

All Scripture To All Of Life

The Question

Is God's Word the supreme authority in your life?

If God's Word was the sole authority for everything you did, what would your life look like? Is God's Word directing everything you do? Is the church you attend seeking to base everything it believes and does on God's Word? Do you live life with Jesus as Lord? This short essay is written to encourage obedience to all of God's Word in every area of life. It serves to expose several errors in the Western Church today and seeks to build a theological bridge that calls for application. Simply put, God's Word is the bridge we must follow with every step taken in His light. Everything else is sinking sand. Our guiding premise is that Jesus is Lord and His Word contained in the Bible is supreme. Our prayer is that God would grant His Spirit by His grace and guide us all into His truth so that we may grow up together in Christ (Ephesians 4:13-15). The reminder of this web-site deals with our specific application of God's Word to the life of the church and family. This introductory essay is intended to provide a general framework for taking *All of Scripture to All of Life*.

The Problem

Disobedience to God's Word

My great great grandfather as well as my great grandfather were preachers and church planters. They were men who believed in the Word of God and taught that unless a man repents and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ they would perish (John 3:3). However, since these men have died, their children have not embraced their God. They have rejected the gospel. Two generations later the Christian faith is lived out by only a small minority in my family. Sadly, I have observed this not only in my own family, but in a majority of Christian families. Many of my friends from youth group and Christian school have drifted far. I wish this was simply my own experience from my corner of the world. But it is not.

The Family Life Council's study reveals this gut-wrenching reality, "88 percent of the children raised in evangelical homes leave the church at the age of 18, never to return."¹ The Barna Research Group has found similar findings stating that 2/3 of the children from evangelical /fundamentalist families will leave the church once they leave home.² Christian author and youth worker Josh McDowell has conversed with various denominational leaders who have confessed, "that between 69% and 94% of their young are leaving the traditional church after high school...and very few are returning."³ We have a problem. To make matters worse, birth rates within the Church also continue to fall. Put the heart wrenching loss of losing most churched children to the world, combined with the tragically low birth rate of the average Christian household of just

¹ Family Life Council: Southern Baptist Convention (SBC 2002 Annual Meeting, St. Louis, 2002), www.sbcannualmeeting.org/sbc02/newsroom/newspage.asp?ID=261

² George Barna, "State of the Church: 2002" (The Barna Group of Ventura, California, 2002), www.barna.org

³ Josh McDowell, The Last Christian Generation, (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006),13.

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nearly reaching the replacement level of 2.1 children / family means that currently it takes two Christian families living in this generation to get one single Christian into the next. This is moving the Christian community in the West quickly from dying to decaying. No amount of evangelistic efforts can make up for this vicious loss in the Christian home. Even though churches many count a growing number of confessions of faith, the stark reality is that of the many who make a profession of faith at world-class evangelistic meetings, only 2% to 4% are actually persevering in the faith five years later.⁴

Could it be that we in the American church have forgotten God? All the significant indicators point this direction. For example, the divorce rate among members of evangelical churches is nearly the same as the worlds.⁵ It has been reported that only half of American's Protestant pastors have even the most basic biblical worldview.⁶ Research reveals the reason why so many children from confessing Christian homes leave the church; they were never a part of it. According to Barna today only 9% of born again teens believe in moral absolutes.⁷ Barna found that of children 13 years of age, they may still be embracing the cardinal doctrines of the church, but their beliefs are isolated from their practice. This deceptive divide results in only 3% having a biblical worldview that serves as the foundation for their decision making.⁸ Scott Brown comments regarding many of the church's problems that "nearly everyone agrees that it is severely broken, but not everyone has the same answer."⁹

The Western Church has had a variety of responses to this departure from the faith, but many of them are not found in God's Word. This destructive wave in the Christian home has been growing since the 1970's with many godly, well-intentioned, men and women seeking to reverse this downward spiral. The 70's and 80's saw a sharp rise in youth work and youth ministry. According to McDowell, many removed their children out of the public government run schools and placed them in private Christian schools. Today, there are over 12,000 Christian schools in the US. But the results have not been very impressive. The Nehemiah Institute has been working to test the worldviews of students in Christian schools since 1986. After testing 20,000 students from 1000 schools what they have found is not good.¹⁰ McDowell comments on the findings, "while these students scored slightly higher than their counterparts attending public schools, only 6% of students embraced a Biblical Theism Worldview¹¹." The strangeness is that neither youth pastors, nor Christian schools are ever mentioned in

⁴ D.A. Carson, A Call To Spiritual Reformation. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 14.

⁵ Family Life Council: Southern Baptist Convention (SBC 2002 Annual Meeting, St. Louis, 2002), www.sbcannualmeeting.org/sbc02/newsroom/newspage.asp?ID=261

⁶ George Barna, "Only Half Of Protestant Pastors Have A Biblical Worldview" (The Barna Group of Ventura, California, 2004) www.barna.org.

⁷ George Barna, "Americans Are Most Likely To Base Truth on Feelings" (The Barna Group of Ventura, California, 2002), www.barna.org

⁸ George Barna, Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority. (Ventura: Regal, 2003), 37.

⁹ Scott Brown, A Weed in the Church: How a Culture of Age Segregation is Destroying the Younger Generation, Fragmenting the Family, and Dividing the Church. (Wake Forest: NCFIC, 2011), 33. See NCFIC.org for more information

¹⁰ Nehemiah Institute, Inc. PEERS Trend Chart and Explanation, (Lexington, KY: www.nehemiahinstitute.com, 2004).

¹¹ Josh McDowell, The Last Christian Generation. (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006),14.

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God's Word by command or example. Could it be that much of the Churches response has missed the mark? We must let the words of the prophet ring in our ears today:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...Because you have forgotten the law of your God; I also will forget your children. (Hosea 4:6)

Let us get to the root of the problem. The vain philosophies of the American culture have so blinded the hearts and minds of believers, that we have lost our way in our own homes and in the Church. The Scriptures warn us, "beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ (Colossians 2:8)." If we had Christ and His Word alive in our homes and in the churches of America we would not be having this rotten fruit.

