

# Imperatives - Authority

by Devern Fromke

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and submitting to the authority of the Lord in every aspect of our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:05:33

**Scripture:** Genesis 13:7

**Topics:** "Authority"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of the 300 soldiers who fought alongside Gideon. He emphasizes that their discipline and way of life revealed their true character as soldiers. The speaker also highlights the importance of our choices and actions in revealing our inner selves. He uses the example of Lot, who gradually became entangled in sin and was eventually captured by kings. The speaker emphasizes the need for a right spirit and a willingness to extend grace and help to others, as demonstrated by Abram's rescue of Lot.

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## Transcript

Lord, we do stand this morning in the full value of all the intercession and the prayer of Thy people. Not only that which is represented here by our groaning and our concern, but that, dear Lord, which is going up around the globe this morning. Oh, we are a part of something so much larger than we realize.

And our spirit this morning would rise and ascend. Our expectation would move into that glorious stream in which Thou art working to accomplish, to realize, something eternal for Thyself. So in this measure of confidence we stand.

Otherwise there would be only weakness and fear and trembling and emptiness. And Thou does know. But in Thee we stand strong.

In Thee we claim Thy liberty to move and to speak and to have Thy own peculiar way. In the name of the Lord Jesus we do ask with thanksgiving. Amen.

In our times with you we have been empty to center just around this one thought. The more we know Him, the more we become acquainted in an intimate way with Him, the more certain things become very real to us. We know His voice, the sensitivity to His voice.

We have come to speak of the consecration that's His and the moving in the stream of that. The harmony that's in His own heart with the Father and that which comes to flow in and through our being. And I feel this morning we are reaching a point as we watch the progress of all the ministry.

We come, the more we know Him, to know the authority of the Lord over our lives. An authority that must manifest and express itself through every area, every area of our being. It's quite something when we acknowledge His Lordship.

We do that in our inner spirit. Then from that beachhead God begins to work out to take over our total being and everything around us begins to come into the same harmony. I heard and I suppose through the years spoken of the authority of the Lord, but I must confess in a whole new way it seems as though the Lord begins to impress upon me what really is involved in His Lordship and in His full authority.

How little I've really known of it. I awakened this morning as happens occasionally with just a bit of a sense of the futility of preaching. Now I've talked about the foolishness of preaching for a long time.

And I suppose anyone who ministers is driven to that place, all the foolishness, the foolishness of preaching. But the futility somehow weighed in on my spirit. And I thought, oh Lord, maybe it would be better if I stayed in bed.

What really, what really can be done that can accomplish something of eternity? Teachings, we've had so much. Then as I look to the Lord, once again just turn my heart toward Him, seem to remind me that everything of eternal content begins first as an act in the spirit. Often we're not aware of it, but there's something of an inner spiritual birth, an inner act in the spirit.

That's where we've been pressing all these days. And then that which has become an inner spiritual act becomes a heart attitude. And then becomes a way of life.

And you'll permit me just for a moment to, as Paul would say, be a little foolish. But I was reminded of some of you the first time I met you. And I would have to say that there were many things that caused me to say, Lord, you sure got a lot to do.

But after four or five or six years, thank God for what He's been doing. We do not know, but something got planted. Something started.

There was a spiritual act, a spiritual planting of something in the spirit that began to become a heart attitude, a heart attitude. And it's becoming a way of life. Well, there are many things about us that are revealing in the outward.

I sometimes say to people, careful now, your spirit is showing. Your heart is showing. There's so many things in the outward that really begin to show.

Often folks say, well, you don't know my heart. Only the Lord can look upon my heart. Man looks on the outward appearance.

You don't know what's in my heart. Well, no, I don't. And yet I do.

Any servant, anyone who becomes more sensitive begins to see things in the outward that are reflective of what's inward. Your spirit is showing very often. Your heart begins to show.

All those, how I say it, all those areas, even in the spirit, that are high places, high places, they have a way of showing. And I've said so many times, oh, it's an awful revelation to stand before people, because the more people sense of the spirit, they look back into our spirit and they know high places, overtones, undertones, hidden tones, things that begin to come out. We are all the time being an open book if people are sensitive.

And the same thing is true in the realm of our soul. There are strongholds. Do you ever meet a sister or a brother? They're lovely.

There's a graciousness. God has wrought something of life deep within. And yet, after a while, you meet a strength in their soul.

