



# Overview

1. Having Authority
2. Exercising Authority
3. Delegating Authority
4. Stewarding Authority





# Power $\neq$ authority

**Power** is the capacity to do something

**Authority** is the moral right or licence to make decisions with the power and capacity that we have.

*(Jonathan Leeman)*



# Leadership and authority in the story of redemption



What does this mean for the exercise of authority?



Recall, in Genesis 2, our created finitude is clearly set out:

**15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

**16** And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

**18** The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

We cultivate God’s creation, we are not the creators;

We are commanded to obey

We are created to enjoy both freedom AND boundaries

Our knowledge and understanding will always be partial.

Created to need each other, to be dependent on God and on each other;



# The Fall affected everything!

## Creation...

Made in God's image

Two actions:

- Multiply
- Rule

One purpose:

- Glorify God!

## Fall...

Usurping authority

Rejecting authority

Idealising authority

Exploiting authority

Avoiding authority





# Exercising authority in the now-and-not yet

Authority as  
intended in  
CREATION:  
Good



# Exercising authority in the now-and-not yet

Authority as intended in CREATION: Good	Authority as experienced after the FALL: Bad	Authority as restored in REDEMPTION: Complex	Authority as we look forward to the NEW CREATION: Good
Supplies	Steals	Sacrifices	Sublime

Transcendence AND Immanence  
are involved



# The good response to good authority is submission...

**5** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

**6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

**7** rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

**8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

**9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

**10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

**11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*Philippians 2*





The good response to good authority is submission...

**So** why is submission a good thing?

- It reflects the likeness of Jesus
- It is the path to our growth
- It prepares us for exercising good authority

**Both (human) AUTHORITY and (human) SUBMISSION are conditional. Each has its limits.**



# Features good authority

## Human authority:

- Is not intrinsic but granted  
(so there has to be a granting agent)
- Has a specific purpose
- Has a bounded scope  
(jurisdiction and duration)
- Carries responsibilities and obligations
- Carries a code of ethics.
- Is a stewardship, not an ownership



# Exercising good authority in the now-and-not-yet

## **Purposes of authority:**

- Protects the vulnerable
- Grows those in authority
- Grows those under authority
- Nurtures others to be ready to hold authority
- Creates groups (enables collaboration and contribution)
- Teaches what God is like



# What does good authority look like? *(and what is it not)?*

- Always submits to a higher authority *(is never unaccountable)*
- Creates life *(does not steal it)*
- Seeks wisdom *(is not unteachable)*
- Administers discipline *(is neither permissive nor authoritarian)*
- Bears the cost *(is not self-protective)*



# So, what about discipline?

Without discipline, authority is meaningless.

But different 'offices' carry different permissions.

None of those are coercive, exploitative, unbounded or unaccountable.

## **Counsel**

A right to 'bind the conscience' but little to no power to determine and enact consequences. Authority through relationship and trust Respects those they lead as their equals. Quickly forgoes their rights.

## **Command**

Able both to ask for obedience and enforce it, and to determine and enact consequences for disobedience.

