

“THE AUTHORITATIVE GOD”

INTRODUCTION: We live in a society bordering on anarchy...

1. Our 21st century America is much like that of Israel in the days of the judges:
 - a. *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.* (Judges 17:6)
 - b. The last verses in Judges reiterates this truth:
In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)
 - c. **Arthur E. Cundall:** Judges, TOTC; pp. 185, 212
In Israel, every man pleased himself. But since ‘to do what was right in one’s own eyes’ is tantamount to saying that a state of anarchy existed, the inference is that this led inevitably to an undesirable and disorderly situation. (p. 185)
The book closes with the reflection of the editor that the absence of the strong hand of a king was largely responsible for the disorders of the land in this earlier age. (p. 212)
2. *Anarchy* is a horrible way to live and it inevitably leads to the opposite of anarchy which is *totalitarianism*:
 - a. *Anarchy* from the Greek *anarchia*
 - i. *a* means “no” or “not”
 - ii. *arche* means “ruler” or “authority”
 - iii. anarchy: no ruler, no rule, no law, no authority
 - b. The dictionary defines *anarchy* this way
 - "No rulership or enforced authority."
 - "A social state in which there is no governing person or group of people, but each individual has absolute liberty (without the implication of disorder.) But is bound by a social code."
 - "Absence of government; a state of lawlessness due to the absence or inefficiency of the supreme power; political disorder."
 - "Absence or non-recognition of authority and order in any given sphere."
 - "Acting without waiting for instructions or official permission... The root of anarchism is the single impulse to do it yourself: everything else follows from this."
 - c. Because society falls apart under anarchy, people become desperate and look for a *singular source of authority* to bring back order.
 - d. They usually choose a *Dictator* and bequeath to him/her unlimited *power* and *authority*.
 - e. The result is equally as painful as anarchy: *Totalitarianism* and *Despotism*.
3. Why is this so? It is so because God intends for His authority to be mediated to people through three institutions: *the family, the church* and *the state*.
 - a. Parents, pastors, governors
 - b. Three basic parameters of civil life
 - c. All three instituted to guard, guide and govern human beings from cradle to grave.

- d. Even more essential since mankind's fall into sin and rebellion.
4. Each of these three God-ordained institutions brings to us a benefit of *God's rule over us*.
- Authority, tradition, power**
 - The "three sinews of society"
5. **Tradition** was primarily learned and accepted in the family.
- 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.* (Deut. 5:16)
 - The basic tenets of right and wrong, the practice of parental discipline, and the value of mutual accountability and cooperation.
 - As divorces and feminism shattered the American family, teenage rebellion became an expected reality.
 - Fatherless homes breed anarchy.
 - Fact:** *80% of people in prison grew up in a home without a father present in their lives.*
6. **Authority** was primarily the domain of the church (and secondarily of the school).
- The authority of an inspired Word and an Apostolic tradition:
All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.
Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:1-3)
 - The church passes on the accumulated authority of past ages to shape our faith and duty.
 - James I. Packer** informs us that biblical tradition benefits us in four ways:
 - Roots:* our historical background and values
 - Realism:* we are not the first generation to face such challenges
 - Resources:* tools and information to help us in our trials
 - Reminders:* how the people before us either failed or succeeded, that the church might learn from the past
 - Packer tells us** (*J. I. Packer: A Biography; pp. 253-254*)
North American evangelicalism, steeped in individualism, often seems to have no real sense of historical 'belonging' or rootedness. As such, it is radically prone to destabilization. The North American evangelical has been 'a spiritual lone ranger who has proudly or impatiently turned his back on the church and his heritage.'
Rediscovering the corporate and historic nature of the Christian faith reduces the danger of entire communities of faith being misled by charismatic individuals, and affirms the ongoing importance of the Christian past as a stabilizing influence in potentially turbulent times.
7. **Power** belonged primarily to the state (government); the "power of the sword"
- 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. The power to enforce the law: policeman, military, FBI, statutes, ordinances, policies and public order.
 - c. *The Rule of Law* to reinforce parental authority and respect Christian Tradition.
 - d. When family fails, church becomes feckless, and school forsakes religion, all that is left is the Power of Law – the attorneys and their courts!
 - e. But it is Power uninformed by authority and not balanced by tradition. *Raw Power!*
8. **David F. Wells** explains how we got to where we are today, in America plagued by moral anarchy, litigious courts and an increasingly dictatorial presidency. (*No Place For Truth: or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology*; pp. 84-85)
- In the past, Western society was held together by three sinews: tradition, authority, power. 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. 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. This is evident in many contexts. First, the Christian theism on which Western societies were built was replaced by idealism of one kind or another. This idealism still had a transcendent interest, but it was no longer theistic. 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. 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. In the absence of moral obligation and a sense of what is right, disputes are extraordinarily difficult to resolve, and so the set of rules that has emerged under the law must take on duties that were once shouldered by a variety of other institutions – the family, the schools, the church. Now we are left with only the lawyers.*
9. You and I are living in an **extreme crisis of authority**. And people are, literally, screaming at parents, pastors and politicians, “*Don’t tell me what to do!*”
 10. All around us the wreckage of our lives is bearing evidence that *anarchy* is once again a painful and destructive way to live.
 11. I am **not** just saying this because it sets up the sermon. Let me give you some real-life facts...
 - a. In the past 30 days, at Christ Covenant Church, your pastors have been assaulted by the following...
 - b. A person is threatening to sue us because we were going to discipline them for leaving their spouse.
 - c. Another person railed at us because we told them that sleeping with someone outside of marriage is sin. (fornication)
 - d. One person wrote us off because we would not let a hymn to Mary be used in our worship services.