The gospel according to Jesus always produces fruit. The gospel according to men's wisdom produces death (James 3:13-18). There is no middle ground. Jesus said those who are not with Him are against Him (Luke 11:23). He also told us that it is not the one who hears the Word who will be saved from destruction, but the one who hears His Word and obeys (Matt. 7:24-27). This is consistent with the Bible's teaching that salvation is all of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Grace teaches us to stay on the narrow path (Titus 2:11-12). The true gospel always produces the good works that God has prepared for those who are saved (Matthew 7:20; Ephesians 2:10). The gospel produces fruit for the individual, fruit for the home and fruit in His Church. Peter gives an invitation to the gospel by preaching:

"Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:38-39)."

Have you repented and received the remission of sins in the name of Jesus? Are you experiencing the filling of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)? Have you embraced the gospel promise for yourself (John 3:16)? Have you embraced the gospel promise for your children? Do you share this with the lost? Recovering the true gospel will revolutionize your life. The gospel is designed for your children. A gospel centered life is a life that is concerned about the future generations that live in your own home, as well as those who are outside. Given the fact that a majority of Christians are losing their children to the world; what does that say about their gospel? Do you see the problem? The majority of Christian churches have embraced a false understanding of the gospel, in part or in whole. Writing on why evangelicals are living just like the world Ronald Sinder sees the heart of the problem as a "one-sided, unbiblical, reductionist understanding of the gospel and salvation."¹² When the gospel is reduced to the repeating of a formula it inevitably produces faith in form rather than faith in God. This 'salvation' may have a form of godliness but it denies God's power (2 Timothy 3:5). This kind of 'faith' never produces holiness (Hebrews 12:14). It is not saving faith (James 2:14; 1 John 2:3-4).

¹² Ronald Sinder, The Scandal Of The Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like The Rest Of The World? (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 57.

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Real faith always works (James 2:14-26). Please acknowledge this deep deception with repentance and faith so you can come to the simplicity that is in Christ (Colossians 2:8).

For those who have tasted of God's saving grace we must be willing to take all of Scripture and apply it to every area of life. Remember, Jesus is Lord and His Word is supreme. Christ commanded us in the Great Commission not to go make converts or church members, but disciples. Disciples are those who follow Him. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me (John 10:27)." Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed (John 8:31)." Disciples are identified as those who are baptized into His name and observe all things that He has commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). If you have been identified with Christ then it is imperative that you observe all His commands. Those who embrace the gospel also embrace His Word – all of it!

ALL OF SCRIPTURE

Seeing God's Standard

God told us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17)." When this verse was first penned by the apostle Paul in the first century it would have been read as referring to the Old Testament as the New Testament had not been fully written. There are some today who wrongly believe the Old Testament is not for the New Testament believer's instruction. Yet, this verse teaches the opposite. We must affirm that all of Scripture (all sixty-six books) are inspired and are profitable for instructing today's believers. For a clear example of this study 1 Corinthians 10. After quoting several passages from the Old Testament Law Paul states that, "all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Corinthians 10:11)." The word admonition means that which corrects your belief and behavior. Paul is stating clearly that the Old Testament Law was written for the New Testament believer to correct his belief and behavior (Romans 15:4). We believe 'All Of Scripture' is both inspired and sufficient, even the Old Testament. We do take into account the discontinuity between the Old and New Testament as God requires (for example the book of Hebrews). But we must not miss the ethical instruction God has for all New Testament believers found in both Testaments. What God has spoken let men not despise.

God told us that His Scripture is profitable so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Do you believe that about your Bible? Do you believe that the Bible has the perfect answer to instruct you in everything that is good? Another way to say that something is profitable and complete is to say that it is sufficient. That means it does not need anything added to it because it is perfect. It also means that every part of it is essential. Nothing should be taken away from it. It is all one needs; nothing more and nothing less. God's Word specifically states four general areas where it is sufficient. These four areas serve to lay a foundation for all that is God's will for all men. First, Scripture is sufficient for doctrine, which means Scripture is all one needs for right believing. Second, Scripture is sufficient

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for reproof, which means that Scripture is all one needs to guide us in removing falsehood. Third, Scripture is sufficient for correction, which means it is able to guide one away from error and bring one to truth. Fourth, Scripture is sufficient for instruction in righteousness, which means Scripture is all we need to direct us to what is right before God. We have been given a sure Word from our Great God, let us cling to His Word and “hold fast the pattern of sound words (2 Timothy 2:13)”. All of Scripture is profitable, thus we need not look else ware. “Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth. The Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 17:24, 2:6).”

Wayne Grudem defines the sufficiency of Scripture as follow: “*The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God He intended His people to have at each stage of redemption history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.*”¹³ God’s Word is the complete standard. We do not need to look else ware to find the answers we need to live out a life that is pleasing to God. Please consider these seven truths regarding the sufficiency of Scripture adapted from Grudem: (1) Take every thought captive (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:5-6). (2) We are to add nothing to Scripture. (3) No other book is of equal value with Scripture (2 Cor. 10:5-6). (4) God does not require us to believe anything about Himself or His will that is not found in Scripture (John 15:7-8). (5) The sufficiency of Scripture teaches us that no ‘modern revelations’ are to ever be accepted or placed on a level equal to Scripture in authority (Deut. 13:1-4). (6) Nothing is required of us by God that is not commanded in Scripture either explicitly or by implication. (7) We must emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and be content with what God has told us (Deut. 29:29).¹⁴

This is how the London Baptist Confession of 1689 speaks of Scripture:
“The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.”

The Westminster Confession of faith affirms:
“The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.”

Westminster Confession of Faith (Glasgow City: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994), 24.

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the

¹³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Great Britain: Inter-Varsity & Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 127.

¹⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Great Britain: Inter-Varsity & Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 130-134.

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heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:7-14)

Because of our belief in the sufficiency of Scripture we believe in what the Reformers referred to as the regulative principle. This simply means that we believe that Scripture should regulate all that we do. It understands this both in the negative as well as in the positive (Deut 12:32). In the negative it means that we should not transgress God's negative commands. The Ten Commandments are examples of negative commands (Exodus 20:1-17). In the positive, it means that we must obey and worship God in the way that He has commanded us to worship and obey Him. Jesus told us that "the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him (John 4:23)." God is not pleased when we do not worship Him in truth. For example, God commanded the children of Israel how they were to worship Him with their censers. Nabad and Abihu decided they would like to worship God close to how He commanded, but not exactly how the Lord commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them (Leviticus 10:1-3). In the New Testament the problem with the Pharisees was that they added their traditions to the positive commands of Scripture. They obscured the normal application of God's commands with their own applications. Jesus confronted them and called them to stop "making the word of God of no effect through your traditions (Mark 7:13)". We must take heed to our Lord's words. God destroyed the nation of Israel in 70 AD because they placed their ideas over God's commands. We are not at liberty to add anything to God's Word or take anything from it. Even if we think we have a very good idea, if it cannot be supported from Scripture it should not be supported by God's people. Thus, if it is not in Scripture either by command, example, practice, or principle we believe it is not something that would be pleasing to God. We understand this will take spiritual discernment to work this out, but we are called to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). We desperately need God's Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). For those who embrace all that God has spoken we, "thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13)."