Strength in their soul. Some concept of yours comes into collision with some strength in their soul. What we want to get at this morning, I believe, in the mind of the Lord, is to see the real necessity of a full confrontation with knowing Him in such a way that He has the privilege of an exposure of all the high places in our spirit.

And the strong places, the strongholds of our soul life. And, of course, the areas of our outer life, which are so much more manifest. Maybe the best way I can picture it is to demonstrate what I call two kingdoms that are in dread conflict.

We all are aware these two kingdoms that are in dread conflict are, first of all, spiritual in their makeup. There is something of a spirit. We say here it's the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God that permeates and controls.

Then there is the anarchistic, the spirit of the enemy. Another spirit down here that's in dread conflict against that which God. The thing that we're constantly realizing is that in this awful conflict that's raging, while with our inner spirit we give acknowledgement and recognition that Jesus is Lord, we claim that His Lordship shall be very real.

That Lordship, first of all, is by the Spirit. No man can call Jesus Lord in the sense that He is truly Lord, but by the Spirit. Up to this time, our mind may have been saying or singing and going through the mouthing of words, and we say, Lord Jesus.

But the individual knows when in spirit. Maybe there's a young person here this morning, a young fellow or a young lady, who has grown right up in a Christian home, has had all the vocabulary and all the knowledge about Jesus. Even the terminology of Him as being Lord.

But there comes a crucial hour. There comes a knock-down, drag-out time when in spirit, the government in spirit bows and acknowledges. And from the inner spirit, we say.

And from that beachhead, now He is working out to deal in all the realm of our life that His kingdom, His inner spiritual kingdom might really pervade every part of our being. Well, it's interesting, as you go back and you see the thread of conflict, this thing continually rising up and the subtleness with which sometimes we get, even though, even though there are areas, we are made to be captives. We are made to be brought under an authority, His authority.

We only find, only find the deep inward sense in our spirit that we're at home. We've arrived home. When in our spirit, there has come the full submission to all that His Lordship means.

Let's just go back and take several places in the Word where we begin to see this conflict coming into real issue. Do you remember the story of God calling Abram out of Chaldea? The man whom He's going to begin to work through His purpose, and his nephew Lot comes along with him. They haven't been in the land very long where the Lord has called them before we have something of a conflict begin to arise.

The thirteenth chapter of Genesis, we get a little picture of this conflict. It says in verse seven, And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, well then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen.

For we be brethren. I do believe that Abram called God, coming to a sense of the larger purpose that God is going to work. Lot has joined him.

Whether Lot sees very clearly, we do not know. And of course, in these two families you have the herdsmen, the various ones around each. I don't know what the point of conflict was, but I expect it was very temporal and very physical.

As they begin to quarrel among themselves, probably for the better watering places. Probably for the choice grazing lands. And this quarreling among these two camps finally gets back to the men who are representative of their party.

Their own camp. And I love the spirit in which Abraham turns. And he says, verse eight, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen.

For we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right.

Or if thou be part to the right hand, then I will go to the left. Well, I say right at this point, you have a very magnanimous spirit in Abraham. If he'd have started reasoning like Verne Trompey does so many times.

If he'd have started to evaluate just out of pure natural reasoning. There could have been a nice little straw that could have said, not only is it mine and I'm not selfish about it, but the Lord has given it to me. It isn't that I've grasped it.

It isn't that I've sought it. But this is mine. And I have real claims to it.

I have my rights to this. This can fit so many areas in our life. And yet there's something in the spirit of Abraham at this point.

I don't know, my natural reasoning could fix up a pretty good argument. Abraham, what right do you have to give away something that God's given to you? You need to be a contender for the faith. Abraham, you mustn't yield at this point.

If you do, the Lord's purposes aren't going to be fulfilled. Oh, I could develop real strength. I've done it.

But oh, I love the spirit in which he says, I pray thee, take this, take this. This is, I've been saying, one of those impossible situations where it really crowds us right to him. And all we can say is, Lord, you're going to have to look after your work.

Lord, you're going to have to take care of this thing or it's going to really go down. All your purpose, all you're going to do. Lord, if... Well, I don't want to read into Abraham, but I just love his spirit.

Abraham, your spirit is showing that it really is the Lord. It's really something God has to do. And I have to say at this moment, Lot, your spirit is showing too.

Maybe your heart, at least, is what we look at, because verse 10 says, And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, and as thou comest unto Zoar. And Lot, out of, what will we say? Selfish ambition? Grasping? Personal desires? I don't know. I don't know.

