thing to suggest -- as many are doing -- that the church is useless and expendable.

The Christian life is a great adventure, better still it's man's greatest challenge. One of the real pleasures of this life is to

be associated with others of like commitment to the Lord. Having this kind of life creates an untold amount of good.

This kind of good relationship was recognized by our Lord. One of the first things He did, in His ministry, was to call together a small group of disciples to be His constant companions. There is strength and encouragement in this kind of relationship. The church is a fellowship of brethren of "like precious faith."

But still there are two main objectives of the church:

- (1) To nurture, or sustain, those in it, and
- (2) To reach out and claim the lives of those who are yet lost.

There is a heaven and there is a hell. The only answer for the church is COMMITMENT, totally, to its mission.

--John McCourt

## Grace and Progress

We do not all travel along the Christian road at the same rate. Some people grow more rapidly in five years than others grow in fifty. Why is this? Why do some people travel more rapidly than others. The answer quite simply is this. They have received an "Abundance of grace" (Romans 5:17)

But why have they recieved more grace? Does God play favorites? No, He is not a respecter of persons. His unmerited favors are open to all. Why? Let meseelf I can explain.

Some receive the more abundant grace because they realize that grace can only be bestowed through living obedience to God. They are aware that baptism marks only the beginning of the Christian race, not its ending. They are aware that God's supreme concern is not merely to forget our unrighteousness but to impart His righteousness to us. They view the conversion experience as only the beginning of grace, not its completion. They know there is more grace to be possessed!

A small town is where kicking up your heels leaves you without a leg to stand on.

Not only do they know that grace must be possessed, but they pursue it ardently. Though their bodies are on earth, their hearts are in heaven. They look at the values of earth in the light of heaven and they know that the only really valuable thing is grace. This, they seek and pursue.

Seek grace and it will come to you like the waves of the sea, grace succeeding grace. Do your work for God faithfully and well and He will give you the grace needed, not only for the accomplishment of that task but for other tasks as well. The more we respond to His grace, the greater the capacity He gives us to receive His grace. "For of His fullness we all received, and grace for grace."

Would you like to move forward spiritually with the most ardent souls you know. Would you like to make progress more quickly in the Christian race? Then, respond more fully to God's grace, and He will give you the grace necessary to run faster than ever before.

---Harry Gipson---

The reason that gossip is so quick to pass on a rumor is that he feels he must tell it before he finds out it isn't true.

## Which Will It Be, God or Man?

By Gene Chumley

In the first century the Gnostics claimed to have a special knowledge of the unseen world. Instead of opposing the gospel of Christ they attempted to take possession of Christianity by combining the two views. This resulted in perverting the truth. The forces of Satan have continued their destructive work down through the centuries quite effectively. That Satan has been so successful is evident in that he thrives on the ignorance of man toward God and he feeds the ego of human pride, desire and lust in spiritual as well as carnal ways. Today one of the forces working against the unity of the church is called "liberalism." The term is bandied about quite freely without any clear definition. Rubel Shelly in his new book "Liberalism's Threat to the Faith," has defined liberalism in clear and realistic terms: "That attitude which challenges and denies the absolute authority of the Word of God and causes men to set aside God's will in favor of their own subjective speculations and desires in religion."

If God's word is not absolute, if His will for man is open to individual interpretation, then it is not really His revelation to man. Under this approach any way a man chooses to believe in God would be all right. This is the approach of the denominational world. The result has been division and confusion, just what Satan wants. This is not the work of God, His Son, or His Spirit because we know that God is not the author of confusion, (I Corinthians 14:33). However, this is exactly the manner in which liberalism would have man approach God's word today. Such an approach denies the unity of God's will for man. The Bible contains God's absolute truth made known to all men. That truth can be known in order to determine what one must do to be saved. Once saved the same truth gives unified instructions and principles by which one can live a Christian life that will keep one in a perfect and spotless relationship with God through Christ. The ideas and concepts of men do not under any circumstances change God's word or His will for man. God has said what He meant to say, and means what He says. His

