



AUTHORITY  
IN  
PRAYER



PRAYING WITH  
POWER AND PURPOSE



DUTCH SHEETS



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# 1

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## The Question

A few years ago I was given a double-billed cap with one bill pointing to the left, the other to the right. The words on the front of the cap, “I’m the leader, which way did they go?” are intended to prompt the obvious question, “Who, really, is in charge?” I loved the humor in spite of the not-so-subtle and obviously asinine aspersion it cast on my leadership skills.

That question in one form or another is asked throughout the world millions of times a day. I recall the day our dog, Mercedes—she’s a Boxer, so ugly she needed a classy name—tried to assert her dominance over me. She was young, and the two of us were in a season of trying to establish who would rule our house. I was lying on the floor watching a football game, and she, very ceremoniously I might add, sauntered over and sat right on my chest. She then stuck her chest out, head up, and looked disdainfully at me out of the corner of her eye, glancing proudly at everyone else in the room. Easy to

interpret: *I'm in charge here; you will submit to me.* (Maybe it was because I was wearing the cap.)

Mercedes is quite large, and at that time she was already full grown. Having her plop down on me was uncomfortable, not to mention humiliating. The guffaws of my wife and daughters didn't help matters much. Of course, girls do stick together. I took authority over the situation immediately, commanding Mercedes to get off of me. As I'm sure you'd assume, she obeyed her master—and within two or three minutes promptly removed herself! I won that power struggle and have been in charge ever since.

But it is not only people and their dogs that struggle with the “Who's in charge?” question. It is at the heart of all conflict on earth. The question was born in the heart of Lucifer when he tried to sit on God's chest in heaven, and it spread to earth when he passed the question on to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan spewed his poisonous deception, and our foreparents also tried to sit on God's chest. We humans have been wearing a double-billed cap ever since, thinking we're in charge, all the while stumbling around, wondering which way to go. It seems that at every level and in every arena of life, power struggles occur:

- Men and women wrestle over control of relationships.
- Parents and children struggle with who will rule the house.
- Siblings quarrel over toys, clothing, TV, and a host of other issues.
- Businesses connive to corner various consumer and investment markets.
- Sports teams vie for first place.

- Democrats and Republicans strive for the domination of America.
- Leaders of nations war over control of lands, people, and wealth.

Everybody wants to be in charge!

Who is ruling your world? I'm not referring to the big one, as in planet earth. At least not yet. I'm talking about the world you live in every day, your *personal* world. I'm speaking of your home, family, job, health, dog—well, okay, maybe not your dog. God doesn't intend that *any* outside force dominate you. He has given you jurisdiction over your life.

God began dealing with me a few years back about governing my world. And He wasn't referring to Washington, D.C. He was talking about the gray matter in my cranium—my thoughts as well as my house, my finances, my health, and so on. In ever-expanding circles He began to teach me about governing the world around me. God did actually want to use me to influence cities, states, and nations, and has since sent me to Washington dozens of times, to all fifty states on an amazing prayer assignment, and on numerous other prayer journeys.

I want to share with you what He has taught me. I'm certainly not implying that I have full understanding of this or any other aspect of truth. In fact, much of my learning has come through paradigm-stretching assignments and frustration-prompted questions. Desperation often births inspiration, like the day at the airport . . .

I was about to break out in hives I was so tense. It was during a prayer tour to all fifty states that Chuck Pierce and I conducted in 2003–2004.<sup>1</sup> I left my home early, as I frequently

did, to fly to another state where I would speak and lead large prayer gatherings that evening and the following morning. That day I wasn't flying my normal airline with which I had special "go to the short line, receive preferential treatment, and get your upgrade" status.

As I stood in the long "NO preferential treatment and NO upgrade" line of this other airline, things became more chaotic by the minute. I don't know if the employees were learning a new system, their computers were malfunctioning, or just what was happening. But everything was in total confusion. I wanted to pass out double-billed caps to all the workers and sit on somebody's chest!

I was already running a bit late, and after waiting twenty minutes with the line not moving, I was getting pretty uptight. My stomach was knotting up, and my anxiety level was rapidly increasing.

I wasn't the only one.

People started pushing their way to the front. Others were shouting from where they stood about not wanting to miss their flight, for the workers to hurry up, etc. And, believe it or not, the workers were beginning to become unnerved and belligerent also! I had never seen anything like it. One lady began to shout about not missing her plane and then began pushing others out of the way as she bullied her way toward the counter.

