

Week of February 12-18

This week's devotional-writer is Mark Kiburz. Mark serves on our Board of Elders and is currently pursuing his ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God.

WALKING WITH AUTHORITY

Scripture Reading: Read Mark chapter 1

People with natural authority can walk into a room and direct people to the tasks at hand. One of the best examples in our society is a drill sergeant. When men and women enter the military, they are met with nice, polite, recruiters who encourage them to sign on the dotted line. Once they do, the new recruits are shipped off to boot camp where they meet their drill sergeant and very quickly realize who is in authority and the necessity of submitting to it! Many recruits complete basic training understanding the hierarchy of authority for the first time.

In today's chapter reading, we see Jesus operating with divine authority. The gospel opens with Mark showing how God set the stage for Jesus' ministry. We see God's prophetic message in Isaiah about a forerunner to the Messiah being fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist. His message of repentance prepares the people for the coming of Jesus. As Jesus arrives on the scene to be baptized, the Father affirms his Son declaring, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Following his temptation in the wilderness, Jesus launches his ministry in the power of the Spirit and with divine authority. He calls four fisherman to follow him and they immediately leave everything to follow him. He teaches in the synagogue at Capernaum and the people are amazed at his authoritative teaching. He casts a demon out of a man at the service and, once again, the people are amazed at Jesus' authority. "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." Later in the chapter, he exercises authority over disease and heals a leper. Again and again throughout the book of Mark, Jesus displays his authority and encourages people to submit to it.

Drill sergeants are there to teach people how to survive in combat. The Bible teaches that we too are engaged in combat. It is a battle against the world, our sin nature and the devil. All have destructive forces which can destroy us if we don't learn to submit to and walk in God's authority. Soldiers learn quickly that drill sergeants are there for their good and to submit to their authority. How much more should we submit to the Lord's authority in our lives.

The disciples left all to follow Jesus in submission to his authority. A little test of how willing we are to submit...Would we be willing to leave all to follow him?

Action Step: Reflect on the authority of Christ in your life and write down areas where you have and have not yet submitted to Christ's authority.

Prayer Focus: Ask for God's authority in your life to overcome areas not yet submitted.

Take-a-way: Walking in submission to Jesus' authority will allow you to walk with Jesus' authority.