

MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SEMINAR II

Theme: “The Foundations for Pentecostal Faith and Practice”

Vital Issues of Power

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INTRODUCTION

Powerful people have influence to be able to cause events to happen, to be persuasive, and/or to exert control. Power is often abused by leaders or bosses to achieve some goal(s). The abuse of power often occurs in organizations because the exercise of power, in most cases, does not have defined boundaries. The abuse of power in the majority of cases is hierarchical, meaning that the abuse comes from someone with formal authority.

Personality traits of powerful people who abuse power are egocentrism, self-centeredness, pride, and ethical insensitivity. Power abusers pursue their own goals at the expense of their subordinates/followers.

Followers of Jesus Christ must avoid the practices of a secular model of power, which justifies behavior that is cunning and ruthless with a lack of moral sensitivity for right and wrong. A secular power move would seek to cleverly outwit and hinder others in subtle and covert methods.

The secular model of power considers us foolish if we play by the rules or take ethics too literally. Niccolo Machiavelli wrote, “Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good.”

Today's secular model of power says that we must outwardly show respect for justice, while inwardly we do as Napoleon advised: "Place your iron hand inside a velvet glove." The secular model says that we must learn the arts of indirection, seduction, charm, deception, and subtly outmaneuvering our opponents. Thus we will be able to make people bend to our will without their realizing what we have done. Deceit and secrecy are common techniques of those who seek power. Secular power calls for the ability to master our emotions, to never be caught by surprise, to always plan ahead, and to play with appearances.

Secular power says that we must learn to wear many masks and keep a bag full of deceptive tricks. In secular power, deception and masquerade are not seen as ugly or immoral because all human interaction requires deception on many levels. Deception is a developed art of civilization and the most potent weapon in the game of power.

For the world, power is an appropriate game. It is always concerned with "What will I get?" and "What will it cost me?" Power is a social game, requiring the skill of understanding people so that we will always be a step ahead. In secular power we always take the indirect route, disguising cunning, never trusting anyone completely, being indirect, and appearing decent while being the ultimate manipulator.

In this session we will look at eight secular laws of power in order to understand how destructive it is to be obsessed with power and how this obsession produces hypocritical and deceptive behaviors. These laws violate Biblical principles and must be rejected as we seek to fulfill God's plan for our lives. The primary source for these laws is the book by Robert Greene, *The 48 Laws of Power* (Viking Penguin Publishers, 1998).

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO IMMORAL ABUSES OF POWER

At twenty-five years of age, Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah as king. His father Ahaz had followed the godless path to power and left a nation that was financially, morally, and spiritually bankrupt. Hezekiah wanted power with God, rather than man.

The Scripture says that Hezekiah:

“...did that which was right in the sight of God...he removed the high places and brake the images...he trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, but kept His commandments...” (2 Kings 18:3-6, KJV).

Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, “The meaning of earthly existence is not, as we have grown used to thinking, in prosperity, but in the development of soul encounters in its spiritual search for the reality of God. Sin is the universal and self-defeating interior bent toward a powerful, rebellious self-centeredness. A renegade desire for power is in opposition to God’s command for holiness. Sin nudges us to replace God in our personal world. This sinful quest for power causes people to be obsessed with domination and control, which leads to an abusive and stubborn self-will.

A true disciple of Jesus Christ must change from the model of the world and reject these secular laws of power. Secular power is designed to match evil with evil in order to ensure personal success. The personification of this invisible counter force is named in Scripture as satan, the adversary, the devil.

We are constantly confronted or even victimized by people who are driven for earthly power. We get tempted to follow the secular laws of power, to fight evil with evil,

and to win no matter what it takes. We should try to recognize any underlying obsession with power. Sometimes sinful pride and the evils of power are hard to identify. What is especially dangerous is that we see these secular laws of power acted out in the church among people at all levels.

We will now take a look at the eight secular laws of power and a Biblical response for each. The truth of God's Word can deliver us from an empty life of deception, phoniness, guilt, shame, and fear. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

SECULAR LAW #1 – "NEVER OUTSHINE THE MASTER"

This secular law says to always make those above us feel comfortably superior. Do not over display our talents, or we may inspire fear and insecurity in our master (leader). Make our masters appear to be more brilliant than they are in our attempt to have their favor.