I remembered a story about my friend and Bible teacher John Dawson, who once had a frustrated and obnoxious lady behind him in an airport line. He decided to witness God's love to her by giving her his place in line. I prayed to receive the "John Dawson anointing" but it didn't work. By this time the "Dutch Sheets anointing" was too strong—she

wasn't getting my position! (I'm just as Christlike as John, it's just that God has given me a more intense personality.)

My next thought was to beat her up, but I could see the headlines: "Preacher on Way to Prayer Meeting Pummels Lady in Airport." Then I took a closer look and decided I couldn't have whipped her anyway. She was big and mean—looked like someone from the WWE! We all backed out of her way as she marched forward.

By this time I had decided I would miss my flight and Chuck would have to do the meeting alone. Then in great desperation but no real faith, I decided to pray. "Lord, do something to stop this chaos and get me on my flight," I whispered.

As clearly as I have ever heard Him, the Holy Spirit responded, "You know this is all about you, don't you?"

"I didn't do anything," I replied in surprise. "Don't blame me!"

"This is all about Satan trying to hinder your assignment," I heard.

Remembering 1 Thessalonians 2:18: "We wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us," I realized the possibility. *All this confusion and anxiety is about me and my assignment?* I thought. *No way.*

Yet I knew I was hearing the Spirit as He said, *Yes, it is.*

"Well, do something about it," I quietly whispered.

But He was trying to teach me something. *No, you do something about it. Move in the authority I have given you and command the demonic hindrances of your assignment to be ineffective. Declare that you have favor and will get to your meeting on time.*

I did as instructed and then heard, "Now, go over to your right, to the end of the counter, and wait." This ticket counter

was on the end of a row next to a wide thoroughfare. I stood at the end of the counter which, naturally, ticketing agents didn't even use.

Almost immediately, though, an agent walked over and said kindly, "Can I help you, sir?"

"Yes, I'm on flight number so and so." I handed her my driver's license, she checked my luggage, gave me a boarding pass, and I was off to my gate—where I was immediately upgraded to first class!

I was pretty pumped. "Whatever you're teaching me, I sure do want to learn it," I told the Lord. "This is nice."

God has given you jurisdiction over your world—under His authority, of course. He wants you, not sin, demonic powers, negative circumstances, or any other outside force to govern it. I realize this was an extraordinary experience, and I, like Paul, have been successfully hindered a few times. Even so, God *doesn't* want the devil or any of his agents ever to sit on our chests.

The question of who's in control is a governmental issue. We often think of government only in its civil sense, but *Webster's* defines *govern* as "to direct and control; to regulate by authority; to influence; to direct; to restrain; to steer or regulate the course of; to exercise authority; to maintain the superiority."<sup>22</sup> *To exercise authority is to govern.* Praying with authority, therefore, is "governmental intercession." So in essence, this is a book about government—not politics, but prayer! Politicians and government officials legislate through man-made laws and rulings. We legislate through spiritual laws, principles, and activities.

One of Scripture's primary themes is governmental authority. The primary biblical struggle is over the questions "Who

will rule humankind?” and “Who will rule the world?” We will see as we progress that the answer to the first determines the answer to the second—yes, in many ways the war is about you and me and who we listen to—we are going to help answer the question of who is in charge of the earth. In this earthly war over who is going to rule it, you and your double-billed cap are caught right in the middle!

God and the devil, opposing forces of good and evil, life and death, truth and deception, seek to govern the earth, beginning with you. The more you learn to govern your world the way God intends, the more His cause prospers. God and good will ultimately win, of course.

We’re promised this in Revelation 20:10: “The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” But God wants to enable each of us to win over evil, governing our personal world *in the now*,

every day, and in every circumstance. As we learn to do this, He then needs us to join Him in His overall governing of the earth, becoming active participants in His war against evil and His fight for life. What an exciting adventure life can be!

You were actually created with a nature to rule, to govern, to exercise authority. Using *Webster’s* definition of governing, you were created “to direct and control; to maintain the superiority,” not be lorded over by other people, evil forces, or even unfortunate circumstances. You’re an overcomer, a

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conqueror. Though this God-given propensity lost most of its purity at the fall, becoming infected with pride and selfish ambition (Genesis 3), nonetheless, the desire in humankind to govern its world was placed there by God.