Many confessing Christians today presume that God is pleased with them when He is not. As in the days of Judges, we live in a day when men feel very free to presume upon God. We presume upon God when we do what we want, rather than what God has commanded. The vast majority of Christians in the West reject the regulative principle because they presume they are 'free in Christ' to be led by their hearts to do what is right. This sin of presumption blinds the heart from obeying God at His Word. If we lack faith

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in the sufficiency of Scripture, we will naturally embrace the normative principle and reject the regulative principle. The normative principle teaches that a person is ‘free’ to do whatever seems best, so long as they do not transgress the negative commands of Scripture. When faced with an ethical question they will seek if God has commanded them not to do it. If He has not, they believe they are ‘free’ to choose for themselves. It is like the teen asking how far they can go in dating, rather than asking God how pure they should be. We would ask if one even should be ‘dating’ or is courtship the pattern in Scripture for God’s people? By only looking for the negative, legal, prohibition one misses the beauty of truly obeying Christ and standing in the liberty of being His slave (Romans 6). This faithless faith is the current expression of modern legalism.¹⁵ Remember, biblical freedom is found only in obeying God’s truth (John 8:30-36).

Let us look at one telling example the majority of Christians presume they have God’s will, when they do not. Please note both how you think as well as what you think regarding the issue of birth control. Because the use of birth control is not explicitly forbidden in Scripture, the majority believe they are ‘free’ to use it. If you think like this please reconsider both your conclusion and how you came to that conclusion. We are not bound only to the negative commands in Scripture, but also to obey and delight in the positive ones. Thus, let us find out what is acceptable to the Lord and base our applications on ‘*All of Scripture*’. Here are just a few passages that reveal the heart of God regarding the giving and blessing of children (Genesis 1:28; 9:6-17; 20:8-18; 25:21; 29:31 – 30:22; Deuteronomy 28:4 / 18; Ruth 4:13; 1 Samuel 1:1-28; Psalm 127; Psalm 128; Hosea 9:14; 1 Timothy 2:15; Titus 2:1-5). Let us not forget our recent history regarding the use of birth control. Just over a hundred years ago the use of birth control was regarded as sin by most churches. The revolutionary feminist and founder of Planned Parenthood, Margaret Sanger challenged her generation in the early 1900’s until her death in 1966 with unashamed feminism. She stated in her first newspaper, *The Woman Rebel* that “Birth control appeals to the advanced radical because it is calculated to undermine the authority of the Christian Churches.”¹⁶ This must be seen in the larger context of the war against the Christian family.

The reason those who claim to know God in the West yet are experiencing such bad fruit in their lives and in the lives of their children is because of disobedience to God’s Word. The reason so many churches are not uniting families with the truth of God’s Word is because they are disobedient to God’s Word. God has revealed what He requires of all man, “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams (1 Samuel 15:22).” This means that it is better to obey what God has said than to think of religious ideas that we believe would please Him. Samuel the prophet made this statement to King Saul because God told Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites. Saul, on the other hand, wanted to please the people and believed it would be better to keep some of the sheep to sacrifice to the Lord. Everyone thought it was a great idea, until Samuel the prophet revealed God’s perspective. He said, “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [also translated presumption] is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:22-23).” Think about that last statement.

¹⁵ see christlifemin.org/feature_articles/reverse_phariseeism.pdf

¹⁶ George Grant. *Grand Illusions: The Legacy of Planned Parenthood*. (Tenn: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988), 61.

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Samuel goes on to instruct Saul that his root problem was pride. When he was small in his own eyes, God was big and he was able to carry out his calling as king. But now he thought he could improve upon what God had commanded. Pride has intoxicated modern man as he seeks to 'improve' upon what God has commanded with more 'relevant ideas'. God is not impressed with man's thoughts concerning how he may wish to please Him. God simply has commanded that all men obey Him. Scripture teaches us that the one who trusts in his own heart is a fool (Prov. 28:26). Let us turn from this foolishness so we may live. Our Lord stated that "it is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)" "Hear the Word of the Lord, You who tremble at His Word" and receive all of His Word as the standard for life (Isaiah 66:5). "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20)." "He who despises the word will be destroyed, But he who fears the commandment will be rewarded (Proverbs 13:13)." Jesus said, "the thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10)."

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Applying God's Standard

Having received God's Word and embraced it as God's standard for everything it speaks about is the first step in the journey of a thousand miles. The next step is to live out God's Word in every inch of your life. This will test your faith as to what you truly believe about Scripture. Remember, all obedience to God's Word must first be based upon God's work of regeneration. Salvation is by grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone, and is always the only foundation for obedience (Ephesians 2:8-10). Regeneration (born again) is what occurs when God gives dead sinners His eternal life. Real life, then becomes the testing ground for what one truly believes. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:12)." If you know Christ you will love to obey His commands (John 14:21; 1 John 2:3-5). If you do not know Christ you will not like His commands (John 3:19-20; 1 John 2:4). If you have God's life in you; He will progressively change your life through His Word (John 17:17). This change is the process of becoming more like Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). Growth or sanctification occur as a believer obeys God's Word (1 Peter 2:1-3). Those who have tasted of God's grace in salvation, by faith in Christ love the sanctifying commands of God that keep us from sin (Psalm 119:11). John Bunyan speaks to us today with convicting insight into family priorities, "Many Christians live and do in this world as if religion were but a by-business, and this world the one thing necessary-when, indeed all the things of this world are but things by-the-by, and religion only the one thing needful (Luke 10:40-42)."¹⁷

¹⁷ John Bunyan cited in A Theology of the Family. Ed. Jeff Pollard; Scott Brown (Wake Forest: NCFIC, 2014), 357.

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“And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42)

We need to simply sit at Jesus feet and focus all our attention on hearing His Word, so we can believe it and obey. May God grant us such a heart!