But there are certainly some areas that... And I suppose Lot can reason... Now notice, he could reason like this. Well, Uncle Abraham, after all, he's offered it to me. So, I have the choice.

There are some things that are offered that we don't accept, we don't receive. We have to come to this, and I think we will before we get through this morning, see? That there are some times, it seems, I don't want to say the Lord tests, but the Lord tests. The Lord holds out.

Remember up on the mount, when he was speaking to Moses? The Lord is saying, Moses, do you know what's going on down there amongst the people? They've made a golden calf. I'm fed up with their idolatry and their rebellion. Moses, tell you what, I'd like to blot them all out.

And I'll start over, and you can be the founding father of a new family. Moses said, Lord, what did you say? Not Abraham is the founding father, but Moses? Lord, say that again. I want to make sure I heard what you said.

No, I don't want to read into it. Moses does not say that. When God says, let me consume them.

And I'll start anew, you can be the founding father. There comes a time when I believe that our spirit is so aligned with that which God is going to do. We come to embrace his heart and his purpose and all that is dear to him, and it's just as dear to us.

And there is, in the realm of our soul, in this area, nothing that the fleshly itch can get a hold of. And I don't know whether he heard it, but he was dead to it. And he starts to pray in the next verses, identifying himself with the larger thing that God is after.

There's no stronghold, there's nothing in the flesh, nothing down here that can be appealed to. Well, here is why. There's something that could appeal to him.

And we read in verse 12, and he pitched his tent towards Sodom. Maybe that verse has never stood out to you, but God has caused it again and again on occasions to just be a whisper to my own spirit. When, at some moment, there was something that began to have a little enticement.

Lot didn't just lock, stock and barrel move down into Sodom, but he began by just pitching his tent, facing in a certain direction. Oh, the gradualness with which things happen. The gradualness with which, instead of knowing the full authority of this kingdom moving in, wherein we are being tested in the crisis of whether there's anything here that the prince of this world can come and find in us.

Or whether we are being brought into a tent down here. Well, we know what happened in due time. Lot not only pitched his tent, but little by little, just locked, found himself all engulfed and involved and wrapped up

until he became one of the leading men right down in the midst of it.

And you know, one day when the kings came in upon that area and Lot was carried captive by these kings. And some escaped and the word got to Abram. And he armed his house and he goes out to liberate Lot.

Now, if Abram hadn't had a right spirit in this, he could have developed another stronghold in his mind. A stronghold that says, Lot, I warned you. Lot, you should have known better.

Lot, you'll have to reap some of the consequences. Lot, but he doesn't. He arms his house, he goes down, liberates Lot from the captives.

And I think it's very interesting now to notice when Lot comes back. In chapter 14, we read, having delivered Lot from his captivity among the kings. Chapter 14 and verse 17, we read, And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, that's Abram, after his return from the slaughter of Chidolammer and of the kings that were with him in the valley of Sheba, which is the king's dale.

And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine. And he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

And blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hands. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth. That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet. And that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich.

Oh, I love that. Here's a principle that's working in the authority of Abram's life. He's not only attuned to God.

God has given. He's been willing to give away. He's been willing to go down and bring lot out of his captivity.

Once again, Abram could have taken his right. The king is saying, Look, take, take this spoil. Take this spoil.

Did he have the right to? Well, it depends on which right you're talking about. If his mind reasoned, if his mind reasoned, he could have said, Yes, I have my liberty to take the plunder from battle. What is mine? The king has offered it.

And all the natural reasoning at this point, once again, could have said, But he refuses. I will not take. Why? There's another governing principle that's higher.

And it is simply that he has aligned himself so in oneness with God, that God will be his provision. And not only his provision, but his riches. And all that he has.

It's the same thing that we notice in the Lord himself, the Lord Jesus. Here he is, the operating principle of his life, because he's under the authority of the Father. The governing thing in his life is, I will do nothing of myself or out of myself, independent of the Father.

I will do nothing for myself. It's a very subtle point in which God's children face this testing. Are we really, are we really knowing the full invasion of all of this part of the spirit over every area of our life? I know men who never could hold a job before they got saved.

I mean, very long. They were just irresponsible. Didn't amount to much.

Suddenly, the Lord begins to develop some stability and some character, some qualities of himself within their life. And not only with that, but he begins to give them some insight and some wisdom. And it's all at that point, the snare of using what has been given for myself.