- e. Another person engaged in gross immorality, left the church, in much anger, when we counseled them, for 7 months, to break off the perverted relationship or be disciplined.
- f. Still someone else left angry when their child was not allowed into one of our programs for good reasons.
- g. The gist of each incidence? *We told them “NO” and challenged them to live by God’s Law.*
- h. All of the sudden, we were “hypocrites,” “legalists,” “unloving,” “lousy pastors” and “uncaring” people.
- i. The truth is this...
In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

12. With this background into our present reality, turn now to Deuteronomy 5:16...

- a. *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. (Deut. 5:16)*
- b. A commandment about God-ordained **authority**.
- 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.” (Eph. 6:1-3)*

I. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

1. This fifth commandment begins what theologians call “*The Second Table of the Law*”
 - a. Commandments #5 - #10 dealing with our duty toward other men.
 - b. *This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man. (WCF19-2)*
 - c. **But others (and I for one) believe it should be under the First Table of the Law, with Commandments #1 - #4, because it pertains to our duty to God.**
2. How can I say this? Listen carefully to these New Testament passages about authority –
 - 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. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. (Romans 13:1-2, 5)*
 - b. *But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3)*
 - c. *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (Eph. 5:22)*
 - d. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (Eph. 6:1)*
 - e. *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)

3. The biblical teaching is this: *God is the source of all ordained and legitimate authority – parents, husbands, pastors, teachers, coaches, policemen, magistrates, bosses and employees. To obey God is to obey them; to obey them is to obey God. We must give to God’s ordained authority what is rightly due them: obedience, honor, support, cooperation and respect.*

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 13:6-7)

4. **God is not a God of anarchy or of rebellion. He expects men to obey Him through the agents of authority He has placed on the earth and in our lives. Anarchy and unmerited rebellion are always condemned, and ultimately punished, by God.**

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints,

But all things should be done decently and in order. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40)

5. We like to think of God as our loving *Father* in heaven, and so He is. But we must not forget that our Heavenly Father is God, the Lord, the Master and the King of the universe.
- a. He makes laws and issues commands.
 - b. He expects and dictates obedience.
 - c. He judges those who disobey and rebel.
 - d. He grants grace but expects loving cooperation in return.
 - e. He disciplines His elect children to improve their behavior.

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5-11)

6. Our modern age of self-centered anarchy resents the idea of God as Lawgiver, Judge or Disciplinarian. We like the God of Grace without authority: a sugar-daddy in the heavens. But this is an idol, a god who does not exist. A god no one honors or obeys.
7. God reinforces this commandment with a **promise**.

- a. *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. (Deut. 5:16)*
 - b. *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." (Eph 6:1-3)*
 - c. **The promise:** *"...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."*
 - d. A two-fold promise:
 - i. Long life for obedient children who live a safe, godly and wholesome life of obedience.
 - ii. The preservation of your society by avoiding the three errors of anarchy, rebellion or dictatorship.
8. Why does God say this: *Because God sees society as an extended family. God is the Father and we are the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of His human family.*
9. This view of society as family is reflected in the historic teachings of the Christian Religion:
- a. *The Westminster Larger Catechism*
By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth. (#124)
Superiors are styled Father and Mother, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents. (#125)
The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals. (#126)
 - b. *The Heidelberg Catechism #104*
Q. What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?
A. That I honor, love, and be loyal to my father and mother and all those in authority over me; that I obey and submit to them, as is proper, when they correct and punish me; and also that I be patient with their failings—for through them God chooses to rule us.
 - c. **Zacharius Ursinus** (principle author of the Heidelberg Cat.) (Horton; p. 136)
The design or end of this commandment is the preservation of civil order, which God has appointed in the mutual duties between inferiors and their superiors. Superiors are all those whom God has placed over others, for the purpose of governing and defending them. Inferiors are those whom God has placed under others, that they may be governed and defended by them.
 - d. **Michael S. Horton:** *The Laws of Perfect Freedom; p. 136*
So Ursinus, like most Christian thinkers of his time, saw society as a family. The family of God, of course, was the church—the body of Christ. And yet the civil society, influenced by Christianity, ought to mirror this heavenly family. There must be order; at the same time, the superiors have two duties: to govern and to defend. As a father exercises his duty by looking out for the best interests of his children, so other superiors in society must seek the good of

those they serve. The best rulers are servants; those who govern best defend those within the scope of their authority.

