

Who is Your Final Authority?

As we learn to be more like Jesus (I Corinthians 11:1), we face a veritable plethora of challenges in our modern world. It has been that way from the beginning, but we have the same basic hurdles as Christians in the first century. One of the most basic decisions that Christians have faced all along is this, “Who is your final authority?” The possible answers are numerous, but the basic ones are not. At the foundation of our life’s choices is simply, “Will Jesus be my *final* source of authority or not?”

Let’s trace a lifetime timeline. When we are born, parents give us food, clothing, housing and safety. It’s rather easy for a child to recognize parents as a source of authority when they are the source of all else. As a child grows, they become a bit more independent. “I want ice cream!” “I want to go out and play, not do my chores!” Most kids go through these stages.

But then the teen years come. Sociologists tell us that until the mid 1900s most young people became independent at about 18 years of age. Not only were the “out on their own,” but mom and dad were no longer their “primary source of decision making.” (That is a vitally important phrase!) That age has become lower and lower and is now frighteningly low. Some estimate that the age of *independent thinking* (parents no longer being the primary source of decision making) is usually around 12 years of age.

Some one or some thing **will** become every person’s **primary source of decision making consideration**. It might simply be self. It might be the beliefs and morals of the family of origin. It might be one’s immediate peers. It might be the broader culture at large. It might be college professors or people in the work environment. The possibilities are quite numerous.

Both biblical history and secular history are quite clear - from the French Revolution (originally rooted in atheism) to the American Revolution (based on faith in God), the results are obvious to any serious student of history. The French Revolution led quickly to a terrible series of abuses. The French finally gave up the atheism that led to those abuses. The U.S. on the other had, while having a few ungodly growing pains, actually became successful **because** of biblical principles built into our founding documents and practiced by the majority of our citizens.

Basically, one could say with certainty that for many Americans (not all), faith in God, belief in His written word and commitment to His principles, were their **primary source of decision-making consideration**.

God’s plan is that through teaching our children (parent to child, Deuteronomy 6; Ephesians 6:1, 2; II Timothy 1:5) we can raise up each new generation to be able and willing to make God and His written word our primary source of decision making authority. Then, and only then, will we genuinely put Christ above culture, purity above peers and self above sin.

Who (or what) is **your** primary source of decision-making authority? The answer, if honest, will help you evaluate your relationship to Jesus and to His people.

