INTRODUCTION

A. To simplify our understanding of relational authority, I reduced its elements to three “R’s.”

B. How do you RECEIVE those in your life? How do those in your life receive you? Lasting authority is built on relationship and finds its access into the hearts of others through the way one is received by others.

C. Where have you taken RESPONSIBILITY in your life? Who has taken responsibility for you? Authority is sustained by active servanthood and ownership (of process, of messes, of victories). Authority is not about exercising power, but serving others’ needs. Wherever we take responsibility and ownership, we grow in authority.

D. Where do you have REST in your life? Peace (rest) is the evidence of victory. I only have authority to release what I have victory over. If you have authority in an area, you will have peace there; in places where you are aware of peace, you will not have to struggle to GAIN authority, you simply REST in the authority you already have.

E. Following the three “R’s” on relational authority, we take a look at the three different types of authority: “Relational Authority,” “Professional Authority,” and “Positional Authority.”

I. RECEIVE

A. “Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me...” (Matthew 10:40-42).

   1. Love is a choice. From the beginning, God put two trees in the garden because He longed to be chosen. True authority must be given. Through love, we give someone the authority to speak into and know the depths of our heart.

   2. As I pursue walking in love, the number one question I ask in my relationships is, “How does this person receive me?” I meet them there. In pursuit of discipleship, I process the following:

      a. To force insight or advice down another person’s throat when they do not fully receive me that way is NOT loving them well.

      b. I wait for pauses in the conversation where the other person’s heart is open toward me. This changes from day to day, season to season as the relationship changes.

      c. Ask the question, “May I share some thoughts?” When a person gives you permission to speak into them, they prepare their heart to receive. Asking this question gives control back to the other person.

B. “...The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward...” (Matthew 10:40-42).
1. HOW we receive others determines WHAT we receive from them.
2. Receive a prophet because he is a prophet and receive of his prophetic anointing. Receive a friend as a friend and receive a friend’s reward.
3. Likewise, a person can be anointed as a prophet and not be received as a prophet but as a friend. This person has not prophetic authority with someone who does not receive them as a prophet. Jesus never took authority, He responded to the authority given to Him; in fact, He grew in favor/access/authority with men (Luke 2:52).

II. RESPONSIBILITY

A. And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).
   1. Large anointing = walked on by everyone (servant of all)
   2. “…the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve…” Sometimes we wait for established leadership to notice us when established leadership is waiting for us to take responsibility.
   3. “…to give His life as a ransom for many.” Jesus took responsibility for sins which were not His own. He threw Himself under the bus though He never deserved it.
B. “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:10,11).
   1. Responsibility is not about “lording over” or “exercising authority,” but about throwing oneself under the bus even when you are not at fault. This is what it looks like to serve the breakthrough in others; people will spit on, blame, and curse you and you say, “I’m sorry you’re hurting. Tell me about what you’re feeling.”
   2. Love is proactive. God SENT His Son to love those who had no love toward Him. This is what love looks like: opening our heart toward those who have no love toward us; this is what it looks like to gain relational authority.

III. REST

A. “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation” (Matthew 12:43-45).
   1. Peace (rest) is the evidence of victory. The spirit in this parable “passes through the waterless places seeking rest” because it is searching for territory where the demonic has authority and dominion.
   2. When it finds “the house (heart) empty, swept, and put in order,” it goes out and brings its friends in because the house (heart) is cleaned out but has not been established under another authority.
   3. This is what my heart does in relationships: I search the heart of others seeking a place of rest (a part of their heart that is surrendered to the Lord’s authority AND open to Christ in me speaking into them.
   4. As a side note, this is why we NEVER cast out demons in someone who is not ready to surrender to Christ; if we do and their heart is not filled with Christ’s dominion, “the last state of that person is worse than the first.”
B. “And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you” (Matthew 10:11-13).

1. Worthy = surrendered to the Lord’s leadership
2. I cannot bring peace (the Lord’s dominion) to a place under someone else’s authority that is not ready to surrender to His leadership.

The 3 Types of Authority
(Relational Authority. Professional Authority. Positional Authority.)

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

INTRODUCTION

A. There are 3 types of authority. The authority type we value the most dictates the kind of relationships we will have. Having open hearted relationships with people who feel powerful is only possible with a strong emphasis on relational authority.

B. RELATIONAL AUTHORITY. Relational authority is built on servanthood; it is the strongest and most long lasting form of authority of the three types. We gain authority to speak into the lives of those around us when we serve them. Relational authority must be given, never taken, and changes from season to season based on the work of the Lord in the hearts of those involved.

C. PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY. Professional authority is built on expertise. Under this type, we are given authority because we have understanding and abilities that others do not. Without also carrying relational authority, professional authority is only given until someone with greater expertise comes along. This is the second weakest form of authority.