This law builds upon people's insecurities and uses flattery to pump up the ego of the master/leader. However, if our master is a falling star (on his/her way out) then we should seek to outshine, outdo, outcharm, and outsmart them at key moments in order to build our own power and reputation.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #1

Christian humility does call for us to show honor to others, especially those who are over us in the Lord. Out of humility we should not show off our abilities in a way to outshine or intimidate our leader(s). What is dangerous about this law of power is the

motive for not performing our best. It is not just so that we can protect ourselves and avoid being the victim of their insecurities. It is so that we esteem others as commanded in Philippians 2:3, 4: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man also on the things of others.”

Secular logic says that if our leader is weak we should discreetly hasten his downfall without mercy. We should outdo, outcharm, and outsmart him at key moments. But the Bible says,

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. Speak not evil to one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge” (James 4:10, 11).

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6, 7).

SECULAR LAW #2 – “NEVER PUT TOO MUCH TRUST IN FRIENDS, AND LEARN HOW TO USE YOUR ENEMIES”

A Chinese proverb compares friends to the jaws and teeth of a dangerous animal. Henry Adams once said, “A friend in power is a friend lost.” Voltaire (1694-1778) said, “Lord, protect me from my friends; I can take care of my enemies.”

One of the problems of friendship in the secular world is that friendship is often based upon one person using another for his/her own advantage; thus, a false friendship

exists. Sometimes friends seethe with jealousy, expecting more and more favors, while an enemy expects nothing.

The secular view says that friends cannot be trusted because they may agree when they really disagree; they avoid being really honest with you; or they may resent your success and be filled with envy. Some would say that the key to power is the ability to judge who is best able to further your interests in all situations and find ways to use them for your own benefit.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #2

It is true that enemies around us keep us from growing lazy. An enemy at our heels sharpens our wit, keeping us focused and alert. It is also true that friends can be unfaithful, ungrateful, and untrustworthy.

The prophet Micah lived in a time which was so morally corrupt that people could not trust one another. Micah said in chapter 7, verse 5, “Trust ye not in a friend, put ye no confidence in a guide...” Such were the evils of his day that no one could even trust his own family.

When we live in a corrupt society that rejects friendship and uses people for vain power, we should also weep as Jeremiah who said, “Oh that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night” (Jeremiah 9:1).

The Scriptures say, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not on thine own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6; KJV). “They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever” (Psalm 125:1).

“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others” (Psalm 49:6-10).

Abraham Lincoln said, “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

Booker T. Washington said, “Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and let him know that you trust him.”

SECULAR LAW #3 – “CONCEAL YOUR INTENTIONS”

This secular law says to keep people off-balance and in the dark by never revealing our actions. Guide people down the wrong path. Envelop them in enough smoke that by the time they realize our intentions, it will be too late. Throw them off by dragging red herrings across the path, and learn to use false sincerity, send ambiguous signals, or set up misleading objects of desire. This law says that when people are unable to distinguish the genuine from the false, they cannot pick out our true goal.

Baltasar Gracian (1601-1658), a Spanish Jesuit writer whose pessimistic novel *El Criticon* brought him exile and disgrace, wrote, “Do not be held a cheat, even though it is impossible to live today without being one. Let your greatest cunning lie in covering up what looks like cunning.”

This secular view says that a key to power is to conceal our intentions by monitoring what we reveal. Honesty is discouraged. It is viewed as a blunt instrument which bloodies more than it cuts. We should tailor our words, telling people what they want to hear, rather than the coarse and ugly truth of what we feel or believe. This secular law says if we yearn for power, we must quickly lay honesty aside and train ourselves in the art of concealing our intentions. Simply dangle an object we seem to desire, or a goal we seem to aim for in front of people's eyes and they will take the appearance or bait for reality. Once their eyes focus on the decoy, they will fail to notice what we are really up to until it is too late.

A common tactic of this secular law is to appear to support an idea or cause that is actually contrary to our own sentiments. Talk endlessly about our desires and goals – just not our real ones. We will thereby appear friendly, open, and trusting; while concealing our true intentions.

