

“Honoring All Authority”

INTRODUCTION: America is suffering from a crisis of authority.

1. We often sense this and express it in language that speaks of a *crisis of leadership*.
2. **Albert Mohler:** *The Conviction to Lead*, p. 15, 18.
 - a. *For the better part of the last three decades, leadership has been a major cultural preoccupation and a professional obsession. Walk into an airport bookstore, and you will find the front tables filled with books promising to make you a better leader. Apparently, frequent travelers have a healthy appetite for such advice. Walk into a Christian bookstore, and you will find ample evidence of the same hunger. If you are like me, you probably have read a small library of books on leadership, have attended numerous conferences and seminars, and keep up with leadership newsletters and professional journals when you find the time. Hotel conference rooms overflow with people listening to speakers deliver talks on leadership, and colleges and universities have gotten into the business as well, offering majors, degree programs, and even entire schools devoted to leadership studies.*
 - b. But what if leadership was **not** what we needed?
 - c. *The hunger for leadership had reached every sector of our society, including business, government, education, cultural institutions, and, of course, the church. Christians, along with everyone else, wanted to develop leadership. It was not always so, although it is hard now to imagine a time when leadership had something of a bad name. The twentieth century was a brutal and murderous laboratory for leadership. All you have to do is think of names like Vladimir Lenin, Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Josef Stalin, and Mao Zedong. In light of these horrors, many people began to wonder if leaders and leadership were themselves the problem. This mentality took root in the culture of the 1960s, where counterculture groups demanded the abolition of many leadership positions, and the larger society grew increasingly nervous about the nature of leadership.*
 - d. In fact, we have two great needs –
 - i. *Godly leadership*
 - ii. *Good followership*
3. It seems *fascinating* to me that the Bible spends comparatively little time focusing on leadership and a great deal of time focusing on **followership** (if there is genuinely such a word!).
 - a. *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. (Romans 13:1-5)*

- b. *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.* (Ephesians 5:22-24)
 - c. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”* (Ephesians 6:1-3)
 - d. *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.* (Ephesians 6:5-8)
 - e. *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior.* (1 Timothy 2:1-3)
 - f. *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.* (Hebrews 13:17)
 - g. *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.* (1 Peter 2:13-17)
 - h. *Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work.* (Titus 3:1)
4. Tell me: **Why** do such passages evoke in us such visceral reactions – ones of anger, resentment, resistance and protest?
- a. Why do we desire to major on *leadership*...
 - b. ...but God majors on *followership*?
 - c. Certainly, in all those passages I just quoted, God speaks to loving husbands, nurturing fathers, reasonable masters and responsible government.
 - d. **But**...God's **focus** is on *followers*, not leaders!
5. We like to say: “We must submit to leaders as long as they are good, godly, and gracious. If not, we may rebel.” But God does **not** say that!!
- a. *Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.* (1 Peter 3:1-2)
 - b. *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.* (1 Peter 2:18)

- c. *Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.* (1 Peter 2:17)
 - d. Really? “Honor the Emperor”? Nero!?!
6. If you read the Bible *objectively*, with *humility* and *very carefully*, you discover that God’s concern is that we all learn how to submit to legitimate authority.
- a. Remember: *Adam and Eve rebelled against the loving, gracious and perfect King, Father and Husband...*
 - b. **God!**
 - c. Bad followership was the mother of bad leadership!
7. So, God gives us a fifth commandment:
- a. *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.* (Exodus 20:12)
 - b. The one commandment the New Testament explicitly comments upon...
 - c. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”* (Ephesians 6:1-3)
 - d. *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.* (Colossians 3:20)
 - e. **Key:** *The first commandment with a promise”*
 - f. **In fact:** *“The only commandment that includes an explicit promise built into ‘its wording’”*
 - g. i.e., *“that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving to you.”* (Exodus 20:12)
 - h. **Even more detailed:** *“that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving to you”* (Deuteronomy 5:16)
8. Do you believe that the American people, to whom God has given this bountiful and beautiful land...?
- a. *Are going to dwell “a long time” in this place?*
 - b. *Can say that “things are going well” for us in our nation?*
 - c. Honest answer: No and No!
9. Then I ask, “Why not?” And there is only one answer:
- a. *We are **not** honoring God-ordained authority”*
 - b. So things are falling apart; going badly for us;
 - c. And things are slipping away from us; we are losing our homeland!