D. POSITIONAL AUTHORITY. Positional authority is built on responsibility. Here, we are given authority because we have taken responsibility to fulfill a mission (which often carries a functional title; e.g. friend, father, principal). Positional authority without relational authority is tyranny. A boss who often uses the phrase, “Because I’m the boss and you’re not,” will lose authority in the hearts of those he leads very quickly, though outwardly he will appear to be influential. A person with strong positional authority very rarely uses their position to dictate procedure; they don’t have to, they employ the relational authority people have GIVEN to them. Without also carrying relational authority, this is the weakest form of authority.

I. RELATIONAL AUTHORITY

A. But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

1. Relational Authority = Submitted Heart
2. David operated in “positional authority” and “professional authority” at a high level, but he always relied on His relationship with the Lord as His standard for righteousness, and his relationships with his mighty men for the expression of His kingship.

B. Relational authority is built on vulnerability, authenticity, trust, and responsibility. In a culture of relational authority we recognize our need for each other and choose to embrace the phrase, “I don’t know, but I know someone who does.”

II. POSITIONAL AUTHORITY

A. Let us turn to positional authority next and return later to professional authority. We look to King Saul for an example of a man who put his faith in his position rather than the Lord, “And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.....And Samuel said, “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel.....Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice...’ Then he [Saul] said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.” (1 Samuel 9:2, 15:24-31).

B. The story of King Saul is a sad tale of a man who outwardly had everything going on, including charisma, physical stature, and looks, yet inwardly he was “little in his own eyes.” This story is the perfect picture of a man who looks the part but was never rooted and grounded in love and in his relationship with the Lord. Because he was insecure and sought to maintain his position and positional authority, he easily followed the whims of the people claiming to Samuel that he, “transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.” His actions after his sin are most revealing of all; rather than being filled with repentance and sorrow at disobedience to the Lord, he seeks to save face and maintain his positional authority by pleading with Samuel to honor him before the elders and the people.

1. He looked the part of a leader. Man always looks at the outward appearance (charisma, golden tongue, good looks), thinking that this is where destiny and significance is measured.
2. Like many men who place value in positions and titles, Saul was “little in his own eyes.” We will be slaves to men and their opinions if we do not know our worth. In ALL things, we either seek to establish our own righteousness or we seek to establish His; it is impossible to pursue His agenda until we know our value and His assessment of us.
3. With strong and established relationships, positions of authority do not destroy us, but enhance our ability to serve. We are not swayed by men’s disagreements with our decisions because we are there to serve them even if they don’t see it.

III. PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY

A. “And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, ‘From what city are you?’ And when he said, ‘Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel,’ Absalom would say to him, ‘See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you.’ Then Absalom would say, ‘Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice.’ And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.
Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (2 Samuel 15:2-6).

B. The story of Absalom is the perfect example of a young man who longs to follow in his father’s footsteps, but believes he must prove himself to find his worth. He heard stories of his father spending time in the wilderness raising up an army to overthrow the establishment with a clearly righteous cause. He looks at his own abilities and appearance and dismisses his father as yesterday’s news. He knows he can and should be king because he would do a far better job. Therefore, it is his duty to lead the people away from King David and herald a new kingdom under his obviously more qualified authority.

Unfortunately, Absalom sets himself up for failure from the start. Authority never subverts established leadership. Even Jesus told those he healed to present themselves to the Elders. In Matthew 23 He says, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.” He honored the established authority as one who came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. Absalom mistakenly assumes that authority is built on expertise and sees the movements of his father through this lens. He assumes that David’s greater ability must be why he “rebelled” against King Saul. He misunderstood David’s actions. David was driven into the wilderness and forced to remain there all while he pleaded and attempted reconciliation with Saul determining in his heart that he would not touch the Lord’s anointed.

C. The reality of professional authority is that it is useful, but fleeting.
   1. We honor and empower someone to operate in authority in some situations if they have more expertise than the current expert. But when someone comes along who has more expertise, the first person’s authority is reduced.
   2. In a culture where expertise is valued most highly, everyone must find a way to minimize and tear down those around them so that they can seem more anointed. You are only as valuable as your last anointed contribution.
   3. A professional culture that lacks relational authority is the essence of “a dog eat dog world.” Collaboration is discouraged, mistrust is commonplace, and you must constantly look out for yourself lest someone eclipse you.

CONCLUSION

God is a relational God. At the end of it all, relationship with Him and with others in our life will be among our most valued possessions. Our expertise and positions are fleeting and will not carry over into His establishment of His kingdom; they will either be replaced with new positions of authority or removed all together. Relational authority built on servanthood, responsibility, and vulnerability with those in our life is to be our gold standard throughout this life.