Idolatry: the wrong standard

However, one of the great barriers to applying Scripture in every area of life is the blinding error of compartmentalism. It is one of the most elusive false gods of our day because it draws devotion away from God by denying the Lordship of Christ. It is a humanistic way of thinking that makes man the measure of all things. It must fall before all of Scripture can be applied to all of life.

Compartmentalism happens when we are told that we can live out truth in one area of our life, but not in all areas. It seeks to put God’s Word in compartments according to the will of men. The pagan religions tried to compartmentalize the God of Israel so they could defeat Him. For example, the Syrian’s thought Israel’s God was confined to being the “God of the hills” but not the God of the plain (1 Kings 20:23).” They wrongly believed that if they could fight them in the plain that their gods would be stronger. This is what God had to say when they tried to compartmentalize Him:

"Thus says the LORD: Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.' " And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians in one day. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men who were left. And Ben-Hadad fled (1 Kings 20:28-30).”

The idolatry of compartmentalism in our day thrives on making false compartments between the private and public world. This is as foolish as saying God is the God of the mountains, but not the valleys. It sees life through separate and isolated man made compartments and categories. For example, we have religious truth for Sunday, but embrace secular ‘wisdom’ come Monday. Author Nancy Pearcey makes the observation that in a society where there is a sharp distinction between the public and the private sphere there will ultimately be a loss of meaning for both. If the public sphere is filled with “objective scientific knowledge” that cannot be questioned by religion than all that is left is a morally neutral private sphere. This results in a wash of moral relativism in the private sphere, where “religion is not considered an objective truth to which one must submit, but only a matter of personal taste which one chooses.”¹⁸ Barna sees the

¹⁸ Nancy Pearcey, Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity. (Wheaton Ill: Crossway, 2004), 20.

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embracing of relativism under the guise of the Christian faith as one of the great deceptions of our day because it facilitates comfort with sin¹⁹.

This compartmentalization is why a believer can ‘believe’ something about the Bible, but not feel a duty to apply it to one’s life. One may know some doctrinal truths about God and the Bible as facts, but those facts are not lived out in daily life. Thus, the world’s philosophy compartmentalizes God’s truth by placing it into boxes. In one small box goes religious truth, while the ‘real’ world is lived in another box. Author Philip Lancaster, has observed that while many Christians hold to a form of godliness, they are practical humanists in the fabric of their daily lives.²⁰ A Church that has divorced its ethics from its education and discipleship only encourages this practical humanism. The separation of ethics from education further paves the way for compartmentalism to flourish. This becomes fuel for every form of hypocrisy imaginable. At its core it teaches that the ultimate authority as to whether or not the Scripture will be obeyed, is found in the authority of Self. It feeds the flesh by whispering, ‘I can do what I want, when I want, how I want’. Everything is a matter of personal choice and ‘freedom’. Self assumes the right to assign the categories that define personal choice, freedom, and personal salvation. This stands in contrast to God defining them and calling all men to repent and obey His Word or be destroyed (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). “Let God be true but every man a liar (Romans 3:4).”

Compartmentalization is taught in every fabric of the American society. Once I worked as an activity coordinator at a boys home in the city of Philadelphia. I began having Bible studies with a group of boys that was consistent with my job description to provide moral instruction to them. One day my supervisor called me into his office and expressed thankfulness for my Christian faith, but stated that religious faith was something that should be practiced at home and not in the public sphere of work. Ironically, the boys home was initially founded as a religious home. This is a classic example of the worldly philosophy of compartmentalization. You can have your truth in your private world, just don’t live it out in the public sphere of life. I respectfully disagreed with my boss and lovingly showed him why I could not provide moral instruction without my Bible. Every good work a Christian does is always to be in Jesus name (Mark 9:41). God used this to open many doors for me to share His truth without compromise.

It was during the modern era (19th and 20th century) that God was officially voted out of ‘public’ life. This compartmentalism in the ‘public’ sphere is what laid the foundation for relativism in the ‘private’ sphere which ushered in the postmodern era (end of the 20th century to now). After generations of Americans have rejected God in the public sphere today’s ‘Christians’ are rejecting God’s truth in the private sphere. The postmodern belief is that truth does not matter because it is only a matter of interpretation and personal choice. Christians have not gone so far as to deny the existence of absolute truth, but the effect of relativism is that it has convinced a generation of professing Christians that God’s truth does not need to be applied in their ‘private’ world. Here is a catastrophic example, today less than 1 out of every 20 families have any type of worship

¹⁹ George Barna, “Barna Identifies Seven Paradoxes Regarding America’s Faith” (The Barna Group of Ventura, California, 2002), www.barna.org.

²⁰ Philip Lancaster, Family Man, Family Leader: Biblical Fatherhood as the Key to a Thriving Family. (San Antonio: Vision Forum, 2003), 223.

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together, and 90% of parents, who regularly attend church do not read the Bible, pray (other than at meals) or do any type of service with their children during a typical month outside of church.²¹ That means that of the faithful, church-going family's in a typical church, only one family out of twenty is even remotely practicing authentic expressions of faith in the 'private' sphere of their home. The rest are compartmentalized. The result is that God's truth is not a priority. When God is not the priority you always have idolatry. When you have generational idolatry among the people of God to the third and fourth generations you have judgment (Exodus 20:3-4).

This crisis in the Christian home is a crisis for the Church. Yet, the modern church has not been able to significantly challenge this idolatry in the home because it has been blinded by the idol of pragmatism. Pragmatism uses human standards to judge the effectiveness of an activity and sets aside the commands of God as standards to judge a practice or application. Simply put, pragmatism states that if it 'works' it is good, right, and true. Thus, if a certain practice brings people into a church building a pragmatic pastor assumes the practice must be good because it produced his desired outcome.

This has left many churches completely defenseless to stand against the world for Christ (James 4:4). When a church pragmatically focuses on meeting the felt needs of the lost rather than focusing on meeting real needs defined by God's Word, it quickly accommodates the culture and loses its ability to correct it. The problem with cultural accommodation is that it is a very effective way to draw people into the door. The deceptive power of the worldly philosophy of pragmatism is that it often does work. The evil is that it drives its evaluation only on the basis of what it produces and not God's Word. This may be fine for a machine, but it is devastating for churches.