Another secular power tool is false sincerity. Manipulators know that people easily mistake sincerity for honesty because people's first instinct is to trust appearances. People want to believe in the honesty of those around them. They rarely doubt a person who seems sincere and will fail to see through their act. People cultivate an air of honesty in one area to disguise their dishonesty in others. False honesty is merely another decoy in their arsenal of weapons.

It is said that “deception is the best strategy and the best deceptions require a screen of smoke.” Deceivers lead people down familiar paths so they won't see the trap. The simplest form of smoke screen is facial expressions. It was said that no one could read Franklin D. Roosevelt's face. Baron James Rothschild made a lifelong practice of

disguising his real thoughts behind bland smiles. Henry Kissinger would bore his opponents around the negotiating table to tears with his monotonous voice, his blank look, and his relentless recitation of details. He would catch them off guard to intimidate them, or trick them into accepting his point of view.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #3

In many ways our society seems completely out of control. Violence is increasing, young people are evidently without conscience, and we are confronted with a society bound by lusts, greed, and skepticism. People are so power crazy that will lie, cheat, steal, or do whatever is necessary to get what they want.

In John's Gospel Christ said, "I have set you an example." There is absolutely no place in the life of a the child of God for concealing intentions, creating smoke screens, telling lies, practicing deception, etc. People must be able to take us at our word, just as people did Jesus. When Jesus reached out His hand and touched the leper, there was no deception. Jesus said, "Be clean," and immediately the leper was cured of his leprosy.

David knew a God who was real and trustworthy. David said, "For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth" (Psalm 26:3). He also said,

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot

out all iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:6-17).

Pope John Paul II said, “An excuse is worse and more terrible than a lie, for an excuse is a lie guarded.”

Sir Noel Coward said, “It is discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit.”

Martin Luther King, Jr said, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.”

**SECULAR LAW #4 – USE SELECTIVE HONESTY AND GENEROSITY TO
DISARM PEOPLE (ESPECIALLY YOUR VICTIM)**

It is said that “one sincere and honest move will cover over dozens of dishonest ones.” Open-hearted gestures of honesty and generosity bring down the guard of even the

most suspicious people. Power manipulation uses selective honesty to open a hole in people's armor in order to deceive and manipulate them at will.

The way a con artist brings down a person's defenses is through an act of apparent sincerity and honesty. A master of this was Count Victor Lustig (1890-1947) who said, "I cannot understand honest men. They lead desperate lives full of boredom."

The essence of deception is distraction. By distracting people we want to deceive, we get the time to do something they will not notice. An act of kindness, generosity, or honesty, is often the most powerful form of distraction because it disarms other people's suspicions. In ancient China this was called "giving before you take."

Since first impressions last a long time, selective honesty is best used on our first encounter with a person. Honesty or generosity disarms people. Few people can resist a gift, even from their enemy, which is why honesty or generosity is the perfect way to disarm people. Selective kindness is also part of the secular arsenal of deception. It plays on people's emotions and brings out the child in us.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #4

As Christian believers, we are to conduct ourselves with the most noble character possible. We are to live above reproach in the sight of all men. There is no place for selective honesty or deceptive generosity for the Christian. We are not to return evil for evil. "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." (Romans 12:17). "...Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Corinthians 8:21). Neither are we to hypocritically use acts of kindness or generosity to take advantage of people.

The apostle Paul wanted all men to know that he was honest and fully sincere at all times. He told the Philippians (2:15, KJV) to be "...blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world..."

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:8, 9).

SECULAR LAW #5 – "POSE AS A FRIEND BUT WORK AS A SPY"

Knowing about as much as possible about our rival is critical. Secular power advocates spying or keeping a secret watch to gather information which can be used against a person. This law says that we should learn to ask probing questions in order to get people to reveal their weaknesses, intentions, or personal secrets.

In the realm of secular power, a person's goal may be to have control over future events. Part of the problem with this goal is that people will not easily tell us all their thoughts, emotions, and plans. We cannot predict people's moves when we do not know their weaknesses, ulterior motives, or obsessions. The trick is to find a way to probe into their personal lives without letting them know what we are up to.

