

Spiritual Authority

1. Spiritual authority has a territorial dimension. Paul asserts his authority in 2 Cor. 10:12-18 over an area he believes God has assigned him – an area that includes Corinth.
2. Spiritual authority flows from a burden to see a love relationship between those served and Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-6).
3. Spiritual authority is grounded in a substantial knowledge of God and His activities in the human sphere (2 Cor. 11:6).
4. Spiritual authority must operate without being tied to payment. Paul exercises his spiritual authority as a servant without charging the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:7-12) or anyone else.
5. Spiritual authority involves an uncompromising opposition to charlatans – those who masquerade as true Christian leaders but who teach lies (2 Cor. 11:13-15).
6. Spiritual authority serves even to the extent of readily sacrificing and suffering (2 Cor. 11:16-33). Paul, in exercising the authority God gave him, has endured incredible hardship on behalf of those he has ministered to, mostly at the hands of those who oppose him.
7. Spiritual authority involves direct revelation from God (2 Cor. 12:1-6). Paul was taken up to “the highest heaven” and heard things there “which cannot be put into words, things that human lips may not speak.”
8. Spiritual authority is exercised in weakness and ordinariness, even with God-allowed satanic reminders to keep us humble. In 2 Cor. 12:6-10 Paul speaks of his weaknesses and of the “painful physical ailment” (verse 7), or “thorn in the flesh” (KJV), that God has allowed “as Satan’s messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud.”
9. Spiritual authority is authenticated through the operation of spiritual gifts (2 Cor. 12:12). Paul points to signs and wonders as proving his apostolic authority.
10. Spiritual authority is ready and able to rebuke and discipline those who persist in disobedience (2 Cor. 13:1-2).
11. Spiritual authority can be tested by checking the presence and activity of Christ in those who have responded to the message presented by the one who claims that authority (2 Cor. 13:5-6).
12. Implied in the passage is the fact that spiritual authority is not contingent on a given personality type.
13. Neither is spiritual authority contingent on one’s ability to preach or communicate in other ways. Spiritual authority precedes these abilities, acting as a life-giver to these means but not restricted by whether or not one is a gifted communicator.
14. True spiritual authority affirms rather than puts down others, encouraging them to operate in all the gifting and authority God has given them.
15. Spiritual authority can be exercised in a multitude of unique ways. Rather than being a mere “doing” thing, it is to be grounded in and exercised out of a person’s very being.

Fifteen characteristics of Spiritual Authority written by D. Michael Crow as quoted in the book *“I Give You Authority”* by Charles Kraft