



## Authority

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On Thursday, I arrived at work and reached up to my left lapel for my ID, but it wasn't there. In the past few years, our employee ID's have become increasingly important. First, they are our key to the building. They are our proof that we belong in the different schools we visit. Our ID's put kids somewhat at ease as "strangers" in their classrooms and around their school building. On Thursday, the students were "extra," as my children say. They were extra loud, extra rowdy, pushing and shoving as the morning bell rang. It was to the point I thought I should assist the teachers who were trying to usher them to class. Without my ID, I felt awkward. My hand motions, loud voice, nor my stern face seemed to be effective. I thought it was because I wasn't wearing my ID to identify myself as an adult the students should listen to and respect. The teachers and I managed to get the students into the classrooms without a major fight, but we did have some skirmishes to settle. Before assuming we had finished with the herd I decided to check the restroom. There in the mirror, I saw it. My ID. It was hanging on my right lapel, not my usual left lapel. At that moment, I realized that my ID badge does not command authority.

In the 10th chapter of Luke, Jesus sent 72 disciples out, two-by-two, to the cities and towns to prepare them for His arrival. He told them, "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." (v. 2) He says the disciples will be "like lambs among wolves." (v. 3) He tells them "Do not take a purse or bag or sandals..." (v. 4) He tells them that when they enter a house, first say "peace to this house." If there is someone in the house who promotes peace, the peace would rest on that person. If not, the peace would return to the disciple. He advises that they stay in one home eating and drinking, instead of going house to house. (v. 5-7)

Jesus added, "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me." (v.16) The 72 returned joyfully to Jesus saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." (v. 1) Jesus encourages them once more, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (v. 19-20)

This story in the Bible is not an exact parallel to the task at the hands of our public school teachers and administrators, but we can find relevant encouragement in these verses. Unfortunately, teachers are not paired. It would be nice, but often there are 25-30 students in class with one teacher. Teachers can certainly feel like a lamb among wolves. Jesus tells His disciples to stay in one home eating and drinking. (v. 5-7) When we spend time together we develop relationships. Teachers begin on the first day, getting to know their students. Through class discussions and interactions, positive relationships should develop. Although, there is separation of church and state, SC Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman says, "You may not be able to talk about Jesus in our public schools, but you can come in and act like Him."

It is intentional, to me, that in this passage, Jesus speaks of developing relationships before He speaks of authority. As a Christian, our authority is God. Someone who doesn't know God, or doesn't know His Word, isn't a disciple of Jesus and therefore doesn't possess Godly authority. Without a relationship with God, there is no authority. There are most certainly some demonic spirits walking the hallways and sitting in the desks at a school. A person of faith, a teacher of faith, an administrator of faith should never feel as if they have no authority over the evil spirits in the building. Jesus gave His disciples authority to, "overcome all the power of the enemy." (v. 19) Jesus advises His disciples to go without a purse or bag or sandals. I suppose this is so the people wouldn't wonder about hidden motives, and it would also help the disciples to look more like the people, common not authoritative. Their authority would be articulated in the conversations they had and in the relationships they develop. The same is true regarding the authority of a teacher or administrator. Authority is not dependent on whether he or she is carrying a bag, a clipboard, a stack of referrals, nor whether they are wearing an ID badge.

There are all sorts of things that can make us feel less-than, our stature, our gender, our level of education, our appearance, or whether or not we have our ID. We should never let those outside things overshadow God in our heart. With God in our heart, we are never less-than. We are children of the most high God, and we have Godly authority over the enemy. We may not be a part of the original 72, but the charge given to the 72 applies to us today. We are to go into the world to make disciples. Our peaceful nature, our kind words, and the loving relationships we develop serve to show God's attributes, everyday. It is these attributes that point others to Christ. When we demonstrate these attributes we have His authority.

I wish everyone Christmas Cheer!  
Thank you for reading!

Kim