Pragmatism has with it the promise of deceit when the fruit of raising numbers starts to fill the pews. It can move a biblical church into idolatry very quickly. The old adage is true, what you win them with you win them too. The result of churches drawing in members based on slick advertisements, rock'n'roll, and an upbeat message based on men's wisdom has served to accommodate churches that are full of members who do not know God. God's test of approval is not whether it 'works' but if it is consistent with His Word (2 Timothy 2:15). His truth is the standard for success in His sight (Amos 7:7-8). The Word says if one's aim is to please men, one cannot be a servant of God (Galatians 1:10). Fearing man leads only to compromise (Proverbs 29:25). Alan Wolfe, a sociologist from Boston College, states this about the contemporary minded church, "so strong a desire to copy the culture of hotel chains and popular music that it loses what religious distinctiveness it once had."²² Wolfe chronicles "the passing of the old time religion" in the areas of worship, fellowship, doctrine, tradition, morality, sin, witness, and identity and contrasts them with current expressions of religion. His conclusion is that the United States has transformed Christ, and that "in every aspect of the religious life, American faith has met American culture – and American culture has triumphed."²³

²¹ George Barna, Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your Church's #1 Priority. (Ventura: Regal, 2003), 78.

²² Alan Wolfe, The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith. (New York: Simon & Schuster: 2003), 257.

²³ Alan Wolfe, The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith. (New York: Simon & Schuster: 2003), 3.

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God has called the Church to be salt and light against the wicked lies of the culture. One of the God given purposes for the church is to support the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). If God's truth is not a priority, biblical ministry will be left by the wayside. The drift away from biblical ministry has enabled the modern church to embrace priorities that often are not all that important in the eyes of God. Barna performed extensive research to determine the priorities of the church in 2005, revealing the two lowest priorities among a list of ministry choices was ministry to families (4%) and at the bottom was prayer (3%).²⁴ When there is a priority problem there is idolatry.

When idolatry is combined with truth the result is syncretism. Syncretism is the combination of truth with error that weds to produce a "new" and distinct religion. It is "new" in that it is not consistent with the Bible or with the ancient faith of orthodox Christianity. It despises the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16). Yet, it is distinct from the complete godless world around it as it does have some elements of Christian truth and biblical confession. Examples of these in our day are all too numerous. This counterfeit Christian religion functioning within evangelical Christianity consists of a compartmentalization of truth that fragments and destroys the Church and the family. It presents God's truth as relative, optional, and unimportant. This facilitates comfort with sin, and complacency toward God. Speaking to an earlier generation, J. Gresham Machen observed that when this occurs in the name of Christianity the religion that emerges is "not Christianity at all, but a religion which is so entirely different from Christianity as to belong in a distinct category".²⁵ There is nothing new or good about syncretism as the Bible reminds us, "they feared the LORD, yet served their own gods, according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away (2 Kings 17:33)." The bottom line, because the Church in America has failed to live out the commands of God, its deception is great and without repentance its destruction is sure (Revelation 2:5). Do not be deceived.

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6:46-49)

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25)

²⁴ George Barna, "Church Priorities for 2005 Vary Considerably." (The Barna Group of Ventura, California, 2005) www.barna.org

²⁵ Gresham J Machen, Christianity & Liberalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923), 6-7.

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Let us look into the perfect law that gives liberty and continue in it. Let us return to God by seeking Him according to His Word. Let us resolve to obey his commands in every inch of our lives that we would be doers of the word and not hearers only. Let us repent of compartmentalizing God's precious truth and rejecting His Lordship. Jesus is Lord and His Word is supreme. Let us take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Let us take *All of Scripture to All of Life*.

God's Standard Sets Jurisdictions

God is the only One who has the authority to establish categories or spheres of knowledge. We revealed the idolatrous nature of compartmentalism and pragmatism so God's people can be saved from this idolatrous way of thinking to serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9). The reset button in our minds needs to be pushed several times. God has established spheres of authority that serve as the basis for a Christian worldview. Please allow God to rearrange the 'furniture of our mind' so you can see clearly to apply His truth.

The spheres of authority that God has established are often called jurisdictions. God has established three jurisdictions (1) the family (2) the Church (3) and the State. The word jurisdiction comes from two Latin words *juris*, which refers to Law, and *diction*, which means to speak. Jurisdiction means the act of speaking and applying Law. It involves the recognition of legitimate authority to govern and apply Law. It addresses *who* has authority, as well as, *what* that authority constitutes. God is the Law speaker who has established all legitimate authority. God Himself is the only One who is qualified to set categories or spheres of authority. God is also the only One who is qualified to ordain how He wants what He wants to operate. We must come to grasp that God has given His Law-Word to regulate *who* will exercise authority, and *what* that exercise of that authority should look like in every area of life.

God stated clearly "there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God (Romans 13:1)." The Greek word found in Scripture that is translated *authority* in this text is *exousia*. It corresponds to our Latin based English word for jurisdiction in many ways. It deals with who has the right to control or govern a specific area or jurisdiction (Luke 19:17). Because legitimate authority comes only from God, illegitimate authority is against God. Righteousness, goodness, and truth can only flow out of God's legitimate authority. Illegitimate authority encourages unrighteousness and wickedness and must be opposed. Legitimate authority carries with it the weight of God's divine authority (Romans 13:1). Legitimate authority carries out God's will on earth. Legitimate authority is to be honored and obeyed (2 Peter 2:13-17). When men assume authority over something God has not given or commanded them in it is an illegitimate authority. This abuse of authority is to be resisted as obedience is always to be directed to God (Acts 5:29). The Christian is to resist the misuse of authority by overcoming evil with good (Romans 12:21; 1 Peter 3:9).

Jesus was constantly asked who gave Him the authority to do what He did. These contemporaries of Jesus were asking a legitimate jurisdictional question, they just did not want to hear His answer (Matthew 21:23, 27; Mark 1:27; 11:28, 33; Luke 4:36; 20:2,8; John 12:49). The child of God must learn to think in terms of legitimate jurisdictions and biblical authority. We must ask the jurisdictional questions: *who* has the authority, and

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what does that authority authorize that person to do. We must recognize that all authority is from God. He is the only Sovereign Lord who alone possesses unlimited power and authority (Revelation 4:11). The servant of God must humbly accept that God has delegated a limited authority to the jurisdictions He has established on earth. These three jurisdictions of family, Church and State were created by the spoken Law of God and are to be regulated according to His Law-Word as well.

