Christians and Authority
Matt. 20:25-28

Introduction:
A. Authority is basic to civilization.
   1. Chaos is the alternative.
   2. True of any social unit: Home, state, church, organizations.
B. We want to consider several aspects of authority that Christians should recognize and respect:

Discussion:

I. We must Recognize the Source of Authority.
A. God is sovereign. (Acts 17:24-26; Rom. 9:20-21)
B. Son given all authority. (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 15:24-28).
C. Men given various kinds and degrees of authority.
   1. Civil authority (John 19:10-11; Heb. 13:1-5; 1 Tim. 2:2)
   2. Domestic authority. (Eph. 5:22-6:4)
      a. Apostles. (2 Cor. 10:8)
      b. Elders rule or exercise oversight. (1 Pet. 5:1-5).
      c. Evangelists. (Tit. 2:15).
      d. Men over women. (1 Tim. 2:11,12).

II. We must Recognize the Order of Authority.
A. God’s authority always first. (Acts 5:29).
B. Order of headship or authority.
   1. God, Christ, man, woman. (1 Cor. 11:3)
      b. Reflected in the church: Men and women in general (1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Cor. 14:34,35)
         (1) What about woman teaching a class of men?
         (2) What about women in business meetings?
   2. Elders over congregation. (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:17; Heb. 13:7)
   3. Older men over young men. (1 Pet. 5:5).

III. We must Recognize Proper Use of Authority.
A. Text does not condemn authority but its abuse.
   1. Elders not to lord it over - kind of rule in text. (1 Pet. 5:1-5).
   2. Christians submit voluntarily rather by force or coersion.
B. Christians in authority make themselves servants of subjects rather than lords.
   1. Christian husbands told to be gentle. (1 Pet. 3:7)
   2. Elders told to rule not as lords, but examples. (1 Pet. 5:3).
   3. Christian parents told not to be unduly harsh. (Col. 3:21).
   4. Christian Masters told to be just and fair. (Col. 4:1)

IV. We must Recognize the Instrument of Authority.
A. All authority expressed in the gospel. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16).
B. Scriptures furnish us unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Conclusion:
A. Let us recognize and respect authority.
   1. As those under authority.
   2. As those with authority.
B. Let us realize that all authority ultimately rest in the Godhead to whom we all give account.