## Withdrawing from Withdrawn

The question is sometimes raised: "Is it right to withdraw fellowship from a member who has already withdrawn himself from the church?" The answer depends largely upon what is meant by one "withdrawing himself." Each case must be determined upon the basis of its own particular circumstances. In general, however, the question probably has reference to a member who ceases to assemble for public worship. Some wonder if such a one can be scripturally withdrawn from if he no longer attends services. Perhaps the following points will help clarify the right answer.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH WITHDRAWING fellowship is served whether the disorderly is in attendance or not. Briefly, the purpose involves: (1) saving the erring brother (I Cor. 5:5; James 5:20); (2) removing ungodly leaven which threatens to contaminate others (I Cor. 5:6); (3) promoting godly fear and respect for the Truth among all (I Tim. 5:20; Acts 5:11).

This church action is designed to make the disorderly "ashamed" (literally means to turn in, that is, to turn one upon himself and so produce a feeling of shame; a wholesome shame which involves a change of conduct" (VINE'S EXP. DICT. OF N. T. WORDS). Fellowship in the Lord's affairs extends beyond public assembling. Also there are numerous daily contacts among Christians, such as social, economic, recreational, etc. Paul meant more than the assembly when he said, "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (I

words are non-negotiable. It is only by such absolute authority and standard that man truly has something to grasp, to provide true purpose for his life. Let each one who would be a true child of God be aware of false teaching and upon what they feed - yet at the same time take comfort in the knowledge that "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every goodwork." (II Timothy 3:16, 17).

Cor. 5:13). He was including all of these other various contacts as well, for he explained: "...have no company..with such a one, no, not to eat" (I Cor. 5:9-11).

A member might "withdraw himself" by forsaking public worship for any number of sinful causes, yet still desire the company and seek the friendship of faithful brethren in personal affairs. But scriptural discipline DENIES him such company so as to make him ASHAMED of his condition before God. One finding himself so ostracized cannot help but examine his wayward state. Then there remains but two alternatives. His heart will either be hardened in his sin (perhaps revealing a perverted and self-condemned condition (Titus 3:11)) or, godly sorrow will work repentance unto salvation (II Cor. 2:6-11; 7:10). Thus this purpose as well as the other objectives of corrective discipline may be served even in the case of one forsaking public assembly.

2. THE LORD COMMANDS WITHDRAWAL FROM the "disorderly" (II Thess. 3:6). Yet one of the most common sins of negligent or rebellious brethren is a violation of Heb. 10:25 (which involves Matt. 6:33 also). If the church is unable to discipline those forsaking the assembling together, then it is unable to deal with one of the most prevalent of sins within the body of Christ. And the Divine pattern would be insufficient, which is a false conclusion. Since his plan is perfect (II Pet. 1:3; Heb. 13:17), we have the necessary instructions in dealing with this and every form of disorderliness.

3. A GOOD SHEPHERD GOES AFTER HIS WAYWARD sheep (Lk. 15:3-7). He doesn't conclude his hands are tied in the matter and there is nothing he can do because they "withdrew first" from him. He makes every effort to save them withdrawal is such an effort). Elders have the work of shepherds watching for souls (I Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17). Can they say to the chief Shepherd of their failure to discipline: "Those unruly sheep jumped the fence and got into the enemies' pasture, so there was nothing we could do when they had already withdrawn themselves?"

## Is He a Good Mixer?

This question is frequently asked when brethren are considering a preacher. Sometimes they are more interested in this than in his soundness and dedication. When brethren are more interested in a preacher being a good mixer than his being scripturally sound and being a genuine Christian they are inviting trouble.

We know a preacher that pooled good with the denominations of the town to help the needy. He worked with the Salvation Army and various community projects. He spent much time in group-meetings with Catholics, Protestants and brethren. He claimed to be enlarging the fellowship of the believers! He now calls everyone his brethren who believe in God! All this was done in the name of being a good mixer!

