



ALIVE!

AUTHORITY

“WHO OF YOU RESPECT authority?” questioned the professor to those of us sitting in her classroom. I immediately raised my hand. Awkwardly, I realized that mine was the only hand raised. I was surprised but unshaken in my response. I respect authority. It’s how my mama raised me. A good 20 plus years older than my peers, I attributed the difference in our reactions to our age discrepancy. Maybe my classmates were shy or did not understand why the question was asked. Maybe their respect for authority was lost due to a bad experience. On the other hand, maybe they were not taught what my mama taught me. For whatever reason, there was a lack of hands raised in the classroom that day. I believe it was but a microcosm of our society today.

Humanity has a right to question and to stand up to authority when it is in the wrong. “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan” (Proverbs 29:2). When we are unsure of people who come into authority, we naturally fear and question. How will they use their power? Will they make decisions that will hurt us economically, socially, physically, or hinder our freedoms? Authority brings with it power—power to influence, change, lead, and command. Whether we like it or not, we are all impacted by authority.

I find it fascinating how humanity acknowledges authority and whom they acknowledge it from when it comes to health

and lifestyle. One man drinks a glass of wine every evening because his doctor told him it was good for his heart. A woman takes *garcinia cambogia* as a supplement because Dr. Oz said it would cause weight loss. Another girl refuses to eat “carbs” because of what she read from the Weston A. Price Foundation. Eve ate forbidden fruit because she believed the words of a serpent.

... he went to the store to get root beer.

Who, or what, is your authority when it comes to your lifestyle choices? I once counseled a friend who wanted help losing weight. We developed a strategy and scheduled a follow-up visit. Six weeks later not a pound was lost. I asked him how things were going. He shared an enlightening experience with me. He had come home from a stressful day at work, sat in his chair, and had a yen for root beer. The yen was strong. So, he went to the store to get root beer. While he was there he decided he would get some ice cream for his root beer and some key lime pie as well. By heeding the yen, it became the authority for his actions, superseding his weight loss plans. (For the sake of privacy, details have been changed in this story.)

Imagine what our appetite was like before Eve heeded the serpent. There was no such thing as compulsive eating, addiction, or obsessive thoughts about food; no

preoccupation with body image or excess adipose tissue in the wrong place, no bingeing, and no self-medicating with food. Eve knew what and how much to eat. She was master of her appetite and impulses. She was in harmony with the will of God and the world around her. God is trying to lead us back to this Edenic experience. His original design encompasses how we live and whom we respect as authority.

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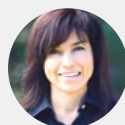
Jesus was a man of authority. Though without title or rank, His authority was self-evident to those He healed, to His followers, to His enemies who hated Him, to the wind and the waves, as well as to the demons He cast out. Even those who rejected His authority could not help but acknowledge it. But acknowledging authority and respecting it are two different things. We have a choice as to how we will relate to authority. When Jesus cleansed the temple, some ran from His presence while others remained. At the tomb of Lazarus, His directives were contradictorily met with human reasoning and logic. When He diagnosed the girl as not dead but sleeping, He was laughed at. When He spoke, the hearts of those who stood by were amazed. When He spoke the law of God, the people quaked. When He healed, He was feared and worshiped. When He forgave, some thought He blasphemed while others believed.

The Pharisees questioned, “By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?” (Matthew 21:23, KJV). But the answer could only be given to those who would appreciate and accept it. To acknowledge and respect Christ’s authority would entail following His teaching and embracing His mission. Surrender to, love for, and obedience to God are the highest forms of respect for His authority. The principles of His kingdom as written in His law and then manifested in us through sanctified temper, humility, love, temperance, and obedience reveal the authority of Christ in our lives. As Author of the laws of nature by which our bodies operate, what would it be like if we gave God authority over our appetite? Well, it would be like what Eve experienced before that first bite: no compulsive eating, no

self-medicating with food ever again. We wouldn’t be led about by the compulsive yen. More than that, we would experience the power of Christ’s authority in an area of our lives where we have lost so much control.

“When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own.”¹ Let His authority manage your appetite. Letting Him be Lord over this area of our lives will result in a change that we cannot accomplish for ourselves. The weak area of our lives will become our strength. “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1, ESV). The very area of our lives where we have suffered great loss, the place that is foundational to much of our dysfunction can become a type of sacrifice. Death to the yen and healing and restoration of our appetite will be our experience. These are acts of worship: acknowledging, respecting, inviting, and adoring God and His authority. 🕊

1. Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 324.



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