

WEEK FOUR

LEADERSHIP

Introduction

This week, the subject is “Leadership”. While there isn’t space to discuss the breadth of the Bible’s perspectives on leadership, we will introduce three issues. First, we’ll provide an overview of the spirit of rebellion, then discuss God’s view of submission, and then close with why we chose to discuss submission at all.

Confronting Culture: Rebellion

In our day, authority is thought to be inherently corrupt. To trust authority is to betray one’s self and walk in delusion. In our culture, rebellion is the assumed and *right* posture of all thinking people. If someone questions this assumption, they’re considered a nut job. But from the beginning of time, proud rebellion has been the downfall of humanity. Adam usurped God’s authority when he rebelled against his reign. Since then, every generation has lived under the curse of rebellion. When confronting Saul, Samuel said, “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry” (I Samuel 15:22). Clearly, rebellion is a heinous sin.

In our culture, two false perceptions perpetuate rebellion. First, we think we have the right to define reality—what’s true and real. Second, we think anyone who presumes to challenge our view of reality is a violator. Jesus is reality and invites us to follow him (John 14:6). But he does so by challenging our view of reality. As these two lies work together, people in our generation see Jesus as the greatest violator. Even Christians. And our generation thinks they’re violated when someone challenges their spirit of rebellion. Even Christians.

The Gospel and Submission

Jesus’ arrival in the world was a watershed moment that initiated a great reversal. Though he didn’t want to endure the misery of crucifixion, he submitted to the Father (Matthew 26:39). In turn, the world was set free from sin and death. Rebellion didn’t save the world. Submission did.

The gospel calls all believers to respond to earthly authority—parental, pastoral, and civic—with the conviction that God is the Father of every family, Jesus is the head of his church, and Jesus is the king of the world (Romans 13:1-8; Ephesians 6:1-3; Hebrews 13:7, 17). This means everyone will give account to Jesus for their response to all three spheres of authority (I Corinthians 4:2; II Corinthians 5:10). Because our judgment is predicated on our faithfulness to his will, our primary concern should be submitting to Jesus, his Word, and the responsibility he’s delegated to us (Romans 14:4). Believers are instructed to follow Jesus by following his appointed leaders, which include: parents (Ephesians 6:1-3); spiritual leadership/elders in local churches (Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Peter 5:1-5), and civic authority, like judges and police officers (Romans 13:1-8). Every

believer (and leader) will answer to Jesus for the way they followed those appointed to lead them (I Corinthians 4:2; II Corinthians 5:10). Though leaders may err, fail, and sin, God calls his body to walk in faithfulness to his Word, even when that means following imperfect leaders.

Those appointed to spiritual authority will give account for their personal life, family, and leadership. They give account in three ways. First, they give direct account through the relationships and circumstances that affirm or correct their leadership. Second, they give account to earthly authority, other elders charged to pastor them (Galatians 2:11-21; I Timothy 5:17-20). Third, they will give account in the resurrection. Those who rule well will receive a crown of honor, a distinction given only to spiritual leaders (Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:4).

Why Discuss Submission At All?

Today, talking about submission is “out of bounds”. Aren’t we all children and priests of God? Everyone can hear God’s voice and be led by the Spirit. So, why discuss submission at all?

- The Father, Son, and Spirit share their nature and glory equally. But, the Son displayed perfect submission to the Father in his death (Matthew 26:39) and will submit to his Father when he returns the kingdom to him (I Corinthians 15:27,28).
- The nature of Satan’s kingdom is rebellion. The devil infected the world with rebellion when he successfully tempted Adam and Eve. Since the church is the embodiment of God’s presence, the place where heaven and earth intersect, we must strive to root out all forms of rebellion, whether it exists in a person, family, or entire congregation.
- In every culture, rebellion raises its ugly head, albeit in different ways. Faithful spiritual leadership identifies the larger cultural trends inconsistent with God’s kingdom and then equips God’s people to embody humility and submission. To neglect these key areas of human life is to let Satan’s kingdom reign among God’s.

Weekly Activities

This week you will do the following exercises.

1. Read Acts 10-12. Respond by answering two questions (journal if self-study; respond via the electronic platform if a group study).
 - Who is God and what is he doing?
 - Who are we and what are we called to do?
2. Do one Lectio Divina on I Peter 5:1-5.
3. Complete the worksheet *Understanding Elders* and respond to four questions.
4. Read the document *In the Lie of the Beholder* and respond to nine questions.

Here are some additional resources that may be helpful to you.

1. Twenty Six Eight’s three-part sermon series entitled *Unity*.
2. Twenty Six Eight’s eight-part sermon series entitled *Protect Your Call*.

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Worksheet: *Understanding Elders*

Elders are appointed to lead local congregations.

