

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 30)

THE AUTHORITY PRINCIPLE (CONTINUED). “When you submit yourself to a visible authority you are in perfect harmony with the Head, since the fact that someone has the supply (that) constitutes his authority” – Watchman Nee. Nee distinguishes between direct authority and delegated authority. It is important to understand the difference between these two different kinds of authority. “The ministry God appoints requires authority; no one should reject it. Most people want to have God’s direct authority, but God’s more frequent way is to set up indirect or delegated authorities for us to obey. Through them we are to receive spiritual supply.” Direct authority comes with a disciples’ gifts and calling. The authority is as irreversible as the gifts and callings themselves. “The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). The authority to Be God’s minister is the result of a call that comes directly from God. Delegated authority is the spiritual covering required by God for those who serve Him in the church. Paul refers to direct authority and indirect (delegated) authority in writing the church at Ephesus. “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift... And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:7, 11). Equippers are given both directed authority and delegated authority from Christ “for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). No disciple is exempt. Every disciple who receives direct authority for service is required to submit to some delegated authority. There are no exceptions. Even the apostles, who were given direct authority by Christ (Matthew 28:18-20), were placed under the delegated authority of James, the lead pastor of the church in Jerusalem. And James, in turn, placed himself under the authority of the apostles and elders in the church at Jerusalem.