

Exercising Authority

Teacher's Guidebook

By John Baughn

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Spiritual "equipment" for the contest of life.

Introduction to This Teacher's Manual

The exercises in the "Exercising Authority" workbook are designed to aid teachers in acting as a guide to truth, not to act as any final authority. The whole purpose of instruction is to aid the student in coming to proper conclusions about truth and to embrace that truth, no matter how difficult.

As teachers, we must put aside our desire to tell the student what we know and replace it with the desire to bring the student to the truth. The student has a much greater chance of using the truth correctly when he or she is drawn to proper conclusions rather than being convinced that the teacher is correct.

Trust the words of God's inspired Scripture to do the real instruction in righteousness...

Trust the words of God's inspired Scripture to do the real instruction in righteousness, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Understand that sharing the teacher's knowledge is less important than the student being led to their own correct conclusion about truth. **We must separate ourselves from the ideas of all men**, including those who we respect and those with whom we hold common ideas and agreement. If we are to come to agreement, it must be based solely upon God's principles alone.

These exercises are not of the traditional fill-in-the-blank, make-a-choice, or true/false nature. They are to be used as stimuli for discussion. They should be used to seriously challenge the student's thinking process. And, most of all, they should be used to stimulate an exploration of God's will.

» A Teacher is a Facilitator

It is also important that the teacher realize that he cannot and should not have to know every word or every thought of every student. However, the teacher should spend substantial energy in attempting to involve everyone in the "learning process." Student involvement can start with having the quieter students simply reading passages or questions without being put on the spot. When a quiet student does something as simple as reading out loud or doing a task like recording items in small groups on newsprint, they will become more likely to contribute out loud to the discussion.

In using these materials, teachers serve as the facilitators and guides, not the source of truth. These exercises, when used properly, should facilitate an exploration of God's truth by stimulating the minds of the students to look more deeply and to seek more earnestly the righteousness of God.

Always try to let the students respond to the questions on their own and thus draw their own conclusion before discussing the passages. In many instances, students may simply be thinking out loud and with the help of the teacher and other students, they may need to work through the thought process in order to come to the right conclusions.

» Hope for Challenges

In using the facilitator process, the teacher runs the "risk" of being challenged by students. However, such a challenge should be viewed as a compliment to the learning process. If tough

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challenges arise, it means that the students are stimulated to explore the truth more deeply. They are “thinking” about the truth.

Sometimes the challenge may come before they are ready for the next step of the process. The student may be thinking ahead. In this case, compliment them for such a good point or question and ask them to note it for the appropriate time in the course when it can be more fully addressed.

There are two good methods to help keep the thought “alive” for later:

- have the students fill out 3x5 cards to pose their question(s) and turn them in to a designated person or to the teacher for later discussion; and/or,
- post newsprint with a marker in the room for students to write down their question(s).

When stuck or unsure of how to handle a particular challenge, a teacher has several options:

- Tell them that you are stumped or that you don’t know.
- Develop a class assignment to further research the issue.
- Seek the contribution of other students in the class in order to further stimulate discussion.

» Progressive Teaching Plan

The teacher can use these exercises as a source to develop a primary lesson plan or he can pick and choose exercises that may best aid an existing lesson plan. In either case, be sure to realize that a study in authority requires a specific process. When certain study tools are in place and fundamental principles are established, then, and only then, can one make proper application.

Take for example, the authority for having a church building. It must be preceded by an understanding of certain principles. The student needs to understand the principles of general and specific authority, of expedience, and of the nature of the church before coming to a Bible-based understanding of the authority for a church building.

There is no difference between trying to understand authority for a church building and understanding the images of Revelation. In order to have a correct understanding of the images of Revelation, one must first understand some basic principles of Old Testament language and the nature and history of the New Testament church.

Don’t jump to Revelation to teach first principles and don’t jump to a discussion of a church building to teach authority. Other important Bible groundwork must be developed first.

My prayer for all teachers is that their students will be stimulated to learn more and to drink more deeply from the fountain of life as the result of their effort. I also pray that these exercises will aid in that process.