- Elders establish the identity (who a congregation is) of a local congregation within the confines of God's Word (Matthew 16:17-19; Acts 15).
- Elders define the vision (what it's called to do) of a local congregation.
- Elders live and articulate the principles upon which relationships and ministry are conducted—often called a philosophy of ministry or values (I & II Timothy, Titus).
- Elders ensure the vision is fulfilled by equipping leaders and the body (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- Elders train and raise up new leaders (Acts 16:1-5; II Timothy 2:2).
- Elders guide the body into a way of life that's most conducive to fulfilling God's purposes (I Timothy 3:4,5; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-4).
- Elders direct the development of spiritual, relational, and ministry components necessary to fulfill God's purposes (Acts 13:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-16).
- Elders preside over discipline issues that arise in a congregation (I Corinthians 5:1-10).
- Elders oversee the financial and physical resources of a local congregation (Acts 4:32-37; I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:1-9:15).

Elders are appointed to shepherd local congregations.

- Elders care for the spiritual, relational, and ministry needs of a local congregation. This care touches on all aspects of people's lives because the formation of the Holy Spirit touches on all aspects of people's lives (Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34; John 21:15-17).
- Elders strengthen the weak, immature, and sick through patient love, instruction, hope, prayer, and friendship (I Thessalonians 5:14).
- Elders keep watch over the souls of those they serve (Hebrews 13:17).
- Elders live as a godly example in personal and family life (I Peter 5:1-4).

Elders are appointed to protect local congregations.

- Elders guard the congregation from internal conflicts, offenses, division, and sin, even bringing correction and discipline when necessary (I Corinthians 1:10-17; 5:1-13; 11:17-34).
- Elders guard the congregation from harmful teaching and teachers (Acts 15; 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:13-16; II Timothy 4:3-5; Jude 1:1-23).
- Elders guard the congregation from ungodly, divisive people (Titus 3:10,11; III John 1:9,10).

Elders are appointed to teach local congregations.

- Elders, model, articulate, and teach the theological convictions of a congregation.
- Elders bring stability and maturity by imparting God's Word (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).

- Elders train disciples in God’s processes of formation to fulfill their calling in life and ministry (Ephesians 4:1-12; Hebrews 13:7,17,18).

Elders are appointed to serve local congregations.

- Elders serve by investing in prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-7).
- Elders serve by equipping the body to build itself up in love (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- Elders are available to do whatever needs to be done within the scope of their calling to help and bless God’s people (Matthew 20:20-28; Exodus 18:1-27; Acts 6:1-7).

1. What did you discover about elders you didn’t previously know?

2. How does this introduction affirm what you knew? How does it challenge what you know?

3. Why do you think there’s so much confusion on the subject of elders?

4. How is Jesus inviting you to respond to what you’ve learned?

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Article: *In the Lie of the Beholder*

Please read the article *In the Lie of the Beholder* by Pastor Daniel Brown ([click here](#)) and answer the following questions.

1. On pages 1-7 (sections: *Introduction, Points of Stumbling*) Pastor Daniel describes the responsibility of spiritual leaders to serve God's people in love. How did his discussion clarify important biblical concepts for you?

2. On pages 7-15 (sections: *Wolf Cries, Exploiting Abuse, Limited Disclosure, and Defining Abusive Leadership*), Pastor Daniel discusses how Christians in today's society can be guilty of sinning against God's appointed leadership. Which concept impacted you most? Have you seen this happen in a local church? Have you participated? If so, describe.

3. On pages 15-18 (sections: *Controlling Leaders, Biblical Language*), Pastor Daniel exhorts believers to use biblical language in disagreement and conflict. How did this help you reframe the way Christians should talk about disagreement and conflict with spiritual authority?

4. On pages 18-24 (sections: *Cultural Traps, Bottom Up Abuse, Accusing Smoke*), Pastor Daniel discusses multiple interrelated subjects including the victim mentality and the spirit of

accusation. In your experience, why are Christians so vulnerable to the victim spirit? Why do so many Christians lack discernment about accusations and false allegations?

5. On pages 24-36 (sections: *To Each Their Own*, *Leaders' Responsibility*, *Call to Repentance*, *Subjective Concerns*, and *Lion on the Road*), Pastor Daniel discusses the complex responsibility of pastors to lead God's people in a culture of entitlement and accusation. What did you learn about God's call to leaders? How does this reshape your view of past church conflicts you've experienced?

6. Make a list of all the churches you've attended for at least three months within the last ten years. Write down the name of the pastor you had direct relationship with. Then, *circle* every church you left due to conflict, disagreement, or offense. Use the back if necessary.

Church Name & State	Pastor's Name

7. List all the churches you circled. Indicate whether you think you have resolved the conflicts, disagreements, and offenses. How do you know? Would the pastors of those churches agree? How do you know? If some of these situations need more attention, are you willing to do what needs to be done?

Church Name & State	Resolved: Y or N

8. Using the same list you make in question six, write down the name of every church you left because didn't like the counsel the pastor gave you. Use the back if necessary. Have you resolved this departure biblically. How do you know? Would the pastors of those churches agree? How do you know? If some of these situations need more attention, are you willing to do what needs to be done?

Church Name & State	Pastor's Name	Resolved: Y or N