We will now take a brief look at the purpose, nature, and function of each jurisdiction God has established. The overall purpose of everything is to glorify God (Jude 1:25). The way God has ordained for the jurisdictions to give Him glory is for them to fulfill their specific purpose God has given to them. When men see this and recognize God in all of life we see the beautiful wisdom of God. Each jurisdiction complements the other. Everything works together in harmony under the direction of the Master.

Jurisdiction Given To The Family

The first jurisdiction or institution that God established is the family. It is the foundation of all other jurisdictions. God created the family on day six of the creation (Genesis 1:26-2:24). The purpose of the family is to bear the image of God and, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28)." This means that each family has been given the family mission statement to have as many children as God gives them; harness the earth's resources and use them for the benefit of their families as good stewards for the honor of God. God uniquely created the man to fulfill the family mission statement to provide, protect and direct his family to obey God (Genesis 2:15-16). God uniquely created the woman to fulfill the family mission statement as her husband's soul-mate, helper, and life-giver (Genesis 2:18-25; 3:20). Male and female were uniquely created to function within the covenant of marriage to accomplish the purpose God gave to the family (Genesis 2:24). All of Scripture builds upon this foundation for the family and never contradicts it. The family then has jurisdiction over its children (Ephesians 6:1-4). The family has jurisdiction over land or property as it is called to exercise dominion over the earth. The authority given to masters over slaves (today's employer to employee) builds upon the authority given to families to take dominion of the earth (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22). Private property is given by God to the family to control. The Ten Commandments are given to regulate the proper use of jurisdictional authority for the family (Exodus 20:1-17). The first four specify how families are to relate to God. The last six largely protect the integrity of the family. For example, the fifth command recognizes parental authority and commands children to honor their parents. The sixth command protects the human life that comes from families. The seventh command protects the marriage bed from perversion. The eighth command protects the property of the family. The ninth command deals with just dealings between families. The tenth command deals with the heart issue every family has to address as God commanded, "you shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's (Exodus 20:17)." God loves families. He created us to come from families and to live within families. He is

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the One who has given the family its jurisdiction and His Word is given to regulate all that is good for the family.

Thus, the God given purpose given to the family is to fulfill the dominion mandate. This is *what* the family is to do. God never changed this. Rather the entirety of Scripture builds upon the foundation for the home set forth in Genesis. God created a wonderful harmonious division of labor. He uniquely created *who* would carry out His will in the home. He uniquely created men to be the servant leader, and gentle father to provide, protect and direct the home (Ephesians 5:25- 6:4). God uniquely created women to be the submissive help mate and mother who nurtures life (Ephesians 5:22-24). The institution of marriage is between one man and one woman who covenant before God to form a one flesh relationship becoming husband and wife. Biblical marriage is what initiates the jurisdictional responsibilities of each family unit (Genesis 2:24-25). Children are the fruit of the womb who are to honor and obey the authority God has given to their parents (Psalm 127; Ephesians 6:1-3). This is all in the Lord (Ephesians 5:22,25,6:1,4). Those who reject the purpose and function of the family blaspheme the Word of God (Titus 2:3-5). Those who by faith accept the purpose and function of the family are blessed as they express mutual submission to the Lord Jesus Christ in the jurisdiction of the family (Ephesians 5:21; Psalm 128). Choose this day whom you will serve (Joshua 24:15).

Jurisdiction Given To The State

The second jurisdiction is the State. Here are two passages that clearly state the purpose of the State is to punish evildoers and praise those who do good.

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good (1 Peter 2:13-14).”

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing (Romans 13:1-6).”

Both passages make it clear that it is God who has established the authority of the State. Men are commanded by God to recognize this legitimate authority and submit to it. God has given the State the authority to use the sword to punish evil and praise to encourage good. God chooses ministers to be civil magistrates who will carry out His will to

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“execute wrath on him who practices evil”. One of the most important questions in our day is who determines what is good and what is evil. The humanist dogmatically assumes that man is the one who must determine what is good and evil. He uses compartmentalization to ‘get God out’ of the State so he can set himself up as a god and rule the state to carry out the wicked ideas in his heart. The Christian believes it is God who determines what is good and evil in His Word (1 Timothy 1:8-10). During the founding of America this country’s founding fathers were Christians who believed that God was the One Lawgiver who defined good and evil in His Law-Word (James 4:12). As such, 34% of all quotations in the Framers’ writings came from the Bible, with the book of Deuteronomy being quoted the most.²⁶ They understood the purpose and function of legitimate authority for all of life, as imperfect as they were. Today we have incredible confusion and judgment because we have rejected God’s purposes. When a nation changes God’s definitions of good and evil and asserts its own politically correct definitions that nation is under judgment. The prophet cries out, “woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20-21)”

The potential misuse of the State’s God given authority is great. Thus, it is essential that good civil magistrates be chosen to carry out the legitimate purposes of government. Again, who defines what is good and right to qualify one as a good civil magistrate? If you have the faith to take *All of Scripture to All of Life*, God has given wise characteristics of a good civil magistrate in Exodus 18:21.

“Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them ...(Exodus 18:21).”

When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule the people grow (Proverbs 29:2). Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34). The character of the people reflects the character of their leaders (1 Samuel 8:7). God is sovereign and uses both righteous and wicked rulers to accomplish His sovereign purposes. God requires all rulers to acknowledge that the “most High God rules in the kingdom of men and appoints over it whomever He chooses (Daniel 5:21).” God has given us the jurisdiction of the State to accomplish His purpose. He has give His Word to regulate and give definition to that purpose. He has given us wise qualification for civil leaders. If we believe that Jesus is Lord (even over our government) and His Word is supreme we will be blessed with right applications that honor God (Psalm 33:12). We will rightly understand that God’s Law is higher than man’s law. Rousas John Rushdoony reminds us that in any culture the source of law is the god of that society²⁷. If we reject God and His Law-Word as the basis of Law we will view humanity as god and man’s law will be supreme. Then we will grow under the

²⁶ Lutz & Hyneman, *America Political Science Review* 189 (1984).

²⁷ Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes Of Biblical Law*. Vol one (USA: Presbyterian & Reformed Pub, 1973),4.

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tyranny of man's lawless laws. There is one Lawgiver, let us have no other gods before Him (James 4:12).

