



TOTAL AUTHORITY Matthew 7:28–29

CONNECT

1. Take a few moments to process: What are the primary sources of authority in your life? Who are the voices into which you lean? What are the books or articles that you read? What are the prevailing influences that shape your worldview? Then process the degree to which these may or may not give deference to the lordship of Jesus Christ. In what ways do you allow His authority to prevail over all?

CELEBRATE

2. Matthew 7:28–29 tells us that the crowds were “astonished” by Jesus’ teaching. Review with those around you some of the things Jesus shared in the Sermon on the Mount that have left you astonished—even uncomfortable or convicted.
3. The historian, Matthew, records that the crowds saw Jesus as having authority that was not at all like their rabbis (see Matthew 7:29). Based on your time in the Sermon on the Mount this past year, in what ways do Jesus’ tone and words demonstrate authority that sets Him apart? Consider His declaration “For I tell you the truth” (Matthew 5:20, Matthew 5:18, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44) in contrast to His statements regarding the rabbis’ teachings, “You have heard that it was said” (Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43).
4. Press into the authority of Jesus a bit more. In Matthew 5:11–12, Jesus compares His persecuted followers to the persecuted prophets of the Old Testament. Those prophets were persecuted because of their obedience to God. If Jesus says His followers are like those prophets, what is Jesus implying about His own person? How does this frame your allegiance to Him and your response to His words in the Sermon on the Mount?

CONTRIBUTE

5. Glance back at the various commands and kingdom values we’ve heard from Jesus in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Have you been a doer of what you have heard? Be honest. What changes have you made? Is there anything you intended to do but have not done yet? What would a first step of obedience look like?
6. Based upon your answer to the previous question, how will you live out Jesus’ vision and values in your realm of influence? Will people be able to tell your primary allegiance is to God’s kingdom? How and why? Also, remember that your strength to pursue this only comes through His “power, according to God’s glorious might” (Colossians 1:11) and is never done on your own.