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Teacher's Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Exercise Series # 1	Some Key Scriptures	9
Exercise Series # 2	Words Are Important	15
Exercise Series # 3	The Need for Order (Authority)	22
Exercise Series # 4	Old Testament Principles of Authority	28
Exercise Series # 5	New Testament Principles of Authority	33
Exercise Series # 6	Sources of Authority	38
Exercise Series # 7	The Specific or General Realms	50
Exercise Series # 8	The Role of Silence	54
Exercise Series #9	Making Sound Judgments	60
Exercise Series #10	Establishing Spiritual Authority	71
Exercise Series #11	The Nature of the Church	82
Exercise Series #12	Determining what is Authorized	88

Exercising Authority




Teacher's Notes to Exercise Series # 1

Some Key Scriptures

EVERYTHING REQUIRES A POINT OF REFERENCE. Build everything in this course upon the context of Scripture. Everything that we authorize must find its source in the Holy Scriptures of God. In order to understand truth, we must understand the context or “point of reference” of the instruction given.

This first set of exercises is designed to start the learning process with the proper and careful examination of Bible scripture. Be sure to cover the following information when looking at these scriptures.

Help students look at the text prior to and following each quoted scripture in order to determine the **full context** of the passage and help them get in the habit of asking these questions:

-  Who is speaking in each scripture?
-  To whom is the scripture being addressed?
-  Why is the statement being made?

Make a chart or poster with the above questions and post it prominently in the classroom as constant reinforcement of these principles. Title it, “Understanding context is a habit for every good Bible student.”

Emphasize that these passages will continue to come up and should be kept in mind as the study continues. They should be kept in mind anytime that anyone discusses Bible authority.

- Post copies of some of these scriptures in prominent places in the classroom.
- Review Moses’ instruction to Israel in Deuteronomy 6:5-9, and talk about the importance of proper attitude toward scriptures.
- Consider Proverbs 6:20-22 and make the parallel between the instruction of earthly parents to children and God (our heavenly parent) to us (His children).

Teacher's Manual

EXERCISE SERIES #1 - Some Key Scriptures

Following are some key scriptures to consider when looking into the realm of Bible authority. Examine each scripture and consider its significance by answering the question posed.

A. OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES (NKJV)

1. After considering the following scriptures, use the space below to write what they have to say about man's wisdom.

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Proverbs 14:12; 16:25

“O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”

Jeremiah 10:23

2. After considering the following scriptures, use the space below to write what they have to say about God's wisdom.

“8 For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.

“9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

“22 Then Samuel said, ‘Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.’”

1 Samuel 15:22

“2 You shall not add unto the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”

Deuteronomy 4:2

Exercising Authority

Teacher's Notes to Series #1, A. "Old Testament Scriptures"

➤ **Exercise A, 1.** The purpose of this first exercise is to establish the facts that, in spite of man's opinion of himself, God's knowledge, understanding, and wisdom is far superior to man's.

These scriptures are printed on the exercise sheet so that students will have the critical verses before them as they think about them. However, as was stated before, they will need to look them up in the Bible in order to establish their proper context. **Be sure to discuss the context before soliciting the student's response to the verses.**

Use newsprint, a marker board, or chalkboard to capture short phrases or one-word descriptions that the class has written about these passages. Newsprint is best because they can be posted as visual reminders and they can be compared to other lists of words and phrases from the next exercises. See "**Supplement A**" about brainstorming activities.

➤ **Exercise A, 2.** Once assessing man's knowledge and wisdom, use this next set of scriptures to explore God's knowledge and wisdom. Don't stop with the first responses that students make about the passages. **Go on to challenge the students to consider the impact of their responses upon their own life and the lives of others. Further, consider the impact of these passages upon our overall attitude about Scripture.**

Use newsprint, a marker board, or chalkboard to capture short phrases or one-word descriptions that the class has written about these passages.

➤ **Compare and contrast the lists that the class made from Exercise A, 1 with the list made from Exercise A, 2. Make a comparison of God's knowledge and wisdom with man's knowledge and wisdom.**

TEACHER'S NOTES:

Teacher's Manual

B. NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

1. After considering the following scripture, use the space below to write about what man's attitude should be regarding righteousness.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Matthew

6:33

2. Tell what the following scriptures have to say about the contrast between a person's actions and God's expectations of him or her.

“21 Not every one who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

“22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name cast out demons in Your name and done many wonders in Your name?’”

“23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me you who practice lawlessness!’”

Matthew 7:21-23

“8 These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

“9 And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Matthew 15:8-9

“9 Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

“10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor greet him;

“11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”

2 John 9-11

Exercising Authority

3. Explain what the following scriptures say about the things that should guide our actions.

“18 Then Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”

Matthew 28:18

“16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

Philippians 3:16

“17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

Colossians 3:17

4. Explain what the following scriptures tell us about how to respond to and use the Word of God.

“16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

“17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

“21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Peter

1:20-21

“18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

“19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Revelation 22:18-19

Teacher's Manual

Teacher's Notes to Series #1, B. "New Testament Scriptures"

☞ **Exercise B, 1:** Man's *attitude about Scripture* should have been brought out from Exercise A, 2. The scripture in Exercise B, 2 (about the Kingdom of Heaven) should help students focus upon what our *attitude about our priorities in life should be*.