We are descended from a king, Jesus, Creator and Lord over all, so it logically follows that deep in our DNA we have a desire and ability to rule. God speaks of this motivation in Romans 5:17: “If by the transgression of the one [Adam], death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will *reign in life* through the One, Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

This word *reign* means to rule as a king or queen.<sup>4</sup> It refers to our royal nature as sons and daughters of the Most High God. The same word is used in 1 Peter 2:9, where we’re called a “*royal* priesthood,” again referring to our ruling nature. Children of the King are always to rule and reign in the world and overcome in life. To do so, we must learn to pray with authority and govern through intercession.

In the *Pentecostal Evangel*, J. K. Gressett writes about Samuel S. Scull, who settled on a farm in the Arizona desert with his wife and children:

One night a fierce desert storm struck with rain, hail, and high wind. At daybreak, feeling sick and fearing what he might find, Samuel went to survey their loss.

The hail had beaten the garden and truck patch into the ground; the house was partially unroofed, the henhouse had blown away and dead chickens were scattered about. Destruction and devastation were everywhere.

While standing dazed, evaluating the mess and wondering about the future, he heard a stirring in the lumber pile that was the remains of the henhouse. A rooster was climbing up

through the debris and he didn't stop climbing until he had mounted the highest board in the pile. That old rooster was dripping wet, and most of his feathers were blown away. But as the sun came over the eastern horizon, he flapped his bony wings and proudly crowed.<sup>5</sup>

Why did this emaciated rooster insist on rising above the debris to crow? Because it was his nature. His DNA was programmed to announce the beginning of a new day. True to his nature, he stuck out his bare chest and declared, "Wake up, world—a new day awaits!"

And so it is with us. Deep in our DNA is the nature of a King. He speaks to us from within our inner nature, and sometimes when we're under mounds of circumstantial rubble, "in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer" (Romans 8:37). We were made to rule!

I must say at this point, however, that I don't want this book to take on an air of religiosity. There are many religious clichés thrown around in the church, especially in charismatic circles, about "ruling and reigning," being "more than conquerors," etc. Though these expressions are biblical, and we *will* use them in this book, for many Christians they are not reality, but wishful thinking. This—words or actions without the power or substance that should accompany them—describes one meaning of *religiosity* (see 2 Timothy 3:5).

Expressions like these are often only heartwarming phrases of religious denial among Christians—stemming from a mentality that spouts slogans and verses about "overcoming," while people are actually being beaten up by circumstances and walked on by the adversary at every turn. For many believers it seems enough to simply be called an overcomer or to think of themselves as one. Christ's abundant life is for them

an appealing hope, perhaps even an intent, but not actual. The tragic reality is:

- Their minds are controlled by sin and compromising thoughts.
- Their marriages fail along with those of the world around them.
- Their children grow up questioning God’s reality or relevancy.
- Their businesses fail alongside those whose owners don’t know God.
- They walk in very little true peace or joy, experiencing the same stressed-out lifestyle as unbelievers. (No wonder most unsaved Americans see no need for God. What difference would He make? they question.)
- They speak of prayer’s power, but rarely pray; even less frequently do they see answers.
- They speak of an all-powerful God, who is “in charge” but who seems to be losing control of our nation—our schools, government, and culture as a whole.
- They glibly sing, “Come on, let’s take this city . . .” but they haven’t taken even one yet, at least in the U.S.

Yet off we go to our church services, week after week, learning our lingo and getting our denial fix, all the while wondering why the rest of society—and many of our children—think we live in a make-believe world of religion without reality, performance without power. Talk about a double-billed cap!

*What’s wrong with this picture?!*

Something has to change, and it can. Our God *is* all-powerful, and everything He has said of us is true. His promises are indeed “yea, and in him Amen” (2 Corinthians 1:20 κϒν). We

absolutely can reign in life and be the overcomer He intends us to be, taking charge of our personal world and changing the world around us. We don't have to allow sin, Satan, or life's circumstances to sit on our chest.

Beginning with your *private* world—your thoughts, body, actions, and ultimately your God-ordained destiny—you can take charge. Authority is yours.

Then because God established and so honors the principle of authority, He will back you as you walk in the government He has delegated to you regarding your *extended* world—your home, family, business, and possessions.

Finally, God's plan is for you to partner with Him on the earth in broader realms of influence and authority—your *universal* world. Jesus, the sovereign King over the earth, wants to rule institutions, cultures, societies, and

governments through you and your prayers. He needs you: Your choice matters and your involvement is crucial. You have been offered the great privilege of helping to answer the “Who's in charge?” question for the earth.

I want to help you take off the double-billed cap, answer the question clearly and emphatically . . . and sit on the devil's chest!

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