It might be said that this is an extreme case, but the fact is a good many influential brethren endorse these practices and share these sentiments! This should be expected when brethren place more stress upon a preacher being a good mixer than upon his being scripturally sound and a dedicated Christian.

The Bible plainly teaches that gospel preacher is to be an example of the believers. (I Tim. 4:12). He is to teach, preach, reprove, rebuke and exhort. (2 Tim. 4:1-4). He is to give his attention to reading and studying the Bible. (I Tim. 4:13, 2 Tim. 2:15). When he applies the Bible to his life he will have strong convictions and will not be led into error as the so called good mixer frequently is! He will have the courage to expose those who mix so well that they mislead others.

I do not mean to leave the impression that a preacher should not be friendly. He should and will be when he is an example in love. (I Tim. 4:12). He will visit the sick, distressed, delinquents, prospective Christians and as many people as he can. He will do these things because he is a Christian rather than because he is a preacher.

Brethren should be interested in a preacher's ability. Some preachers are effective in a city, others are more effective in a rural community and some preachers can do more work than others. But the strength to withstand temptations, courage to preach the truth, fight false teaching and mark those who cause division are important qualities no matter where a preacher works. May God grant us the wisdom to place more emphasis on important matters and not over emphasize a preacher being a good mixer. He who mixes well is sometimes easily mixed!

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## What About Those Problems?

Financial? Is there too much month left at the end of your money. Marriage? Did you promise to marry for better or worse and now find more worse than better? Business? Did someone say cheer up, it could get worse, and sure enough, it did? Health? Have you felt that you would have to get better to die, and almost wish you would? Social? Do you feel that you don't have a real friend in the world and that the world couldn't care less? Are you "Tired of living and scared of dying"? Emotional? Does life seem just one big rat race and you've had it? Psychological? Are you so far down you'd have to reach up to touch a snake's belly?

You feel so alone. You ask what's it all about anyway. There seems to be no rhyme, reason or reality to life. In these feelings you have a lot of company in this modern world.

Have you tried to drown your sorrows in alcohol? It only irrigates them and makes them multiply. Did you run away via drugs of some sort? Such a trip only makes the return more difficult, if not impossible. Did you try to lose yourself in the ecstasy of sex? This only leads to further entanglements and many times to self-loathing. Have you turned to the stars and the planets? The astrologers are just as confused and confusing as you. Have you tried psychiatry, only to find it expensive and not really helpful? There seems to be no sage with the wisdom and the power to untie the Gordian knot of your life.

But, there is an answer! Many have found it and have proved it. You see, we all have problems, but some have found the real, basic cause of problems and have

discovered the sure cure as well.

The cause is basically sin and here we are all in the same boat. We have all done our share. We have sinned and broken contact with God himself, the source of life and light. The Lord Jesus came to take care of this problem. He suffered and died in order to blot our sin out of God's sight. Then he rose again triumphing over all the powers that array themselves against us. When a person really believes in Christ (Romans 10:10) and is united to his great sacrifice in baptism (Romans 6:3-13) he is given new life and the contact with God broken by sin is restored.

Does this mean that all your problems will be solved the minute you are re-united with God through Christ. No! but he has the answers and the power you need and they are now available to you. He can heal your hurts. He is concerned about you. He wants to solve your problems and he will if you will.

--Charles R. Prince  
San Antonio, Texas

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### God's Authority (Con't.)

choose for ourselves if we could know all the implications and consequences of our acts as he knows them."

The direct application of the authority of God to our lives would be in his will for us as revealed in the Bible. This discussion was not designed to prove this concept to one who already rejects the authority of the Bible, since our reasoning would be considered circular to them, having drawn our proof from the Bible. For believers, however, it should follow that the vast, supreme, and ultimate authority of God should make us view his book, the Bible, as the final authority in any matter it mentions.

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