The most common way of spying is to use other people. The danger here is that spies may ineptly reveal our spying or even secretly turn against us. Therefore, many people spy themselves, posing as a friend while secretly gathering information.

The French politician Charles Tallyrand (1754-1838) was a master practitioner of this art. He had an uncommon ability to worm secrets out of people in polite conversation. He was able to suppress himself in the conversation and make others talk endlessly about themselves, inadvertently revealing their intentions and plans. Tallyrand was eventually excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church and removed from political leadership.

La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), a famous French author of maxims, wrote, "Sincerity is found in very few men, and is often the cleverest of ruses (tricks) – one is sincere in order to draw out the confidence and secrets of the other." One trick often used is to give a person a minor false confession in order to get them to give us a real confession.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) suggest another trick, i.e., to vehemently contradict people we are in conversation with as a way of irritating them, stirring them up so that they lose some of the control over their words. In their emotional reaction, they will reveal all kinds of truths about themselves, which we can later use against them. This trick is often done in debates or in ordinary arguments.

In politics, information is critical to power. One of the most potent weapons in the battle for information is giving out false information. Winston Churchill said, "Truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #5

Power, politics, and war are all dangerous to Christian life. God has called us to be open and true in all our relationships. The Bible says that “A righteous man hateth lying...” (Proverbs 13:5).

“A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit. Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart. His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly” (Proverbs 26:24-26, NIV).

A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin” (Proverbs 26:28, KJV).

Friendship is a precious gift. Through friendship we receive love, support, encouragement, and help; therefore, we should never pose as a person’s friend in order to seek our own purposes. A hypocrite is an evildoer (Isaiah 9:17). “A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor” (Proverbs 11:9).

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are a abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Proverbs 6:16-19).

**SECULAR LAW #6 – KEEP PEOPLE IN SUSPENDED TERROR: CULTIVATE
AN AIR OF UNPREDICTABILITY**

This law says that because humans are creatures of habit and need familiarity, we need to keep them off-balance by being unpredictable. In extreme cases, this law seeks to intimidate and terrorize.

Terrorists feel that they are doing nothing wrong when they prey on people. Most of them have an antisocial personality disorder or a psychopathic disorder with an absence of empathy for the suffering of others.

Abusive people, such as terrorists, have a typical thinking style in which they believe, “I am good and right and you are bad and wrong.” Therefore, they act in abusive ways with little or no sense of remorse or guilt.

A closed-minded certainty is also a commonly observed feature of much terrorist thinking. A document left behind by Mohamed Atta, one of the September 11th attackers, illustrates this. In it is the following:

“Everybody hates death, fears death but only those, the believers who know the life after death and the reward after death, would be the ones who will seek death....Check your weapon, say morning prayer together, and, if you take a taxi to the airport, when you arrive, smile and rest assured, for Allah is with the believers and the angels are protecting you.”

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO SECULAR LAW #6

Playing with people's emotions to terrorize or manipulate is evil. On a human level we often set ourselves against another person in conflict and seek to destroy the other person. This is often done without mercy or compassion.

“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; So shalt thy find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (Proverbs 3:3,4).

“Do they not go astray who devise evil? But mercy and truth belong to those who devise good (Proverbs 14:22).

The Bible says that by mercy and truth iniquity is purged and that when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (Proverbs 16:6, 7).

SECULAR LAW #7 – DO NOT COMMIT TO ANYONE

The judgment of this law is that we should not commit to any side or cause but only to ourselves. By maintaining our independence, we become the master of others – playing people against one another and making them pursue us.

This law also says that if we allow people to feel that they possess us to any degree, we lose all power over them. By not committing our affections, they will only try harder to win us over. Some suggest that if we stay aloof, people will come after us to win our affections. Therefore, if we stay aloof we gain the power that comes from people's attention and frustrated desire. Play the Virgin Queen: give them hope but never

satisfaction. An example of this attitude was expressed by Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603), "I would rather be a beggar and single than a queen and married."

Since power depends on appearances, this law says that we may want to learn the tricks that enhance our image. Never committing is one such trick. The moment we commit, the magic is gone. We become like everybody else. In seeking the attention or respect of someone deemed important people will give gifts, shower with favors, etc. all designed to put someone under obligation. In other words, encourage the attention, stimulate people's interest, but do not commit to any cost.

