

Are Older Children in Charge of Younger Children, Part 1 | birth order and authority

I. The Nature of Maturity

- I Corinthians 3:1-3, 13:11, 4:20; Proverbs 16:31; Job 12:12; Lamentations 19:31; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 5:14; James 1:2-4; Matthew 5:48
- The older the person is, the more mature they should be. They should have more knowledge and understanding, they should have more experience using that knowledge and understanding, and therefore, older people *should* be able to make better decisions than younger people.
- But though it could be easily taught and expected that the older you are the more mature you *should* be, does the number of years traveled around the sun always equate to increased maturity? And the answer is indubitably, “No.”
- If age does not equate to maturity, what is the mark of maturity? Maturity is simply a measurement. Whereas age is the measurement of the length of your life, maturity is the measure of how *wise* a person is. If someone learns something, understands it, and puts it to Christ-honoring use in his life, he is mature. Jesus Christ is the standard of all maturity.
- Just because a child has been taught and reprov'd more often than the others doesn't mean they're mature. However, the degree to which the child has *participated* in the correction and training stages of parenting are indicators of true wisdom and maturity.

II. The Nature of Authority

- **The World's Understanding of Authority**
 - An authority as a person in command, and to command is to exercise a dominating influence over someone or something.
 - In our world, authority is viewed as an inherent right tied to any number of factors. As we've already observed, many people believe they have the right to lead and/or command others by virtue of their age. However, we know that finances, popularity, titles, physical strength, ownership, and the like are all used to exercise authority over others.
 - Each of these applications all tie back to *power*. Because of my size, age, weight, influence, title, bank account, etc . . . I am more *powerful* than you. And because I'm more powerful than you, you have no choice but to do what I say lest there be negative consequences in exchange for your resistance.
 - When you really step back and look at the world's understanding of authority, you see that it all boils down to “Might Makes Right.” Whoever can exercise the most power gets the most power.
 - This is why wars are fought, riots ensue, yelling matches start, murder occurs, and the innumerable other examples of a sinful exercise of strength.
- **God's Understanding of Authority**
 - The true nature of authority actually does have a lot to do with power, but it's far more than that. As it happens, the One true authority of the entire cosmos does happen to be the most powerful Being in existence. But He's not in charge simply because He's strong and can bend everyone to His will — whether He's right or wrong; He's in charge because He's holy.
 - God is set apart from all that is wrong, wicked, false, destructive, and fatal. He's in charge because He's perfectly equipped to always be right. And isn't that the person you want in charge — the person who's always going to make the right decision for every other person?
 - It just so happens that God is also the most powerful being in the cosmos. But His power doesn't put Him in charge; His perfection does.

III. The Nature of Inherent Authority

- Something that is “inherent” is there by nature or habit.
- The biblical concept of Inherent Authority is quite simple. By God’s design, there are people who He deems should be in charge simply because of the nature of the position in which they serve. All throughout the Bible we see clear examples that groups of individuals need a hierarchal authority structure at the tip of which is a singular man.

IV. The Consequences of Inherent Authority

- When you teach your kids that birth order or size or financial status or any other tangible reality imbues Inherent Authority in someone, you’re not only lying to your kids, you’re setting them up for lots of issues.
 - You’re setting the older children up with very dangerous concepts of leadership.
 - You’re setting your kids up to obey bad leaders.
 - Inherent Authority — more often than not — makes it about me versus you, instead of us following God.
- Kids don’t have Inherent Authority over their siblings, but even if they did, Inherent Authority isn’t enough. There is no Inherent Authority on earth that has to be obeyed all of the time under every circumstance.
- Peter told the religious leaders of the day, “We obey God *rather than man*.” This means that when someone on whom God has laid Inherent Authority by virtue of their position expects the people he’s leading to sin, no one has to obey him because he’s not submitting God.

V. The Nature of Inherited Authority

- Inherited Authority is anything but inherent. There is potentially *nothing* in the individual themselves — no power of any kind — that would qualify them (in an earthly sense) to lead. The authority is merely passed on to them — for a time — and is an extension of another, higher authority.
- In order to lead with Inherited Authority, the child must have knowledge of the nature of Inherited Authority, how their parents exercise their authority, as well as a ton of humility to make it about the correct authority and not about the child’s authority.
- The *best* kind of human authority is Inherited Authority, and it’s our submission to our Inherited Authority that gives our Inherent Authority any power.

VI. The Consequences of Inherited Authority

- Any authority they may be given is not inherent in them. It has nothing to do with their power over their siblings.
- When the parent gives Inherited Authority, it has everything to do with which child will most maturely exercise that authority the best. And this means . . .
- The one in charge is not leading for themselves, they’re leading as the parent would, which should be exactly how God would. In fact, hopefully . . .
- The child with the Inherited Authority can skip the parent’s authority all together and simply lead in the Inherited Authority of God.
- The siblings who are *not* in charge need to recognize that the one in charge is not more special than they or more powerful than they, they’re simply more trustworthy to submit to God’s expectations for their lives and lead others to do the same.
- The one who inherits the authority has the opportunity to mature in the humility necessary to submit their authority to God’s.