Some of the wisdom by which I can develop a big business. I can develop this. I, but I love this.

It has to be, if the authority of God's working is going to be fully invading, this sort of helpless dependence in which Abraham stands and says, I will not take, unless somebody is able to say, I've gone out and in battle, I have won. I'm getting something for myself. You see, then the Lord Jesus, all the way through, there he stood.

Tempted by the enemy in the wilderness. Turned the stones into bread. He had been fasting 40 days.

The crucial hour of hunger. Turned the stones into bread. No.

He wouldn't do anything. He could have. Out of independent power of the Father.

The kingdoms were offered. But he was held by a higher power within. Instead of living in what could have been right, he says, no.

It must come from him. This is the principle, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abraham rich. I have done something for myself.

Now I thrill with this next verse, because just as surely as the Lord may begin to make this operative in our own life, at least if we get a hold of the doctrine of it, or the knowledge of it, and it becomes a principle that we hold very strongly, we try to impose it on others. Either our children in our home, or our friends, or those in the church. We're going to somehow bring them under the dominion, at least of the teaching, or the knowledge of the thing.

When Abraham went to deliver Lot, there were some brothers who went with him. Their names were Aner, Eskel, and Mamre. They were confederates.

You can read it in the fourteenth chapter. They went with him. Now they're all coming back.

They meet the king, who says, I'll just take the persons. You take the goods. And I love this principle.

I think we need to get a hold of it in verse twenty-four. Abram says, I will not take, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eskel, and Mamre, let them take their portion, their right.

Let them take their right. Do they have the right? Oh, they've won it in battle. Let them take their right.

You cannot impose. We were talking about consecration the other day. You cannot impose this quality or this level upon your children.

This is why in your home you're having so much difficulty. If you have set your faith to live by a spiritual flow of resource in the Lord, that's fine. But you cannot impose that consecration on others.

It's not the Lord's way. They have some rights. Aner, Eskel, Mamre, let them take theirs.

I am concerned that we recognize a moral foundation upon which the spiritual can be built. There's an awful tendency these days for individuals to get hold of a spiritual quality or concept and ignore the moral upon which it rests. There are some things in our dealing with our children that are just right, and we deal with them on a totally moral basis.

And if we're not dealing with them on that, their mind, natural as it may be, looks back and says, but Dad, that isn't right. That isn't right. There's the moral base.

But up above here in the spiritual sense, only when God brings them under His own spiritual authority and has the right to invade and bring them into this place where they begin to give up some of their rights, so-called, only in that way can the Lord bring them under His authority. This is true in a church fellowship. The Lord's people will see in a little bit.

I take us to this as a principle now. There are those things that are livingly real and operative that move in our life, but they cannot be imposed upon others. And it's when the imposition comes, however real it may be to us, that we run into great conflict.

God will do it in their life in His own way. Well, let's take another conflict. We've been talking about overcomers.

Turn to the book of Judges with me for a moment. Let us consider in chapter 7 another separating that took place. I don't want to be misunderstood in this, but it is inevitable.

There is no way of getting around it. There are two kingdoms that are in conflict. And just as surely as I move in alignment with this, I am sent to invade every stronghold in my life.

Who got quite an unveiling one day. The Midianites had been creating great conflict with the children of Israel. There was a desperate hour in which they were always just about harvest time, coming in and taking the fruit of the harvest.

They'd let the children of Israel do all the labor, but they knew the right hour to come in and take the harvest. This thing had been going on through the history again and again. And God raises up various judges who stand with Him in spirit against this.

And we know the story in chapter 7 of the book of Judges, where Gideon, a man who is called of God in this particular instance, to fulfill something of the purpose of the Lord. Well, let's just read a little bit. Chapter 7. Then Jerubal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early and pitched beside the well of Herod, so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them by the hill of Marah in the valley.

The Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel bonds themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And they returned of the people twenty-two, twenty and two thousand,

and there remained ten thousand.

Here's the dread conflict. They should be fully under the control of God's divinity. These things that have all through the years been latching on in their lives.

And just the moment Gideon gives them permission, all that represents these strongholds and areas in their lives, they take the easy way and they head for home. And yet in verse four it says, And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many, ten thousand are yet too many. Bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.

And it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee. And of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. Isn't that interesting? Take them down.

We're going to have a further ten. And I say at this moment now to the ten thousand, careful, your spirit is showing. Your whole life is showing.

