

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF PASTORAL AUTHORITY? Pt. 1

A. The UNSCRIPTURAL IMBALANCES regarding SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.

There are the imbalances of:

1. **Heavy handed spiritual leaders who _____ their pastoral authority.** How does this happen?
 - a) By the church becoming _____ driven and not principle based (John 17:17; 3 Jn. 1:9-13).
 - b) By the _____ of the leader and not the divine viewpoint of the Word of God becoming the unquestioned bottom-line without proper accountability (Romans 12:2).
 - c) By the apparent success of the leader causing people to excuse his spiritual abuse or lack of godly qualifications due to “the end justifies the means” _____ (Jer.48:10a; 1 John 1:4).
 - d) By churches _____ biblical submission in failing to be Bereans when it comes to sound doctrine (Acts 17:10-12; 1 Thess. 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1-3), or by having unquestioned submission to spiritual leaders when asked to do something without having a good conscience to do it as unto the Lord (2 Cor. 1:12; Rom. 14:23) or which is not within scriptural parameters (Heb.13:17).
 - e) By there being no _____ for the spiritual leadership of one or many (Acts 20:28).
2. **The _____ of scriptural pastoral authority.** How does this happen?
 - a) Through _____ resulting in church decisions being made by popular vote by “members” consisting of both spiritual and carnal believers (and maybe unbelievers), instead of an elder-led church with congregational input and feedback, operating under scriptural principles (Phil.1:1; Heb.13:17).
 - b) Through certain individuals throwing their functional weight around due to being big givers, and / or founding or influential families in the church, thus, undermining the pastor’s authority practically.
 - c) Through acquiring pastoral candidates from _____ their local church via an external pastoral search committee, causing the church to be hesitant to invest proper pastoral authority to this relatively “unknown” spiritual leader who may only be with the church for a few short years. In contrast, when the pastor / elder is considered and developed from _____ the church, the congregation will more intimately know the character and giftedness of the considered appointee, as well as better guaranteeing that the doctrine and direction of the church will more likely be preserved. While the finding of a pastor from outside the local church, especially small churches, may be a necessity for a period of time, steps should be taken if all possible to correct this.

- d) Through having an “elder board” (in addition to the pastor) consisting at times of scripturally _____ men in character, gift, and/or doctrine, which were previously appointed due to ecclesiastical politics, nepotism, or meeting some unbiblical plurality quota. The new pastor “inherited” this dilemma. In this arrangement, the “elder board” may not grasp that a pastor is not an “employee of the board” but is actually a servant of the Lord and a fellow-elder who usually is the “leader among leaders”.
- e) Through the congregation, or even fellow-elders or deacons, not _____ the sound teaching of their pastor(s), or not submitting to the functional directives & policies of their spiritual leaders(s).
- f) Through being in a _____ church that limits pastoral authority on a local church level due to an unscriptural leadership structure that suppresses the independency of the local church and its leaders. (Rev. 2-3)

B. The SCRIPTURAL BALANCE of Godly Spiritual Leaders.

1. They biblically _____ the church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ within scriptural parameters; they do not _____ the church. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

“Lording it over” occurs when spiritual leaders ...

- a) Forget that _____ is the Head & Owner of God’s flock (Eph. 1:22; Matt.16:18), and that they are _____ under the authority of our Lord and the Word of God. (Matthew 20:25-28)
- b) Fail to allow the _____ to teach & bring others along in their understanding of the Scriptures and personal growth but demand doctrinal compliance before others have followed the Berean example & have searched the Scriptures themselves. On the other hand, pastors/elders must be on vigilant and on guard against false teaching / teachers. (2 Cor.1:24; Acts 17:10-12; 20:28-32)
- c) _____ their sphere and actions of leadership beyond scriptural parameters and principles so as to abuse their authority to gain prestige or power, or to further their own selfish aims & agendas like Diotrephes became guilty of (2 Cor. 10:13-14; 3 John 1:9-10).
- d) Point people to _____, instead of pointing them to Jesus Christ as sovereign and sufficient, so they are more concerned with obedience to the leaders instead of to God. (Heb.13:7; 1 Cor.11:1)
- e) They _____ the decisions of believer-priests and require submission in personal areas when there is no scriptural basis or legitimate reason involved. (1 Cor. 16:12)

2. They biblically lead with godly Christ-like _____ (bathed in _____) for the glory of Jesus Christ, the blessing of the congregation, and the furtherance of the Gospel of grace, not motivated by selfish, personal agendas or achieved through strong-arm legalistic methods. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Romans 12:3; 1 Tim. 4:12-16; Prov.11:14, 15:22; James 1:5)