Use the text (Matthew 6:33) to aid the students in bringing out other things that are inferred by this passage. Ask these questions:

- What does this passage reveal about success in God's eyes vs. success in man's eyes?
- Does this passage have anything to do with Bible authority?
- Does this passage authorize anything specific?
- What types of things might it authorize in general?

☞ **Exercise B, 2:** The old saying that "actions speak louder than words" may not be found in the Bible, but clearly the principle is there. Direct the students' discussion toward two critical concepts that come out of these passages: **words and actions**.

- After reviewing the scriptures in this exercise and establishing their context, explore this question with the class: **Are words or actions more important? What evidence is in these passages to support your answer?**
- Next, draw the students' attention to the following passages:
1 Samuel 15:22; 1 John 5:1-3; and Matthew 7:24-29.
- **Which is more important in these passages, the words or the action as far as man is concerned? As far as God is concerned?**

Critical points that should be brought out through this exercise:

- **Words are important:** This principle will be covered more thoroughly in the next exercise series, so don't spend a lot of time covering this now.
- **Actions are critical:** Consider Matthew 21:28-31. This particular passage follows an important discussion that Jesus had with the chief priests and elders about the subject of authority. **Don't delve too deeply into verses 23-27 at this time, except to place verses 28-31 in context. This passage will be covered in detail later.** However, have the class discuss the importance of man's actions as they relate to obeying God's words.

Exercising Authority

☞ **Exercise B, 3:** This exercise will explore what words should guide our actions.

Use newsprint, a marker board, or chalkboard to capture short phrases or one-word descriptions that the class has written about these passages.

After capturing phrases and words, ask the class to consider the following:

- The words that guide our daily actions should come from what source?
- **Outside the context of the Bible:** In what ways do people “walk by the same rule” and “be of the same mind?”
- **Within Bible context:** In what ways may a group of people have unity with one another but not be united in God?
- What is Paul telling the churches at Philippi and Colosse about what should guide unity?
- In what ways might Colossians 3:17 address both individual and group responsibility for unity?

» **Exercise B, 4:** This last exercise of the section should help summarize this series. Ultimately, we must come to an understanding about the perfection of God’s words and the imperfection of man’s actions.

Use newsprint, a marker board, or chalkboard to capture short phrases or one-word descriptions that the class has written about these passages.

After capturing the words and phrases, move the class to a discussion about the consequences of actions.

Have class members form small groups to discuss the following questions. Give them two (2) to four (4) minutes to deal with each question and then have them share their findings with the total class. “**Supplement B**” will explain more about organizing small group activities.

Small Group Discussions:

- ☞ What were they guilty of in Matthew 7:21-23? What was unacceptable about their actions?
- ☞ Does Matthew 15:8-9 give any clues about Matthew 7:21-23?
- ☞ What is meant by “transgresses” in 2 John 9-11?
- ☞ What are the consequences for those who transgress?
- ☞ What are the consequences for those who fail to stand against the transgressors?

Teacher's Manual

Teacher's Notes to Exercise Series #2

Words are Important

One objective of these exercises is to understand the strength and finality of God and His word.

This concept is often in conflict with modern views of authority. It is not uncommon for people today to challenge authority. But it is also important to know that this is not unique to our day. It happened in the Garden of Eden, in the days of Moses, in the days of Christ, and it still happens today.

Another objective of these exercises is to understand the powerlessness and pitfalls of words when improperly handled by man.

Communication is one of the key things that we do as human beings. Christians who desire to teach the truth must develop good communication skills in order to relate the truth to others.

EXERCISE SERIES #2 - Words are Important

Words are important. In being able to communicate with another person and come to a common understanding one must be able to use words that have common meanings.

A. **DEFINING "AUTHORITY"** - In a study about authority, the first word people need to commonly understand is the word "authority."

1. **First, let's see what you think.** Without looking up the word in a dictionary, give your definition of "authority" below:

2. **Now let's see what the world thinks.** Consider the following definition as given by a modern day dictionary.

Authority: "a. The power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge. b. One that is invested with this power, especially a government or government officials." ¹

Exercising Authority

3. Carefully consider your definition and then the dictionary definition. What is similar between the two? What is different? Are they the same?

4. Matthew 7:29 says, “for He (Christ) taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.” What was it about Christ that would cause these people to make such a statement? Write/discuss all of the possible ways that this statement could be understood.