It's going to show. There are things about you that show. Careful, ten thousand.

There are things that are going to show. So he brought down the people, ten thousand of them, unto the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that laugheth of the water with his tongue as a dog laugheth, Him shalt thou set by himself.

Likewise, every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that laughed, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men. But all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink.

You say, what a silly way to separate. But their drinking was very revealing. There was something showing that Gideon was able to discern.

What was it? Well, I see nine thousand, seven hundred of them head down for the water. And they take a drink. Get down on both knees, get their mouth right down and fill their belly.

Oh, what a refresher to all they love. Fill their belly. Who were they concerned about? What at the moment was the overshadowing thing? What really revealed them? Well, we all know the star.

It's so simple. But there were three hundred who likewise showed something about themselves. Their discipline showed.

Their real warlike instruction and quality of a soldier showed. And here they were. Apparently they'd been doing it so long, that even though there might not have been the immediate need, at least there was something about their whole manner of life.

That which had happened as an act within them, had become a hard attitude that was a way of life in their being. How did they drink? There are things about us in our way of life that reveal us. They show us up.

We are giveaways every time we open our mouth. Every time we dress. Every time we make a little walk.

Through the course of the day, our way of life is showing. Inwardly, we may say, Lord, I love you. I belong to you.

I am yours. We say it with our lips. Do we really know all that is involved in a life from the inner spirit that is under authority, that is touched every area of our life, including the outreach into the outer area.

Oh, you pray for this young man in the areas in which you see things that I'm blinded. I can only cry before the Lord and say, Lord, where there's darkness in my spirit, you penetrate. Where there may be strongholds, you penetrate.

Where there may be things out here that are still revealing, you have permission. There's so much in these days, as has been referred to already this morning and other times. There's so much in these days that reveals the anarchistic spirit, the lawless spirit.

It's a revolt against the standards, the customs, the things that have been accepted. Maybe there are some need for changes in. And yet, down through the years, those who have known the discipline of the spirit, the government of the spirit within, God has a way of bringing us into conformity to the loveliness of His Son.

Gideon looks at these, every one that lasts. And there was a dividing. There was a dividing.

It's interesting how the 300 of them qualified. We want to be overcomers. We set our faith.

I hope when it comes down to the water pool, we won't get separated. Because we reveal that the core, the way of our lives, the lust of our flesh, all of this, the opportunity to do what I want to do. The enemy may have been a long ways away, and yet there was a revealing of the soldier quality within.

I've thought so many times, it's quite a revelation. We say we're all busy, and we are. We're pressured on every hand.

But what do you do when you can really do what you want to do? What do you do when you have a little time? What do you do when you really have time to do what you want to do? All the choices that we make reveal us, but they also make us. And 300, you remember, are those who qualified. In spirit, they were those whom Gideon takes out.

And I had never noticed this before. They went out and began to chase after the Midianites. And you come in chapter 7, and verse 24, to something very interesting.

It says, And then Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethabara and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together and took the waters unto Bethabara and Jordan. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeb.

And they slew Oreb upon the rock, Oreb and Zeb. And they slew at the winepress of Zeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeb to Gideon on the other side, Jordan. You'd think these Ephraimites now, who had suddenly just come in to help the 300, would have been pleased and satisfied, and yet something strange happens in the next verses.

Chapter 8, And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou callest us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply. They hadn't been a part of the initial 33,000. They weren't those who went home.

I don't know how to explain. They didn't seem to be washed out, to be cast aside from the 2,000 to the 300. But here they are, somehow getting in on the tail end, and going to battle, and they catch two kings.

Now they're chiding. They're dealing rather harshly with Gideon. Why did you deal with us? Why didn't you invite us into battle? And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? A better translation of that reads, Are not the leftover grapes of Ephraim better than the entire crop of Abiezer? Abiezer represents the whole posterity, or the whole ancestry of Gideon.

Look, what are you complaining about? Didn't you get two kings of Midian? The choice, the gleaning, or that which is less, isn't that better than all that we have conquered? The whole of Gideon's 300? All that we have conquered? And I was struck with my middle margin here, which said, and this is quite interesting, Here begins the deep-rooted division in Israel, which culminated in the division of Solomon's kingdom under Jeroboam and Rehoboam. And it was just like a sword that struck me. The enemy was planting something a long, long ways ahead, waiting for a time when it could come to a harvest.