- e. **James I. Packer:** *Growing In Christ*; pp. 255-256.

Why does God highlight the duty to “love, honour, and succor my father and mother” (as the Catechism puts it)? For many reasons. First, the family is the basic social unit; no nation is stable or virile where family life is weak. Second, the family is the basic spiritual unit, in which God makes parents their children’s pastors and teachers. Third, children do in fact owe their parents a huge debt of gratitude for years of care and provision. Fourth, children need parental guidance more than they know, and impoverish themselves by rejecting it. Fifth, in pre-social security days the aged had only their own children to provide for them; and even in the welfare state aging parents need their children’s loving concern, just as the children once needed their parents’ care.

10. Our society of abusive *individualism* cannot bear the thought of honoring, obeying or submitting to anyone but self – neither to God nor any human superior.
11. Our rejection of complementarian structures in life and our feministic ideas of *egalitarianism* (sameness, equality) makes us recoil at the very idea of *superiors* and *inferiors* (authorities and subordinates).
12. **The result is anarchy:** divorce, rebellion, violence, lawlessness, lawsuits, insubordination, disrespect, abuse and unimaginable perversion.
13. **It is a terrible thing when there is no king in the land and all men do what seems right in their own eyes!**

II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE PERFECT SON AND LORD

A. Jesus Christ is the Perfect Son of God

1. Jesus fulfills the 5th commandment for believers by His submission and obedience to God His Father.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying,

*“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”*

And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the

devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

(Hebrews 2:10-18)

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:7-10)

2. Jesus Christ unites Himself to our humanity, our sonship under God and our punishment for disobedience and rebellion. He saves us so that we might live in a newness of life – *a life of loving obedience to a loving Father in heaven.*
3. This is the truth of the **Gospel**: Christ saves us from rebellion and for obedience.
 - a. This is **the Gospel** truth: We are saved to obey God as His children...
 - b. *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.* (Romans 8:14-17)
 - c. *I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.* (Galatians 4:1-7)
 - d. And good sons and daughters honor and obey their Father.
4. Jesus has come to both *show* us this truth and to *work* obedience in us.

B. Jesus Christ is the Perfect Lord

1. This gracious Son and Savior is also the *Lord of Glory*.
 - a. The Lord of Lords and King of Kings (Rev. 19:16)
 - b. “...Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory” (James 2:1)
 - c. *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and*

under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11)

2. Jesus makes no bones about this truth: He expects to be obeyed...
 - a. *You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. (John 13:13)*
 - b. *Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? (Luke 6:46)*
 - c. *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)*
3. Forget "Jesus meek and mild" who gives in to all your whims and whining. Jesus is Lord and expects you to do what He tells you to do.
4. In fact, *your obedience* to Jesus Christ is the sealing *proof* that you are saved, that you belong to Him, that He is indeed your Savior and *Lord*.
5. To Jesus Christ belongs our honor, obedience and duty:
 - a. *...to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 25)*
 - b. *And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." (Rev. 7:11-12)*
 - c. *"honor and power and might" – that due a King!*
6. **Please:** *I want us to be done with that false Gospel of cheap grace that inevitably leads to anarchy and with it that pseudo-Christ who is Savior but not Lord. Let us have a "manly" Gospel of grace leading to obedience and faith that honors the Heavenly Father and His glorious Son, our Lord.*
7. It is informative to us that young **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** wrote his classic *The Cost of Discipleship* in 1937 in Hitler's pre-war Germany.
 - a. A time of moral, spiritual and social anarchy...
 - b. ...that gave **Adolf Hitler** supreme singular authority and power as *Reichstag Führer*.
 - c. **William Shirer:** *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*
The overwhelming majority of Germans did not seem to mind that their personal freedom had been taken away, that so much of culture had been destroyed and replaced with a mindless barbarism, or that their life and work had become regimented to a degree never before experienced even by a people accustomed for generations to a great deal of regimentation.... The Nazi terror in the early years affected the lives of relatively few Germans and a newly arrived observer was somewhat surprised to see that the people of this country did not seem to feel that they were being cowed.... On the contrary, they supported it with genuine enthusiasm. Somehow it imbued them with a new hope and a new confidence and an astonishing faith in the future of their country.
 - d. How could this happen? Anarchy reigned; an anarchy brought about the *cheap grace* and a *false Gospel*.

