

# How to Grow in Spiritual Authority

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Spiritual authority, in the Christian sense, is an authority that comes from God alone. No person can conjure up this kind of authority. It's not the same, and it doesn't work the same as the world, like with business or politics. Spiritual authority doesn't necessarily translate into big crowds, large influence or lots of money. Just because someone is the leader of a big church doesn't necessarily mean that they have lots of spiritual authority (though that could be the case). Spiritual authority is not easily measured; rather, it is spiritually discerned. Here is a definition of spiritual authority that I think is profound,

*"A hand upon the throne" (Exodus 17:16), the capacity to touch heaven and change the outcomes on earth.' – Rob Reimber*

## **God's Authority or Mine?**

One year ago, in the middle of a year turned on its head because of COVID-19, I experienced a fresh drawing of the Lord. My relationship with Jesus at the time was like old bread, stale. This fresh wave of God's presence was wonderful, but little did I anticipate how painful this process of renewal would be. Two months later, and still in the wonderful new space in my walk with God, the Holy Spirit convicted me of unrepented and undealt with sin in my life. It was sin that I had confessed, but I realised the seriousness of my offence against God. In that moment of conviction, I was confronted with a choice. Do I confess and repent to someone over me in the Lord, or do I keep this to myself? While contemplating this, the Lord asked me a question: *"Christopher, do you want to walk in My authority, or do you want to minister in your own authority?"*

I know myself well enough to know that I cannot do anything of eternal value in my own authority. I know myself well enough to know that I'm not that impressed with 'me'. I need Jesus to truly make a difference! When the Lord asked me this question, I also knew that there was only one answer and that that answer would lead to a 'painful' journey of discipline. The following day I picked up the phone and phoned one of the elders over me in the Lord, I repented to my wife, and I repented to the congregation I led the next Sunday. That week was one of the most painful weeks of my life

and the months that followed were not easy. I stepped down from leading a congregation, and my wife and I took a break from ministry to go through a process of healing and restoration.

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## The Difference Between God's Authority and Man's

It's now nine months since the Lord asked me in whose authority I wanted to walk and I have seen the restoration of God in multiple areas, including serving on eldership again. Recently, I went out cycling in nature by myself. I was experiencing Jesus really close, with Him sharing His heart with me (something that doesn't happen regularly while I'm cycling). God reminded me of how important this theme of spiritual authority is. It's all over the Bible – Moses, David and Jesus, to just mention a few. I was reminiscing over my journey the past year and my decision to choose God's authority over mine.

Suddenly, God (through nature) showed me a profound example of the difference between God's authority and man-made authority. In the distance, I saw four bird-like figures flying quite high above in the sky. At first, they all looked the same as I was too far out to make out precisely what they were. As I came closer, I saw it was, in fact, a pair of eagles and a pair of crows flying close to each other. The eagles were gliding effortlessly like eagles usually do, using the wind. The crows, however, were flapping their wings all the time. I immediately knew God was showing me something profound. **The eagles represented believers walking in God's authority.** They rely not on themselves but on the air to be up there. **The crows represented believers walking in their own authority.** I'm not exaggerating that for every one flap from the wings of the eagles, those crows probably flapped 100 times, if not more. I thought, *"these crows won't be able to stay up there for long with all the effort it takes for them to be up there"*. Not even three minutes later, only the eagles remained. To walk in spiritual authority is to walk by the Spirit.

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Spiritual authority is not just for leaders in the church. God desires for every believer to walk in His authority. In the end, we will either be an eagle or a crow, spiritually speaking. We will choose to trust in God and fly by the wind of His Spirit, or we will try really hard, flapping wildly so that we can soar with the eagles. The Christian life was never designed to be lived in our own strength and effort. In our strength, we will fail miserably and come up way short. Obedience will become tiresome and heavy. Many Christians find themselves here, and this is where I was only a year ago. Why? I was running, or should I say flapping, in my own strength. I had forgotten, in this Covenant, the Lord is the one who never gives up pursuing me, who never goes a day without desiring to be close with me. The way up is the way down, or the way down is the way up.

## Sustained by the Wind of the Spirit

The other massive difference that I immediately thought of between the eagle and the crow: the eagle is a hunter. The eagle is 'self-sustainable' in a good way. Spiritually speaking, the eagle is someone who knows how to find God's presence daily. Their relationship with Jesus is not from Sunday to Sunday. The crow, on the other hand, is dependent on others' leftovers. This is a person who does not find God's presence for themselves daily. Their only spiritual food is what others feed them.

*"Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."* – Isaiah 40:30-31 (ESV)

You've probably seen this Scripture quoted on a coffee mug, your Facebook feed, or some verse of the day. It's one of those well-known and frequently referenced Scriptures that Christians use for a quick boost. But nothing about this verse suggests anything quick. We don't like the word 'wait'. It goes against the grain of our culture. But with the Lord, that is the only way to renew our strength. To trust and wait on the Lord. This is where the biggest difference between these two birds lies. The eagle, as it soars, has a posture of being at rest while gliding; it appears to be effortless. However, the crow is working hard to be up there with the eagle and has a posture of striving and flapping, doing everything in his own effort. If our relationship with Jesus is about us trying very hard, then we are flapping like the crow and not gliding by the wind of the Spirit.

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One clear example of this for me is how many years ago the Lord showed my then-girlfriend and me that we were going to be married. We were dating at the time, but He then asked us to put our relationship on the altar and to offer it to Him. We broke off the relationship completely. We moved on to the point where we both individually committed not to pursue the relationship until the Lord clearly spoke to us. It was a hard and difficult journey, but today in our marriage, we walk in the blessing of the Lord bringing us together, and we know that His authority rests on our marriage and family. We know that we did not hold onto our relationship in our strength. This knowledge brings us rest for the duration of our lives; God will be the one upholding us because our marriage started in His will and with His authority.

Brother and sister, I encourage you to **put your trust in the Lord**. Regardless of your function within the body of Christ, wait on the Lord daily. In terms of your calling and gifting, wait on the Lord to raise you up. Wait for Him to release you in His authority. We desperately need His authority to do what God has called us to. Our strength is not enough. When we wait on Him, He renews our strength; He gives us eagle wings, and He provides the wind of the Spirit.