Jurisdiction Given To The Church

The third jurisdiction is the Church. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself established the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by being the "fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:23)". The Church is not a building, it is the people of God - the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18, 24). It is the physical (flesh and blood) manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world. As such, the one unique quality of the Church on earth is that it has been give life. The word church simply means an *assembly* of people. The church is an assembled group of called out believers. Those chosen by the Father come to Christ, the Head to receive His eternal life (Ephesians 1:4; 2:5). This life comes from the victory over sin and death that Christ accomplished in His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). Those who have the Son have life and those who do not have the Son do not have life (1 John 5:12). The Church is composed only of believers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). All who have received this life are baptized into His body the moment they are saved (1 Corinthians 12:13). The mission and authority of the Church is given by her Lord in the Great Commission.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Lord's mission for His people is very simple. Jesus is Lord, He has all authority. He gives His Church jurisdictional authority over the entire earth to make disciples. That is a twofold process of seeing people identify with the Lord Jesus in baptism and obedient to the Lord Jesus in all that He has commanded. This is *what* His Church is to do.

How the Lord's Church is to do this is by being the "pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15)." The Lord's Church is to support His truth by preaching (2 Timothy 4:2) and by practice (John 13:35; James 1:22). We must confess a biblical orthodoxy and live a biblical orthopraxy. The Lord has given His Word to regulate all that is preached and practiced in His Church (2 Timothy 1:3). If it is not in His Word, it is not for His Church. He also gave His Church the Holy Spirit who gives His power for the proclamation of His Word (1 Thessalonians 1:5) and the ability to understand Christ (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). The Holy Spirit guides us to pray and apply God's Word according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit directs the ministry of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Acts 13:2).

The Lord Jesus is the sovereign Head over His Church (Colossians 1:18). He is the one Senior or Chief Pastor (1 Peter 5:4). Thus, He alone is qualified to give under-shepherds to pastor His sheep. These elders are given the authority from Christ to equip the saints for the work of ministry until everyone is conformed to Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). The tool that Christ has given pastors for the equipping of the saints is His Word

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spoken in love (Ephesians 4:14-15). The office of overseer carries the authority of Christ when used within the legitimate jurisdiction Christ has given (Hebrews 13:17). This spiritual authority then must only be recognized on those whom the Holy Spirit has “made overseers to shepherd the church of God” (Acts 20:28). This is why some of the most important instructions given for the proper functioning of leadership in the Lord’s Church sets qualifications for *who* is qualified to lead. The vast majority of errors in the Western Church will only be fixed when we take the qualifications of elders serious (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

It is elders who are charged with the glorious responsibility of pasturing the local expressions of the body of Christ found in local churches. They will give an account to Christ for this stewardship (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Corinthians 3:9-15). The elders oversee the ministry of the Church in Christ’s stead. If the Lordship of Christ is being denied and His Word held in contempt they, along with the church, must obey the Lord and confront those in error (Titus 1:9; Matthew 18:15-20). The church has been given church discipline as an essential tool that Christ commands His true Church to use on all who will not obey His Word (Matthew 18:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). Failure to enact Christ’s discipline in His body against those who will not submit to His Word is high treason against Christ.

Is Jesus recognized as Lord of the local church you attend? Is His Word the supreme Word that everything is based upon? Is Christ’s discipline practiced on those within the church who will not obey His Word? Please consider one of the letters the Lord wrote to the lukewarm churches:

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked -- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 3:15-22)."

The Wisdom of Complementary Jurisdictions

The three jurisdictions given to men were designed by God to operate according to His purpose, regulated by His Word. God created these jurisdictions to complement one another. When Jesus is recognized as Lord and His Word supreme there is a beautiful harmony that may be experienced on earth. This blessing will look like life; families who produce human life (Genesis 1:26), a State that protects life (Genesis 9:6), and a Church that proclaims Life (Philippians 2:16). Sometimes people will ask which jurisdiction is the most important. The answer is God. It is wrong to think of one jurisdiction as being ‘better’ or more important than the others when all three spheres are a reflection of His

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authority and based on His will. The right question is who is Lord over all so that His Word gives an essential balance to all three institutions. I am not saying this as it relates to the gospel. The proclamation of the gospel by the Church is the centerpiece of what God is doing on earth in Christ. We must see how all of Scripture applies to all of life in the three jurisdictions that God established to create, protect, and grant life.

The family has been given the rod to shape life, the State has been given the sword to protect life, and the Church has been given the keys to keep life. Satan is the enemy of life. He is attacking all that God has said with rebellious sin. Sin is a lack of conformity unto, or transgression of, the Law-Word of God (1 John 3:4). Sin brings utter confusion to all of life because it confuses God's authority on earth. Satan invites rebellion and confusion on earth by elevating one jurisdiction over all the others. For example, today secular humanists elevate the State in a way that usurps the God-given authority of the Church and home. On the other hand, many churches have believed themselves to be the most important and have usurped the rule of God's Word by trampling on the jurisdictions of the State and home. The Crusades are a horrible example of what happens when the Church picks up the sword of the State. We must be clear and purposeful in taking all of God's Word and applying it to every area of life so biblical jurisdictions are built-up.

The family has uniquely been given the jurisdictional blessing of being the human source of physical life on earth. The family has been created, equipped, and commissioned to nurture and sustain life in a multi-generational context (Psalm 78:1-8). The family has been given the rod to discipline its members so that life is protected and preserved for generations to come (Proverbs 29:15, Ephesians 6:1-4). This is the family's jurisdiction before God. Neither the State nor the Church should infringe or discourage the family from carrying out its God-given purpose. For example, neither the State nor the Church should seek to educate the children that belong to the family. God has not given them this jurisdiction. This is why we are against government public education and the Sunday Schools that are patterned after them. God commanded the family to instruct, educate and disciple its members, and He told them how to do it in His Word (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). The modern home school movement is based on this pattern. God has not given parents the freedom to delegate the weight of this command to others. Each father must disciple his children (Ephesians 4:4). On the contrary, the State and especially the Church should encourage the family to carry out its God-given mission. This happens as they fulfill their God-given jurisdiction. Moreover, the Church does have the unique responsibility of upholding this truth for families in a world that hates God. It is specifically commanded to do so in word and deed. If a church does not publically uphold the jurisdiction of the family it has blasphemed God's Word (Titus 2:1-5).