This secular law also teaches that we let others do the fighting, struggling, contending, etc., while we stand back, watch and wait. We may even make it a practice to stir up a quarrel between other people, and then offer to mediate, gaining power as the go-between.

Baltasar Cracian (1601-1658) said that men of great abilities are slow to act and usually avoid commitment. He added that one commitment or obligation only leads to a greater one.

We want to come out on the winning side so, if necessary, we appear to be on both sides without taking sides. The trick is to keep from taking this too far to where it turns against us. At times some people will feel that they need to commit to one side or the other, even if only for appearance sake. Commitment then becomes a method of manipulation.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #7

The Bible teaches us to commit our ways unto the Lord. The Christian life calls for a strong total commitment of our lives, hopes, and dreams to the will of God.

God has called us to commitment and unity. Mark said, "...a house divided against itself cannot stand." Paul took a stand for Christ in Acts 26:6. Peter took a stand for Christ on the Day of Pentecost. Stephen took a stand for Christ even though it cost him his life.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we now stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:1-5).

Paul also encouraged the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:13) to stand fast in the faith and be strong. To the Ephesians, Paul said that they should put on the whole armor of God to be able to stand (6:11). We must live our lives in holy commitment to God and to the Great Commission, knowing that one day the small and the great will all stand before God and face judgment concerning our works and actions (Revelation 20:12).

SECULAR LAW #8 – RECREATE YOURSELF

This secular law says that we need to recreate ourselves by forging a new identity that commands attention. The secular world teaches us to be a chameleon capable of reflecting the colors of the world around us. According to the world, we must be flexible enough to impress the crowds and make them believe that we are just the right person worthy of their trust.

This secular law says that just as Julius Caesar did so successfully, we must play for the crowds. Always be aware of our audience and who our supporters are. We must arrange to place ourselves at the center, to command attention, and never be upstaged at any cost.

We recreate ourselves by playing many roles as an actor adjusts to whatever the role demands. Creating new identities, as needed, will protect us because they are not “us”, they are just costumes we put on and take off. This law says for us to remake ourselves into a character of power, which again comes the importance of taking control of our appearances and emotions. Learn to play sincere when necessary. Create a tear and a compassionate look, even if we don’t feel like it. Adopt the plasticity of the actor, who can mold his/her face to the emotion required.

The secular world teaches to orchestrate events in a dramatic way. Remembering that rhythm and timing are critical. In order to possess great power, we must make ourselves a memorable character who can cover a multitude of sins.

This secular law says to learn to play many roles and adapt to the situation. Bismark played the game to perfection; to a liberal he was a liberal, to a hawk he was a hawk.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO LAW #8

“When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.” (Anonymous)

Secular power talks a lot about playing the game and acting out the part. The Bible talks about purity and integrity. Power has corrupted many people causing them to be anything it takes to keep power.

Percy Shelley said, “Power is like a desolate pestilence, polluting whatever it touches.” Samuel, in the Old Testament, reminds us that God does not see as man “...for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). Image and appearance may be everything to man in secular power issues, but inner character and holiness is everything to God. And if we want God’s blessings and anointing on our ministry it had better be everything to us!

CONCLUSION

The credibility of ministers is at an all time low and ministers are under greater stress and pressure than ever. The world is full of phony people who want power more than integrity. They know how to play games, disguise their true identity, play to people’s fantasies, avoid the truth, and excite the masses. Their leaders know how to seduce people into following them by focusing on what people hold dear. They preach change, but never make reform a reality. They get people’s sympathy and make their sins appear harmless.

Beyond doubt, the Bible calls for us to be real and true in relationship with God and holiness in life.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Perhaps one of the most serious issues facing the church today is whether or not the servants of God are more concerned about power with God than they are about power with people. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

The followers of Jesus Christ are to be different from the nominal church and the secular world. The life of Jesus and the message of the New Testament calls us to reject the temptations of secular power. We are to be committed to the values, ethics, and principles of God’s Word. We are to be part of a Christian counter-culture dedicated to be role models of spiritual power in a secular world.