

• SUNDAY MORNING (January 5<sup>th</sup>) •

# What is Authority and Why Does It Matter?

**A**UTHORITY (*noun*) — the power or right to determine, control, command, judge, or prohibit the action of others; dominion; jurisdiction.

You interact with authority every day. You submit yourself to authority every day. You depend on authority every day. At the gas pump. In the grocery store. When you look at a clock. As you use money. When you drive. As you leave the pharmacy.

You expect the fresh fruits and vegetables you buy to meet a certain standard of cleanliness and quality. You take for granted the fact that the prescriptions your pharmacist fills have been regulated and approved by a governing authority. Every single time you cruise beside someone on the highway or fly by another car on a narrow two-way street, you assume that all involved are going to abide by the regulating standards of lawful authority.

Standards of authority have power to teach, reprove, correct, and train. When different people with differing ideas, varying histories, and conflicting agendas agree to abide under a common standard of authority, unity of mind and harmony of purpose is possible. There is potential for peaceful and constructive coexistence. Disagreements can be settled and a clear vision for collective purpose and action in the future can be established.

For instance, if you are asked how long this line is...

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...what would you say? What would you do? Is there anyone who would disagree that we *can* come to a common understanding of exactly how long that line is? Is there any doubt as to how we could definitively reach an agreement? It's all possible by appealing to a common standard of measuring authority.