

Authority & Power – Week 3 – Abuse & Misuse

Connect and review	
<p>Welcome any newcomers and ensure everyone knows everyone else's name. Encourage everyone to share something they learnt from last week.</p>	<p>Brief recap on last week. Sharing about personal reflections on last week's suggested activities, namely (i) What examples can you find in the Bible of people being given power to perform acts on God's behalf? (ii) How does God give power to individual churches and/or their leaders?</p>
Inspire and engage	
<p>There is no set way to present material, just go the way that suits you. Try to use most of the Bible verses.</p>	<p>Abuse = (i) use improperly or to excess; (ii) treat with cruelty or violence; (iii) speak in an offensive way. Misuse = (i) use wrongly; (ii) treat badly or unfairly. Abuse & misuse can both be used to mean 'the use of something in the wrong way'; misuse often refers to substances or objects, e.g., antibiotics, furniture, physical environment. The wrong use may be based on ignorance, rather than a deliberate act. Abuse is used when something is used for the wrong purposes, rather than in the wrong way, e.g., substance abuse, corruption. God ALWAYS does what is right [see, e.g., Psalm 145:17; 119:137; Revelation 19:11] and so He NEVER abuses or misuses His authority and power. All other created beings, however, can abuse and/or misuse their authority and/or power. For example –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angels, e.g., Satan – his rebellion against God is described in Ezekiel 28:11-19. The Bible implies he is the most powerful being God has made [see Jude 9] and he abused his power to rebel against God. • Governments – e.g., (i) Adolf Hitler abused his authority & power, so that many millions of Jews were killed/slaughtered during his time in government in the 1930s and 1940s; (ii) when politicians misuse their power to try to win votes for themselves or their supporters. • Kings/Leaders – (i) David abused his power as King of Israel to unlawfully kill Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, with whom David had an adulterous relationship [2 Samuel chapter 11]; (ii) leaders of religious cults who abuse their power over their followers. • Individuals – e.g., (i) husbands who subject their wives to domestic abuse.; (ii) when the disciples sought to misuse their power to bring judgment on others [Luke 9:51-56].
Explore and apply	
<p>Attempt one exercise at a time. Try to encourage Q & A and discussion but avoid personal/private answers. Possible answers to the Explore question include love, prayer, referring matters to the appropriate authorities, being non-judgmental, humility, etc. Possible answers to the Apply exercise include love, prayer, confrontation, support, discipleship [=showing them a better way to behave], etc.</p>	<p>Explore</p> <p>How should believers respond to the abuse and misuse of authority?</p> <p>Apply</p> <p>How would you help someone you knew, e.g., a friend or relative, who was abusing and/or misusing their authority?</p>
Reflect and review	
<p>This helps to show what has been learned and what may need to be reinforced.</p>	<p><i>Personal reflection:</i></p> <p>How have you been challenged about the abuse and misuse of authority and power?</p> <p><i>Suggested activity</i></p> <p>Prayerfully consider how you can better respond in the future to examples of abuse and misuse you encounter.</p>