

Stephens, GregSpeak the Word

11. Chain of Command

This chapter teaches that a believer's spiritual authority works like a military chain of command. You can only resist the devil once you are submitted to God. Because your authority flows down from the Father, through the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the written Word, everything under you—including the devil and the angels—must respond when you speak that Word.

Key takeaways

- James 4:7 has two halves that go together: 'Submit to God' comes first, then 'Resist the devil.' Submission is what gives your resistance power.
- The Roman centurion had great faith because he understood authority: he obeyed his superiors, so those under him obeyed him. He knew Jesus operated under God's authority, so His word would be done.
- We are soldiers in God's army. Our authority isn't earthly—it is delegated down a divine chain of command, and every spirit being can see it.
- Command authority starts with your own thoughts. Bring every thought contrary to God's Word into captivity by replacing it with God's Word (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

- Jesus modeled this in the wilderness. Before any miracle, He took the devil's suggestions captive with 'It is written,' then commanded the devil to leave.
- Don't ask God to deal with the devil—He already defeated him. It's our job to enforce that defeat using Jesus' name, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.
- Angels are ministering spirits sent to serve us. They act on the Word you speak, because speaking Scripture gives them lawful orders from their Superior, Jesus.
- New Covenant believers have authority no Old Testament figure had. Daniel's angel was delayed 21 days by a demonic 'prince of Persia'; we have Jesus' name to command such spirits directly.
- When God delegates authority He always establishes three things: identity, position, and commission—for Adam, for Jesus, for the disciples, and for us.
- The devil attacks by challenging those three things. Resist him by daily confessing who God says you are and telling him to leave.

Passages worth keeping

“Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

The whole chapter turns on this order—submission first makes resistance effective.

“When you quote The WORD to an angel, he will do what you say because you're giving him lawful orders from his Superior, The LORD Jesus Christ.”

Explains why speaking Scripture, not pleading, activates angelic help.

How it connects

The chapter ties the military metaphor back to Genesis and the Gospels: God set Adam's identity, position, and commission (Gen. 1:26-28); did the same for Jesus (Matt. 3:17; Luke 4:18-19); and now for us (John 17:21; Matt. 28:18-19). We share Jesus' identity as His body (Eph. 1:23), which is why we can command in His authority.

Scripture referenced

- **James 4:7** -- Submit to God, then resist the devil
- **Matthew 8:9** -- The centurion's understanding of chain of command
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** -- Bringing every thought captive to Christ
- **Matthew 4:3-11** -- Jesus resisting temptation with 'It is written'
- **Psalms 91:9-12** -- Angels given charge to bear you up
- **Daniel 10:12-13** -- Angel delayed by the prince of Persia—the Old Covenant limit