10. **David F. Wells:** *No Place for Truth; pp. 84-85.*

- a. *In the past, Western society was held together by three sinews: tradition, authority, and power. To change the image, these were the garments that covered Western society, and without them it has*

become indecent. Of these three, tradition might have been the first to go, although it went hand in hand with authority. Tradition is the process whereby one generation inducts its successor into its accumulated wisdom, lore, and values. The family once served as the chief conduit for this transmission, but the family is now collapsing, not merely because of divorce but as a result of affluence and the innovations of a technological age.

- b. *At the same time, society finds that it can no longer recognize appeals to authority, for any transcendent realm in which these appeals might be lodged has vanished from sight. The Christian theism on which Western societies were built was replaced by idealism of one kind or another. Then the idealism collapsed during the nineteenth century. Initially it was replaced by a kind of humanism that was elevated in its ethical and aesthetic interests.*
- c. *The three tendons have thus been reduced. Tradition and authority have been severed; only power remains. It is power alone that must direct our corporate life, power severed from a moral order that might contain and correct it and from the values of the past that might inform it. In a strange testimony to this inner vacuum, the profession of law has risen to such prominence in America that 70 percent of all the lawyers in the world practice here.*

11. God is calling us to respond to *authority* in order to reestablish these three sinews that tie society together.

- a. **Tradition** rooted in the *family* (fathers and mothers)
- b. **Authority** rooted in the *church* (pastors and elders)
- c. **Power** rooted in the *State* (magistrates and law enforcement)
- d. Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution (2:13)
- e. **The three basic institutions of social order and moral life.**

12. These **three authorities** St. Peter addresses in our passage before us today: *1 Peter 2:13-3:12 and 5:1-7.*

I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE: THE POWER OF LAW (1 Peter 2:13-17)

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:13-17)

- 1. God gave us our governments to bring to us *law and order*.
 - a. *Law*: common rules of decency
 - b. *Order*: structure for cooperation
 - c. e.g., of law: *speed limits and trespassing laws*
 - d. e.g., of order: *tax codes and educational standards*
- 2. Because **all** governments seek to constrain and coordinate sinful, fallen, depraved souls (i.e., all of us), God has given them the **Power of the Sword**.

- a. *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Romans 13:1-7)*
 - b. First: “*God’s servant (minister) for good*”
 - c. Second: “*Bear the sword*” (power of the sword)
 - d. Third: We owe the government *taxes, revenue, respect, honor*
 - e. Fourth: We owe them obedience for two reasons:
 - i. *To avoid God’s wrath* (judgment on rebellion)
 - ii. *For the sake of conscience* (because to do so is right)
3. Once again, God does **not** distinguish between godly government or corrupt government –
- a. In Old Testament, both David and Ahab
 - b. In New Testament, both Rome and Jerusalem
 - c. In our time, both Ronald Reagan and Barak Obama
 - d. i.e., the ones you like (voted for) and the ones you don’t like (did not vote for)
4. We are facing the crisis of **anarchy** in our land because we no longer...
- a. *Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:17)*
 - b. We treat government with *disrespect*, and we *dishonor* President Obama.
 - c. We no longer consider it a *matter of conscience* to pray for, honor and obey our State.
 - d. We oppose those who *bear the sword* –
 - i. Either shooting policemen in the street in the line of duty
 - ii. Or hiring one of the 70% of the world’s lawyers to sue the government or use loopholes to allow us to disobey.
 - e. We really do not see our magistrates as *God’s servants*.
 - f. **Martin Luther:** “*the left hand of God.*”
5. The Scripture is very clear and very simple: *Human Government is both ordained by God and a servant (minister) of God for good.*

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God

has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. (Romans 13:1-4)

6. The New Testament consistently calls Christians to honor, obey and pay taxes and revenues to the State.

Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Romans 13:7)

