

“Leadership is the art and science of inspiring others to reach their full potential in the pursuit of a common vision”

Dr. James Bultman



Today Scripture
Reference

Matthew 28: 18

Then Jesus came to them and said, **All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,



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The TCL E-Leadership Resource Getting Your Authority – Part 1

In the midst of my study of Christian leadership I began to sense a need to help people understand authority in a more comprehensive way. I will divide my thoughts into multiple articles with this being Part I. While I wasn't sure how much authority structure I would find in the life of Jesus, I went directly to the gospels to read and observe how Jesus used his authority. I was surprised when I read repeatedly that Jesus was “given” or “granted” his authority. In the sum of several passages you will find the specifics of Christ's authority and that his authority “was given” to him.

1. He was granted authority in heaven and earth – Matthew 28:18
2. Over every power and authority – Colossians 2:9
3. Authority to forgive sins - Matthew 9:4
4. Authority to give eternal life to the ones the Father gave him – John 17:1
5. Currently reigning with all authority – I Peter 3:22

Although I believe every word of scripture is important, I feel that when God repeats certain phrases, it behooves us to look for a special lesson. Pondering the importance of the Bible repeating the phrase “given him” or “granted him”, I reflected on my own leadership life and remembered the day when being granted authority was so very important.

At age twenty two I received a promotion to plant manager. I was in a growing family business. I really did work hard and love what I was doing. In my first few years of work I gained experience in a variety of production positions and helped management in fixing and/or designing a multitude of pneumatic, electrical and pipe fitting needs. While I felt I demonstrated management potential, I admit that my last name helped me in becoming plant manager of about 50 people.

A strange thing happened after I was given my promotion. They gave me the job but did not tell the employees. They just assumed everyone would fall into place under my young leadership. Guess what? That did not happen the way they expected. There were several employees who had worked for the family for 30 years. They were not going to follow me so quickly ... and one or two of them didn't submit willingly. It would be best described as ... awkward submission.

Weeks later I, along with one senior supervisor, went to the family owners and described the problem. We told them that they needed to tell all the employees about the change in management. They were surprised, but did call a company meeting and formally presented me as their new boss. From that day on everyone knew that I had been given authority over them. Things began to improve immediately.

Friends, it does not matter how skillful or how much potential you have as a leader. You will never be able to lead effectively without this thing called authority. If Jesus did not begin his leadership on earth without it, why should any of us think we can? In addition, authority will serve you well if it is given to you. If you try and “take it” or use an authority you do not have, it will be a thorn in your side.

What other lesson can we learn from these passages? How about asking for and receiving clear and concise job descriptions that include specific language of who and what we have authority over? I believe the passages above clearly outline what authority the Father gave Jesus. Many leaders fear the specifics of job descriptions. I believe job descriptions need to be very specific about the scope of authority but not minute details of every task. Most are weak on authority and heavy on details.

How did you begin in your leadership? Are you clear on what authority you have ... and better yet, the authority you don't have? Who are the leaders who follow you? Have you been clear in what authority you have given them? And finally ... how about the rest of the followers? Does everyone understand?

If you have doubts, might I **suggest** you get to work? ☺