

7. This circumstance is further corrupted by inversion of the biblical system of authority regarding spiritual gifts. There are two communication gifts among the permanent, functional gifts for the Church Age: evangelist and pastor-teacher.
8. Even in times when there are a dwindling number of believers, they always outnumber those with communication gifts. The pastor-teacher is capable of teaching those who attend from the gathering of three or three thousand or more.
9. It is usually the case that among his parishioners there are a few who have the gift of evangelist or pastor-teacher. Their responsibility is to grow in grace and at a point in their advance follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit to recognize the gift and then decide what to do with it.
10. You can stay put and grow under the pastor or decide to attend a qualified seminary. Not among the choices available is the decision to criticize the pastor, correct his teachings, or organize a group of dissidents.
11. In this way, a member of the congregation uses his tongue to recruit a cadre of followers and sometimes seizes power to publicly challenge the pastor's doctrine. This can occur from a person with authority such as an elder or a deacon.
12. The two offices are basically the same. The word "elder" in the Greek is **πρεσβύτερος (*presbúteros*)** and is basically the same as a deacon, **διάκονος (*diákonos*)**. The various denominations of Protestant Christianity use one or the other and sometimes erroneously.
13. The underlying message of verse 1 is the warning of not assuming authority that you do not possess. It is also often true that some who are in positions of authority are respectful to submit to others whose authority supersedes theirs. Good examples are often found in the military.
14. This example is found in Scripture. A Roman centurion approached Jesus, asking for His assistance in Matthew 8. The rank, **ἐκατοντάρχης (*ekatontárchēs*)**, was a commander of a hundred men in a Roman legion noted in the two excerpts cited below.
15. The biblical meeting between the centurion and the Lord is recorded in Matthew 8:5–13. A centurion approaches Jesus asking for His help regarding one of his servants.
16. Background on the rank of centurion and details on the exchange between him and the Lord follow:

Centurion. A non-commissioned officer in the Roman army or one of its auxiliary armies, commanding a century or normally 100 men.

The troops in Judaea were auxiliaries and would be rewarded with Roman citizenship after twenty-five years' service.

As Galilee was not a Roman province in the time of our Lord, the centurion of Capernaum was in Herod's army, which was organized on Roman lines. He was clearly a God-fearing Gentile and reasonably wealthy. His reference to being under authority and expecting complete obedience from his men nicely characterizes his position as a man wielding authority derived from his superiors and reveals his conception of Jesus as a man with divine powers.¹

Matthew 8:5 When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,

v. 6 and saying, "Lord [Κύριος (*Kúrios*): Greek equivalent for the Old Testament Hebrew *Jehovah*], my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented."

v. 7 Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

v. 8 But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof [**respect for ultimate senior ranking Authority**], but just say the word, and my servant will be healed."

17. The Lord has just said He will heal the man's servant. This is a settled issue. The centurion knows that the Lord does not need to make the trip to his home. Deity can heal from afar as easily as closeup. The man is expressing complete faith in the Lord's healing powers and His policy of grace.

Matthew 8:9 "For I am a man under authority [**to Herod**], with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

¹ K. L. McKay, "centurion," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 1:772-73.

18. The centurion is demonstrating how his authority over subordinates only requires him to issue a command and they respond immediately. He recognizes that he and his servant are under the authority of Jesus Christ and His willingness to heal the man is sufficient without needing a road trip. This reflects the man's grace orientation.

Matthew 8:10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly [ἀμῆν (*amēn*): "I am telling you the truth"] I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

19. Those who are following Jesus are Jews. Jesus has just complemented a Gentile officer for the expression of faith he placed in the working object of the Lord's statement and His superior-ranking authority.

Matthew 8:13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go, it shall be done for you as you have believed [**constative aorist active indicative of πιστεύω** (*pisteúō*)]." And the servant was healed at that very moment. (NASB)

20. The constative aorist views the action in its entirety. The centurion had already placed his faith in the Lord's ability to heal his servant. The active voice indicates the centurion produced this action and the indicative mood verifies it as an established fact.
21. The end result is cited in the last sentence; the servant was instantly healed.
22. This centurion had complete orientation to authority. He recognized Jesus as the ultimate Authority and placed his faith in Him to restore health to his servant.
23. This passage teaches the principle of authority orientation. Throughout life, every person is required to orient to the authority of another person, persons, or systems. Failure to do so results in friction that eventually results in conflict, either mental, verbal, or physical.
24. Our present Zeitgeist reveals many and growing examples of this disorientation. It is commonly demonstrated by two- or three-year olds rebelling against the authority of their parents. In 2019, the rebels extend this disorientation into adult life.
25. A free society, to remain free, requires certain levels of authority to maintain order in society. We have described this necessity under the principle of the Law of Liberty.



26. The Law of Liberty refers to the freedom of an individual to say and do whatever he may wish as long as establishment principles, standards, and laws are not violated.
27. These laws are designed to maintain order in society. When an individual assumes the right to violate these laws, he interrupts the peaceful environment that laws are designed to protect.
28. Our present-day example for this deviancy is the tongue. The tongue's use is protected by the Constitution's Amendment I protection against "abridging the freedom of speech."
29. However, when the freedom of speech is used to foment rebellion, circulate lies, fabrications, assumptions, and deceit, and efforts to silence the free speech of others, then the Law of Liberty is under assault.
30. Here are some examples of how the Constitution is being utilized to destroy its protections in favor of tyranny.
 1. Liberty cannot be maintained without a system of authority to protect it. Without authority, liberty is lost for everyone.
 2. The authority is found first of all in the Constitution. From it, other levels of authority may be developed to insure the peace and tranquility of the citizenry.
 3. Among the various levels of authority are nations, states, and local laws that maintain order within these subdivisions of government.
 4. There are levels of authority that maintain order by enforcing laws designed to protect every person's liberty. Those who violate these laws are guilty of disturbing the peace of the community.
 5. This arrangement presents great difficulty for anyone who is not establishment oriented, that is, not recognizing that liberty must be available to everyone, not just a privileged few.
 6. Order in the commonwealth is maintained by the collective enforcement of laws regardless of who breaks them.
 7. When an increasing number of citizens assume the right to violate established laws, then the structure of an ordered society is endangered.
 8. When these violations become widespread, order within the society begins to breakdown. Order cannot be restored unless establishment enforces the laws that are violated.