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:17)

7. I confess, this is **not** an easy thing to do. Let me **illustrate** with two **personal examples**:

a. **One:** Years ago, a police officer stopped me in Mississippi to give me a speeding ticket. I irritatingly said to him, "Don't you have more important things to do with your time?" He asked me, "Like what?" I said, "Like stopping crime in our streets." He smiled and said, "I am. You're breaking the law. I'm stopping your crime!"

b. **Second:** Jane and I were driving through southern Mississippi, and we were praying. A Sheriff pulled me over for going 55 in a 45 mph zone. When he asked me what I was doing, I said, "Honestly, officer, my wife and I were praying, and I lost track of the speed limit." He said to me, "You telling me the truth?" I said, "Absolutely." He then handed me back my driver's license and said, "I want you to slow down, and would you and your wife pray for me?"

8. You and I may be irritated with, offended by or principally opposed to government regulations and civil laws, but God has ordained our government to -

a. Bear the **power** of the sword

b. Maintain **law and order**

c. And prevent **anarchy** from becoming widespread

d. *Anarchy is a worse evil than 70% of the world's lawyers suing one another or a government that makes unbiblical decisions.*

9. We support the State because God is opposed to **anarchy** – what happened in Genesis 3!

10. **BTW**, we are uniquely blessed by the right and privilege of participants being in our government – something Peter and New Testament church did not possess – and we can always enter into political service or vote to change the government. **I believe both these options are Christian duties.**

II. THE AUTHORITY OF THE FAMILY: THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITION (1 Peter 3:1-7)

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live

with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:1-7)

1. What undergirds the *power* of the State is the **tradition** passed on by families – the authority of mom and dad.
2. **Remember:** David F. Wells defines what “tradition” is and why it is of value to us – and why we are struggling as an American culture. (*No Place for Truth*; p. 84).

Tradition is the process whereby one generation inducts its successor into its accumulated wisdom, lore, and values. The family once served as the chief conduit for this transmission, but the family is now collapsing, not merely because of divorce but as a result of affluence and the innovations of a technological age. In a video-saturated culture, film and television now provide the sorts of values that were once provided by the family. And public education, which used to be another conduit for such value, has also contracted out of this business, pleading that it has an obligation to be value-neutral. So it is that in the new civilization that is emerging, children are lifted away from the older values like anchorless boats on a rising tide.

3. With the meltdown of the American family, **traditional values** have died: divorce, common-law marriages, single girls choosing to have children alone (“going solo”), same-sex marriages, religiously mixed marriages, blended families, polygamy and fatherless families on the rise...
4. All these 21st century aberrations have undercut the *wisdom, shared values, common virtues and community solidarity* that people need to live together in a civil and cooperative manner.
5. **Please hear me:** *Every time we violate the God-ordained pattern for marriage (family) we undermine the civic foundation and weaken the corporate fiber of our society.*
6. Our failure to see this and to “connect the dots” is our undoing as a civil people who can function in a community.
7. **Every time** we violate God’s standards for marriage (family), we pay the price:
 - a. If we are insubmissive, disrespectful, dishonoring or contemptuous of our husbands, we set the stage for the same thing in our children in their response to all authority. Insubmissive wives create rebellious children and hardened men...

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. (1 Peter 3:1-6)

- b. Every time a man is harsh, dismissive and unloving to his wife, he creates in his children a mean spirit. Abusive and neglectful husbands create violent and abusive children and bitter women...