- e. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer:** *The Cost of Discipleship*; pp. 46-48

Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace as a doctrine, a principle, a system. It means forgiveness of sins proclaimed as a general truth, the love of God taught as the Christian “conception” of God. An intellectual assent to that idea is held to be of itself sufficient to secure remission of sins. Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. Costly grace is the Gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon His Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered Him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.

8. Commandment #5 demands **Costly Grace**: obedience.

III. THE COSTLY GRACE OF OBEDIENCE FOR CHRISTIANS

1. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* informs us of the sins against this fifth commandment as well as our duties under it.

The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defense and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government. (Westminster Larger Catechism #127)

The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against, their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections; cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonor to them and their government. (Westminster Larger Catechism #128)

2. For me to list the corrections to our lives of spiritual and moral anarchy called for in this commandment would take me several hours. Allow me to give you five brief exhortations...
3. **First:** *Parents, require your children to be respectful to you and to obey you. Do not tolerate insubordination or dishonor. Do not attempt to buy or bribe your children into compliance with your will. Act like a parent; instruct, lead, guide, set the example, discipline rebellion, reward obedience. Stop being afraid of your kids and stop trying to be their friends. You are their parents!*

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

4. **Second:** *Children and young people, honor those in authority over you by learning to listen and trust them. Do not use their failures as an excuse for rebellion. Remember this: What you do to your parents God will visit upon you from your children. Respect breeds respect. Remember God's promise.*

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)

5. **Third:** *Please honor your pastors, elders and deacons. Their job is difficult. All they can do is to teach, serve and advise you. They cannot make you obey God. Do not vent your disappointment, anger or frustration on them for their attempts to follow God's Word. Make this ministry pleasant, not painful.*

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. (Heb. 13:17)

6. **Fourth:** *Pray for our President and our government. Honor them in your speech, even when you criticize them, be very respectful. Communicate with them directly, rather than rail against them to others. Ask God to change our leaders' hearts and lives. Pray for the salvation of our political leaders.*

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. (1 Tim. 2:1-2)

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior... (Titus 3:1-6)

7. **Fifth:** *Those who exercise authority – parents, husbands, pastors, church officers, supervisors, teachers, policemen and lawyers, and elected officials: Rule with humility, temperance and grace...*
- a. *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)*
 - b. *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. (Colossians 3:21)*
 - c. *Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (Colossians 3:19)*
 - d. *Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 4:1)*

- e. *It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors; to instruct, counsel, and admonish them; countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well; and discountenancing, reprovng, and chastising such as do ill; protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body: and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God has put upon them. (Westminster Larger Catechism #129)*
8. **Remember:** If authority is unbiblical, abusive, demeaning and ungodly in focus, it will cause rebellion, incite anarchy and eventually *warrant* both rebellion against and replacement of ungodly authority.
9. Our God is a God of great power but One who always uses that power in a most humble, patient, gracious and constructive manner.
10. God prefers to teach rather than to demand...
- ...to exhort rather than to scold...
 - ...to promise rather than to threaten...
 - ...to reason with rather than overpower...
 - ...to forgive rather than to judge...
 - ...to reward rather than to punish...
 - ...to rule rather than to dominate...
 - ...to govern, to guide, to guard, to be gracious...
- ...but, because He is so great, gracious and good, He expects to be obeyed.**
11. Our God is an amazing God: *The Omnipotent Sovereign of the Universe who is easy to live with.*
12. Yep! That's true! God **is** easy to live with.
13. **A. W. Tozer:** *The Root of the Righteous; p. 13-16, "God is Easy to Live With"*
- The fellowship of God is delightful beyond all telling. He communes with His redeemed ones in an easy, uninhibited fellowship that is restful and healing to the soul. He is not sensitive nor selfish nor temperamental. What He is today we shall find Him tomorrow and the next day and the next year. He is not hard to please, though He may be hard to satisfy. He expects of us only what He has Himself first supplied. He is quick to mark every simple effort to please Him, and just as quick to overlook imperfections when He knows we meant to do His will. He loves us for ourselves and values our love more than galaxies of new created worlds. How good it would be if we could learn that God is easy to live with. He remembers our frame and knows that we are dust. He may sometimes chasten us, it is true, but even this He does with a smile, the proud, tender smile of a Father who is bursting with pleasure over an imperfect but promising son who is coming every day to look more and more like the One whose child he is.*
14. Perhaps you and I would be easier to live with, as both "superiors" and "inferiors," if we took to heart this truth: *The God of all authority is easy to live with. He is a God of grace, mercy and order.*
15. *"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet,*

*they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.
If you are willing and obedient,
you shall eat the good of the land;
but if you refuse and rebel,
you shall be eaten by the sword;
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (Isaiah 1:18-20)*

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you,
and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my
yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)*

16. *“Trust and Obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey...”*