5. Christ said that “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” in Matthew 28:18 (KJV). What do you think each of these words mean?

**ALL:
IS GIVEN:
IN HEAVEN:**

**POWER:
UNTO ME:
IN EARTH:**

6. Now, construct a new sentence that uses the definitions of each word above.

7. Christ was one who had authority and presented himself as such, Matthew 7:28-29. Compare that image to the sometimes negative image of the modern term “authority figure.”

NOTES:

Teacher's Manual

Teacher's Notes to Series #2, A. "Defining 'Authority'"

This exercise explores how important it is to have a common understanding of words in order to have successful communication.

We cannot establish mutual agreement about authority if we do not have a common understanding of the words being used in the discussion. One person may express a certain meaning through words that the hearer of the words may take differently in meaning (Review "context" once again with the class in order to put this in perspective).

➤ **Exercise A, 1:** Allow personal exploration in the beginning of this exercise. Don't make any judgments about anyone's answer. We'll provide opportunity to share and discuss answers later.

Use newsprint to capture short phrases or one-word descriptions that the class has written about these passages. See "**Supplement A.**"

➤ **Exercise A, 2:** This is the first step in measuring the accuracy of definitions. Have a class member read the definition. Again, make no judgments about the "authority" of the definition at this time. However, you may want to talk about the fact that a standard, like a dictionary, is necessary to have a mutual understanding of words. Likewise, the Bible serves as a standard for determining mutual understanding of spiritual things.

➤ **Exercise A, 3:** When comparing the definitions that individuals have written down with the dictionary definition, lead the class in the "negotiation" of a commonly held understanding of the word "authority."

- **What authority have you used to establish meaning for the word?**
- Put the word "authority" on the chalkboard or marker board.
- Discuss the word "*empowerment*," a modern word being incorrectly used. This is relevant when discussing commonly used words as it pertains to "authority" because it reveals how words change with their common usage.
 - ✦ "Empowerment" originally meant to enable with proper authority.
 - ✦ Lately, "empowerment" has come to mean ownership and responsibility with no judgment as to proper authority and is sometimes confused with "authority."
- **Discuss the following questions as a total class:**
 - ✦ Has any student found that their definition of "authority" differs in any way from the dictionary definition?
 - ✦ Has any student changed their understanding or strengthened their understanding about this word, "authority"?

Move the class to a common understanding of authority which focuses upon the synonym "power." Following all of the discussion, place "= power" next to the word "authority" on the chalkboard. Leave "authority = power" on the board as a reminder throughout the course.

Exercising Authority

☞ **Exercise A, 4:** This next step should now move the study back to Scripture and will aid in establishing a common understanding of “authority” as the Bible discusses the concept.

Use the following process to see how people of the world may prejudice their view of Christ by their prejudices about “authority” and “authority figure.”

- **Have the total class discuss the following questions:**

- ☞ What characteristics of a person come to mind when one hears the term “authority figure”? List them.
- ☞ What characteristics about the way Jesus taught would provoke the people to make the statement in Matthew 7:29? List them.
- ☞ How do the characteristics of “authority figure” match or conflict with Jesus’ teaching?

☞ **Exercise A, 5 & 6:** Students should try not to repeat any of the words being used (a good resource for this exercise would be the *Amplified Bible*).

- By attempting to use different words, the student is challenged to come to a better appreciation of the words and thus the concept of the sentence.
- Ask the following questions and listen carefully to the students’ responses.
 - ☐ Has your transliteration of the sentence made the meaning any clearer, or is it more confusing?
 - ☐ Can we understand the original statement without “interpretation” by simply having a mutual understanding of the words?
- Discuss the significance of this statement by Christ and the impact that it has upon a discussion of authority.

Teacher's Manual

B. THE POWER AND FINALITY OF GOD'S WORDS

1. a) Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, & 20 all use one common phrase. What is it?

b) Verses 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, and 30 conclude in what similar way?

c) Finally, verses 10, 12, 18, 21, & 25 all reflect on God's view of the results. What is it?
2. In considering the above phrases, what happened as the result of God's words (see Hebrews 11:3)?
3. Romans 1:16 reveals something about the power of God's word in this present life. What is it?
4. What does John 12:48-50 reveal about the authority of God's word at the end of time?
5. Can you think of any other Bible examples that show the authority of God's word?
6. a) When God speaks, what is the result?
b) When man speaks, what happens?
c) What does this say about God's words in comparison to man's words? See Psalms 119:160 and John 17:17.