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

- c. When we sleep with our girlfriend (boyfriend), we undermine the sanctity of marriage.
Heterosexual immorality is a greater threat to marriage than same-sex unions.
 - d. If we desert a marriage or divorce a spouse for unbiblical reasons, we leave behind us, in our destructive wake, young men and women afraid to or unable to engage in marriage. (Note: 69% of all marriages are initiated by women)
 - e. If our children rebel against parental authority, and they get by with it, then those kids as young adults, will sass their teachers, disregard their pastors, argue with their bosses and break the law.
 - f. When parents give to their children whatever they want (including where a 14-year-old wants to go to church) and if we never say “No!” to them, then they won’t accept a “no” from anyone.
We create a society without the power to live by values, because we have to say “yes” to everyone!
8. **Interesting fact:** Every one of these police-assaults and school shooting situations has been by a young man from a broken home – as much as we know to date! That should tell us something.
9. **Families pass on civic virtues that create shared values by which we all live in civility, cooperation and community. Without these virtues and values** “each man does what is right in his own eyes.”
- a. *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.* (Judges 17:6)
...resulted in the “renting” of a Priest for money
 - b. *In those days there was no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the people of Dan was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in, for until then no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.* (Judges 18:1)
...led to war between tribes of Israel
 - c. *In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a certain Levite was sojourning in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim, who took to himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.* (Judges 19:1)
...led to the rape, butcher and avenging of a young girl
 - d. *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.* (Judges 21:25)
10. **Think this way:** “In those days when there was no *parental authority*, each person did what was right in their own eyes, because **traditional virtues and values** were no longer passed on to the children.

III. THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH: THE FORCE OF MORAL SUASION (1 Peter 5:1-7)

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the

elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:1-7)

1. **Honestly, folks:** I don’t know how to address this; the issue is so “close to home” for me, a pastor.
2. The **Church** was given to mankind to guard us, guide us, and govern us with *spiritual truth* –
 - a. *I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)*
 - b. This Christian truth produced **moral authority**.
 - c. i.e., the force of right/wrong; good/evil; truth/falsehood
 - d. and it came to us by means of **moral suasion**
3. Moral Suasion: an appeal to morality in order to influence or change behavior, grounded in transcendent truth.
4. The **church** alone possesses this *moral authority* because it is the interpreter and proponent of Holy Scripture.
5. **David F. Wells:** *No Place for Truth; p. 85.*

Society finds that it can no longer recognize appeals to authority, for any transcendent realm in which these appeals might be lodged has vanished from sight. This is evident in many contexts – in art, literature, philosophy, politics – but a single pattern is common to them all. First, the Christian theism on which Western societies were built was replaced by idealism of one kind or another. Then the idealism collapsed during the nineteenth century. Initially it was replaced by a kind of humanism that was elevated in its ethical and aesthetic interests, but as such it had no durable conceptual base, and so it fell apart. These have now passed, but the moral vacuum they filled for a time remains, not only in politics but in many other aspects of life as well.

6. Put simply and bluntly: The Bible alone possesses the authority to establish moral authority: What we ought/ought not to do; what is sin/righteousness; spiritual truth/religious lives.
7. **Please follow me:** Once the church loses its *moral courage* to preach the Law of God alongside the Gospel of Christ, it forfeits its *moral authority*, and its ability to use *moral suasion* is lost for good, and as a result ungodliness, moral disorder and spiritual darkness overcomes the land.
8. **Chuck Colson:** *Against the Night: Living in the New Dark Ages; pp. 23-24.*
 - a. *I believe that we do face a crisis in Western culture, and that it presents the greatest threat to civilization since the barbarians invaded Rome. I believe that today in the West, and particularly in America, the new barbarians are all around us. They are not hairy Goths and Vandals, swilling fermented brew and ravishing maidens; they are not Huns and Visigoths storming our borders or scaling our city walls. No, this time the invaders have come from within. We have bred them in our families and trained them in our classrooms. They inhabit our legislatures, our courts, our film studios, and our churches. Most of them are attractive and pleasant; their ideas are persuasive and subtle. Yet these men and women threaten our most cherished institutions and our very character as a people.*