What was it? What was it? Jealousy? Why didn't you call us? I don't know what Gideon's group represents, but I'm inclined to believe that Gideon and those who had immediately been around him who were oppressed in spirit for the thing that God wanted, the others were out. And even those who got shifted off, the 32, the 22, the two, down to 300, they were shifted off. And all that I know is the Lord spoke to my own heart and said, careful now, you might be too preoccupied.

You might be too busy to hear, to be in the place, the sensitivity to that which the Spirit is doing, and look on too late and say, why didn't you call me? I'd have been glad to help. Only later on to join camp with those who were out doing the job. Well, there's a dreadful conflict that's raging, and it's a conflict between kings, and another king who aligns.

You see it all the way through the Old Testament. Let's take one look in on 1 Corinthians and see the battle as it's raging. Same sort of a thing we're wanting to see.

Notice chapter 8, 1 Corinthians. The church has a problem. Right in the midst of the church, there are those believers, maybe younger, more immature, haven't been there too long.

We don't know. But the problem that arises is that they are looking on some of the others in the church, and they're saying, what? Why do you eat meat that has been offered in sacrifice unto idols? Oh, our conscience won't allow us to do this. Then there are those who've probably been in the church much longer.

I was about to say more mature, but I don't think I better. At least they had more knowledge. And among these, there is this answer to them.

Oh, no problem with our eating this meat. We want to eat this. We're at perfect liberty.

We have our understanding that an idol is nothing in the world. There's no other God but one. And so you have a great conflict arising right here.

Same sort of a principle as we were dealing with a little earlier. Those who were saying, we know that an idol is nothing in the world. We have some knowledge.

Now let's see how Paul deals with it. Chapter 8. Now is touching things offered unto idols. We know that we all have knowledge.

Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifyeth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things which are offered in sacrifice unto idols. We know that an idol is nothing in the world. That there is none other God but one.

But though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, as there be gods many and lords many, but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him. Howbeit there is not in every man that fuller knowledge. For some with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol, and their conscience being weak, is defiled.

But need commendeth us not to God. For neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse. But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

If any man see thee which has knowledge, sit and meet in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols? And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died. I hope we get just this principle. Here is the Apostle Paul standing with the Lord in the spirit that's pleading with some brothers.

Some out here who say we cannot, we could not eat this meat offered. Others who are saying we know our liberty. We know that there is our nothing.

We know our rights. We will eat this meat if we want to. Paul comes along to say those who are warring here with a stronghold of the mind, the knowledge.

He says all that the dominion, the control of the spirit of God. Not living, just in the reasoning that which is right to you. He carries this through in the ninth chapter.

Same principle as he explains his own spirit, he says I have the right but I do not use my right. I'm a man under government, under the authority of the spirit, under control. What are we wanting to say in just this brief word? I have a burden that somehow the Lord may break through and make operative in us very real sense that all the conflict and the struggle that rages comes because we seek our own way, our own rights, our own liberty and we have not known what it is to be under the authority of the Lord that invades every area.

Lord, we do not want to just mouth the words. We long in a fuller way than we've ever known what it means to transcend out of the kingdom where darkness, all that it means reigns to fully know thy invading working authority over every area of our life. We cry out to thee this morning.

We would be like Abram, not doing anything out of ourselves or for ourselves or with ourselves that is contrary to thy authority over us. We could be as kings, rich, in Crete because of learning some of the laws of life and enjoying some of it. But we will not make ourselves.

We will not do anything lest someone can look on and say he's done it for himself. And dear Lord, even as it was with Gideon's band, who were thrashed out, we pray that thou will work within us the inner discipline. If there are things that show about our undisciplined life, things in the outward that reveal us, put thy finger upon it until we know thy full authority over us.

And it will be more than just an inward act. It will become a way of life with us under thy government. When we get into our church fellowship, where we come into collision with the strongholds of the mind, we want our rights and our liberties.

We want to take the things that have even been given to us that are good and use them just for ourselves. We pray there will be an overriding law that will govern us. We'll always be, first of all, under thy government.

How does it affect thee, dear Lord? How does it really affect others? You say to us what you want to say. We would know thee this morning in thy full dependence upon the Father, thy gloriously being under authority to him even as it is expressed through him make it to be operated within us. We do not unwittingly come under the dominion or the control of other forces that would capture us for their ends.

So fully, totally, under thy dominion. We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus with thanksgiving. Amen.

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