The State has been given the unique blessing of being the human force that protects physical life on earth. It has been given the sword by God as an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil (Romans 13:4). Sticking to the theme of life, God has given the State the authority to execute through capital punishment wrath on all who destroy life (Genesis 9:6). The family may not practice or usurp the jurisdiction of the State. It is commanded to honor and submit to this legitimate authority (Romans 13:1). For example, the family is never permitted to avenge the death of its members. God has given this jurisdiction to the State (Deuteronomy 21:1-7). Neither is the Church permitted to take the sword and use it for its purposes (Matthew 22:21). A just people

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will pattern its laws after the Laws of God that relate to the jurisdiction of the State. A wicked people will hate God's Law and will establish its own laws which oppose what God commanded. Moreover, the Church does have the unique responsibility of upholding the truth that Jesus is Lord and that His Law-Word is supreme. This means the Church must continually point out to the State that there is a higher Authority and Lawgiver who is supreme over the wicked practices and human laws of men (Mark 6:18-19). The State should not have any jurisdiction over the Lord's Church. Our founding fathers believed this and placed it first in the Bill of Rights. A local church should not submit itself to the jurisdiction of the State as so many churches voluntarily have in our day as 501c3 state controlled non-profit corporation. Jesus taught us to "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21)." Our problem is that we have rendered the things of God to Caesar. The Church should not be governed by the State. It should be governed by Christ and His Word. If the Church fails to preach the whole counsel of God it has failed its duty to proclaim the life giving truth of the gospel to that nation.

The Lord's Church has been given the unique blessing of proclaiming the life giving message of the gospel. It is the Church of Jesus Christ that was founded to proclaim the central message that Jesus is Lord and that His Word is supreme. Christ died and rose again from the dead to give this jurisdictional authority to His people. Thus, the family needs the Church for instruction in the Word, edification, and accountability. But the family is not the church. Biblically qualified elders are called to pastor in local churches. Fathers are not. Fathers are called to exercise loving leadership as the heads of their own households; church elders are not given this position. Biblical preaching blesses all households in the assembly. This equips the entire household to grow in Christ in a way that honors God's Word and God's jurisdiction of Church and home. Jonathan Edward's exhortation is a wonderful example of this, "Let me now therefore, once more, before I finally cease to speak to this congregation, repeat, and earnestly press the counsel which I have often urged on the heads of families...to bring [your children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord; beginning early, where there is yet opportunity, and maintaining constant diligence in labors of this kind."²⁸ One seven year old boy from an age-integrated, multi-generational church (this simply means a church that supports the family jurisdiction) stated, "Our pastor preaches the Word. He makes it so even parents can understand. I am glad we don't have to go to children's church." God's design for the church is that the elders could preach the life giving message of the gospel to the entire household.

The church is not to redefine the role of father, mother, and child as is done in so many churches today. There is supposed to be a distinction in the church as there is in the home. For example, just as wives are called to be submissive in the home, they are called to be submissive in the Lord's Church. That is why Scripture does not permit women to teach or exercise authority over men, but to be in silence (1 Timothy 2:12-15; 1 Corinthians 14:34-40). If they want to ask questions the pattern is for them to ask their husbands at home (1 Corinthians 14:35). In this way the Church practice is consistent with female submission and male leadership in the home. It overflows into the life of the church. If you think this is ugly, it is because you do not understand the beauty of God (1 Corinthians 11:1-16). In the Church children are still called to honor and obey their

²⁸ Jerry Marcellino. Family Worship (Laurel MS: Audubon, 2002), IV.

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parents (Ephesians 6:1-4). In this way the God ordained pattern in the home is reinforced and patterned in the Church. Headship in the home translates into wise elders leading the assembly. Godly wives and mothers in the home translates into wise women who make disciples of women who will be godly wives and mothers (Titus 2:3-5). Visionary fathers in the homes translates into men ready to speak God's truth for the edification of the body (1 Corinthians 14:26). Church elders are to be exemplary family men. If they are not, they are not qualified to be a pastor (1 Timothy 3:4-5). The home is the factory and proving ground for Church leaders. The Church is Christ's body on earth that supports the gospel truth that gives life. This life is all about the Lord Jesus Christ!

Family relationships in the home are the pattern for relationships in the Church. Vern Poythress stated, "the practical implications of the "family teaching" are so deep and so many-sided that we can never fully fathom them."²⁹ Here are a few examples of how familial language is used in the Church: "do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity" (1 Timothy 5:1). Alexander Strauch states family terminology "supersaturates the New Testament" as it is the most frequent image used to describe the church.³⁰ The terms *brother, brethren, and sister* occur 250 times in the New Testament.³¹ God's 'program' for His Church family is that of truth based relationships. Such a practice is seen in the "one-anothers" of the New Testament. The "one-anothers" give us a perspective into the essential ministries of the early church. Here is an example: be kind and honor one another (Romans 12:10), be of the same mind toward one another (Romans 12:15), build others up (Romans 14:19), accept one another (Romans 15:7), instruct one another (Romans 15:14), care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25), do not grumble against one another (James 5:9), confess sin and pray for one another (James 5:16), be humble and submissive with one another (1 Peter 5:5), be in fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7), have a fervent love, be hospitable and minister to one another (1 Peter 4:7-10). How many experience these on a regular basis within the body of Christ? The "one-anothers" are the living out of Christ's command to love one another. The context of these commands is in all of life. As a church relates in love as a family, the "one others" are practiced. There is no way one could have a program to incorporate all these practices. Yet, in the context of a Spirit filled church family, they occur all the time. This builds up the family and the Church in a beautiful harmony of complementary jurisdictions. Many call this the uniting of Church and home. The uniting together of Church and home is under the Lord which occurs as each jurisdiction fulfills their responsibilities. Understanding how God's Word sets jurisdiction of authority enables the believer to then apply *All of Scripture to All of Life*. This serves as the basis for a biblical worldview.

This foundational overview of a biblical worldview is what we are seeking to build at Heritage Baptist Church. I believe this way of thinking is reflective of how the Reformers thought, not just what they produced. It is what Scripture tells us we must do (Romans 12:1-2). We need to ground our faith in the solid foundation of Scripture and pray the Holy Spirit will open our eyes to see how Scripture applies to the issues that

²⁹ Vern Poythress. "The Church as Family." In Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 233.

³⁰ Alexander Strauch. The Hospitality Commands. (Littleton Co: Lewis and Roth, 1993), 10.

³¹ *ibid* 10

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make up life. This is what we mean when we say “All of Scripture to All of Life”. It is a wonderful journey of faith, blessing, victory and trials.

“Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

“I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly broad” (Psalm 119:96).