- b. The New Barbarians? Those who've rejected the Bible, the Church and our Judeo-Christian way of life with its moral order...
 - c. **Modern humanistic thinking**
9. I am aware that a significant number of you do not like authoritative, prophetic, morally suasive preaching. But what would you have the preacher to do...to say?
10. **Let's do a little exercise:** Stop me when you think I've "gone too far" in telling you what to believe and how to live. Raise your hands if you agree with the statement I make:
- a. God exists and is the Creator of the world.
 - b. Sin exists, and there is a heaven and a hell.
 - c. Jesus came to die for our sins, and He will come again to judge all mankind.
 - d. Jesus is the only way to God; faith in Christ is necessary to go to heaven.
 - e. The Bible is God's infallible source of authority.
 - f. Baptism is required to be a genuine Christian.
 - g. True Christianity includes church membership.
 - h. Christians should tithe (10%) of their income to their church.
 - i. Homosexuality is a sin.
 - j. Christian women should not wear bikinis or show cleavage.
11. Did you notice what happened?
- a. When it came to justification, you agreed by around 95%.
 - b. When it came to the Christ's importance and authority, you fell off to about 60-70% agreement.
 - c. When it came to personal, moral positions, at times you were as low as 50-50%!
 - d. **Translated:** *The Church can tell me how to be saved but not how to live as a Christian or make my own moral decisions.*
12. Now...one more time...please connect these dots: *If the Church can only speak about how to be forgiven of your sins but not how to practice Christianity or live a moral life, then it has lost its moral suasion, and both family and State begin to morally collapse!* The Church is the conscience of the nation and the teacher of all parents!
13. **Carl F. H. Henry:** *Twilight of a Great Civilization: The Drift Toward Neo-Paganism; p. 69.*
- One reason law has lost its power in modern life is the failure to recognize divine law as the fundamental law. Modern states are, of course, free to compromise and ignore divine law, but they do so at their own peril. The Bible grounds certain moral imperatives in God's universal creation ethic and others in His special salvation-covenant with Israel.*
14. This is why Peter exhorts the folks of the local church to come under the **pastoral authority** of the local church –
- Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves,*

therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:5-7)

15. Our **low view** of the Church, our **resistance** to strong Biblical preaching, and our **resentment** of the spiritual governance of our elders, combined with a **pic ‘n choose** view of the Bible has led to our spiritual, domestic and societal ruin.

16. Here is a Biblical command we must hear and heed –

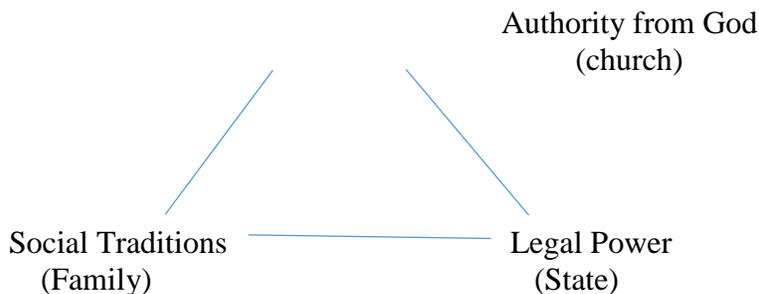
Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

17. Every time we undercut our pastors’ or elders’ authority, we weaken the pillars of life – the pillar and buttress of truth:

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

18. Then everything falls apart...everything! Because the *moral authority* of the Church informs *social traditions* learned in the family and gives *transcendent authority* to the civil laws of the State.

19. If it all fits together, then it all falls apart, once *tradition, authority and power* are separated from one another. This is God's **Triangle of Authority** –



20. *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)*

CONCLUSION: Some of you will say, “Then tell us, practically, what to do.” Answer: I already have. But here are three “takeaways”...

1. Go back to your parents and your spouses and ask forgiveness for all the times you *dishonored them*. Then commit yourself to the mutual respect, submission and obedience the family calls all of us to give – *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. (1 Peter 5:6-7)*
2. Re-examine your attitude, involvement in, and support for your local church, including pastors, elders and deacons. Commit to become an encourager and a “team-player” at your local church. Ask your pastor(s) if you’re a positive influence at church.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5)

3. Accept President Obama as your president because your country elected him. Give *gladly* to our government the 5 things you owe them for conscience sake: Honor, Respect, Taxes, Revenues and Prayer –
Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Romans 13:7)

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:17)

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior. (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

4. In this way, you will strengthen the **three sinews** that hold our American way of life together in decency and order –
- Moral authority
 - Social traditions
 - The power of law
5. *Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 5:16)*