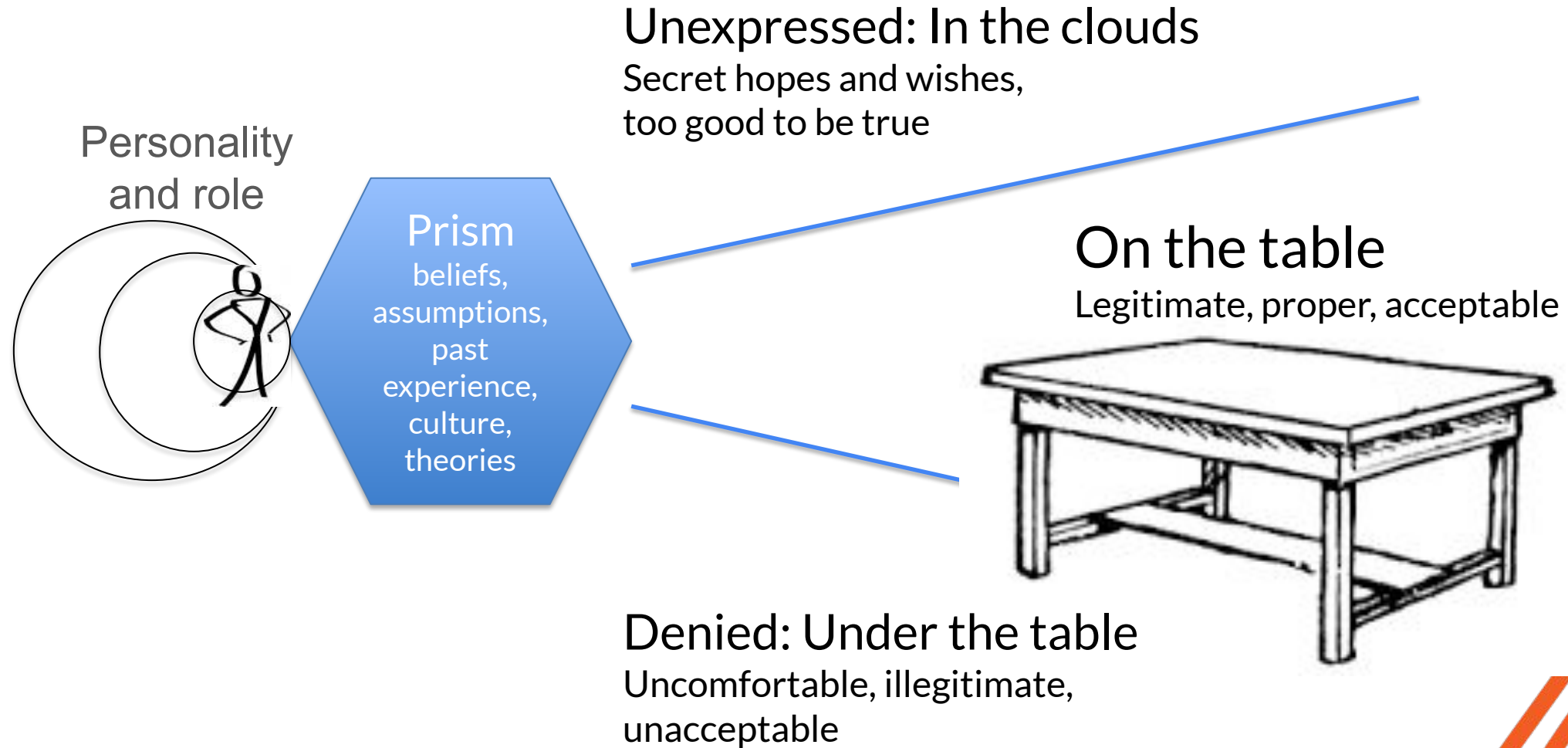


# A spectrum of authority

	Posture:					
<b>Immanence (counsel)</b>	Invite	Encourage	Recommend	Urge	Require	<b>Transcendence (command)</b>
<i>Examples</i>	Husbands and wives	Elders	Parents	Churches	Gov'ts	



# How we each see things creates 'covert' dynamics





# How do you (and the organisation you lead) measure up?

- ❑ There are visible accountability structures which people know how to access (eg a board of trustees; policies and channels for raising concerns)
- ❑ The accountability structure(s) and the culture through which they operate are capable of exercising discipline including over the most senior member of staff.
- ❑ It is clear to others, through visible structures, your speech and your behaviours, that you know yourself to be accountable to an overseeing person or authority.
- ❑ You are known for seeking out the input of others, both internally and externally in your decision making.
- ❑ People would not be surprised if you apologised for messing up on something because this is a characteristic behaviour of yours.
- ❑ People who work for you have gone on to accomplish more than they might have thought possible because they grew under your leadership.
- ❑ People can point to difficult conversations you've been willing to have and difficult decisions you've been willing to take.
- ❑ People are confident that you will confront bad behaviour and address poor performance.
- ❑ People have seen or directly experienced you acting sacrificially, taking on a cost or experiencing a disadvantage for the sake of the organisation, a team or an individual.
- ❑ People know that when you raise issues about their performance they will be supported and helped to learn and change





# Reflection and application

## Personal

- Evaluate how authority is understood, exercised and valued in your leadership context.
- Explore how your own 'prism' plays into your perception and exercise of authority.
- Evaluate your context more critically: What is healthy and needs affirmation? What is unhealthy and needs attending to?
- What would one step healthier look like?

## Group

- 2-3 mins each: Briefly summarise descriptions of authority in each context
- 10 mins each: Share one thing you'd like to work on to make your own exercise of authority, or the exercising of authority in your context, one step healthier. Offer questions or ideas to each other.

God didn't give us others to dominate them but to mould us. Not to mould them as I wish. In their freedom from me, they reflect God's image. Freedom of the other is a burden I must take up. I must not seek to stamp my image on them but to allow God to form them in his image. This is the dignity of createdness *in imago dei*.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*