

PROPHETIC
LEADERSHIP
GUIDE



THE ANATOMY OF ANARCHY

**PRINCIPLE OF SOCIETAL REFORM
AND DEVELOPMENT**



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The Anatomy Of Anarchy

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Anarchy rarely begins with riots. It begins quietly: with a dropped wrapper no one picks up, a queue no one respects, and a rule no one is willing to enforce. Long before a society collapses, implodes, and burns, it begins to leak order in small, ordinary ways.

That leak begins when leadership stops holding the line, refuses accountability, and allows people to learn that disobedience carries no cost. Many African states, including South Africa, offer painful evidence of how far such a leak can travel. A community that first ignores litter on a pavement may, years later, watch a substation burn while no one arrives to investigate why.

The distance between those two events may appear vast, but the pattern is the same. Anarchy does not arrive as a single event; it accumulates as a habit. It moves from the street corner to the household, from the household to school communities, municipal office, and from there to the highest levels of the state. Eventually, institutions built to govern a nation find themselves governed by the very disorder they were meant to restrain.

Scripture names this condition directly. Judges 21:25 closes an entire book with the words, “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.” The verse does not describe a single riot. It describes a pattern of life formed over generations, where the absence of governed authority allowed private judgment to replace shared law.

That is the seed of anarchy. It grows wherever leadership vacates its responsibility, and it does not remain confined to the place where it was first planted. Left unchecked, it spreads upward, level by level, until it reaches the seat of government itself.

The Visible Symptoms

Small disobedience is the first visible stage of disorder, and it is easily dismissed because it appears harmless. A wrapper left on the ground, a queue ignored, or questionable conduct allowed to continue without correction may seem minor in isolation. Yet each act functions as a test of the surrounding culture.

Every uncorrected act teaches the next person that correction will not come. Human experience confirms what Scripture already reveals: visible neglect invites further neglect. Criminologists have long observed that an unrepaired broken window often leads to more broken windows, because neglect signals that no one is watching and no one will respond.

The same principle applies beyond glass. It applies to queues, noise, waste, and every small rule a community depends on to function. Disorder spreads wherever consequence disappears.

In a South African township or suburb, the same test appears in ordinary public life. A street vendor occupies a pavement without a permit and faces no inquiry. A taxi runs a red light in full view of a stationary police vehicle and faces no consequence. A resident dumps rubble on an open plot and receives no fine.

None of these acts destroy a city on its own. But when they are repeated daily across thousands of small decisions, they train a population in a dangerous lesson: rules are optional, and enforcement is performance rather than substance. Once that lesson is learned at the level of litter, it does not remain there.

The Infrastructure Of Neglect

The deeper stage arrives when physical infrastructure starts to fail and stays failed. An electrical pole falls in a neighborhood and sits there for months. A road cracks open and no one returns to close it. A pipe bursts and the water runs to waste for a season because the report never reaches anyone who will act on it.

This is not a resource problem at first; it is an accountability problem that later becomes a resource problem. The people assigned to repair these things often have the tools and the mandate. What they lack is a watching eye and a demanding voice. When no one tracks whether the pole gets fixed, the workers learn that the job is optional. Anarchy, in this stage, looks like neglect with no consequence attached to it, repeated until neglect becomes the system itself.

When accountability dies, infrastructure dies with it, because infrastructure has no will of its own. A substation does not maintain itself. A water main does not report its own leaks. A road does not patch its own surface. Every piece of physical infrastructure depends entirely on a human chain of responsibility that notices the fault, assigns the repair, and confirms the repair was done. Anarchy severs that chain at one or more links, and the infrastructure simply reflects whatever level of neglect the chain now tolerates.

This is why a nation can have functioning budgets, qualified engineers, and available equipment, and still watch its roads, its power grid, and its water systems decay in plain sight. The hardware was never the failure. The chain of accountability was.

Proverbs 18:9 makes the connection between slackness and destruction explicit, stating that one slack in his work is brother to him who destroys. The verse does not separate the lazy worker from the vandal. It places them in the same family, because both produce the same outcome: something that should stand, falls. A fallen pole left unfixed for months is not a passive accident. It is a slow form of destruction, carried out by people who were paid to prevent it.

The Theology Of Accountability

Romans 13:1 to 4 grounds governing authority in a divine assignment, describing rulers as servants of God for the good of the people, carrying responsibility to restrain evil and reward what is right. The passage assumes a working chain: authority watches, authority enforces, and the community benefits from that enforcement. When the chain breaks at any link, the rest of the structure starts to fail with it, because law without enforcement is only a suggestion.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 ties personal slackness to structural collapse, stating that through sloth the roof sinks in, and through idle hands the house leaks. The image is domestic, and the principle scales to a nation. A house leaks one drop at a time before the roof gives way. A society collapses the same way, through hands that stopped working long before the headline event arrives. Accountability is the force that keeps those hands moving. Remove it, and decay becomes the default condition rather than the exception.

The Family As The First Government

Anarchy at the level of a nation cannot be separated from anarchy at the level of a household, because the family is the first government a person ever lives under. Long before a citizen meets a police officer, a magistrate, or a member of parliament, that same person meets a parent who either enforces a boundary or lets it pass. The home is where accountability is either learned as a normal feature of life or dismissed as an occasional inconvenience that disappears the moment supervision leaves the room.

A child who litters in the house and is corrected learns that mess has consequences and that someone is watching. A child who litters in the house and is ignored learns that mess is simply how the world works until someone bigger forces a change.

That second child grows into the adult who drops the wrapper on the pavement without a second thought, because the lesson was never installed at the only stage when it could have been installed cheaply. By the time a municipality tries to teach that same adult through fines and campaigns, it is correcting a habit that should have been corrected in a household twenty years earlier.

¹ Timothy 3:5 asks how a man who does not know how to manage his own household can care for the church of God, and the same logic governs civic life at every scale. A nation full of households where no one enforces a boundary will produce a generation that does not expect boundaries to be enforced anywhere else. The family is not a private matter detached from national order. It is the first training ground for either accountability or anarchy, and whichever one is trained there is the one a person carries into every larger system they later join.

From Neglect To Predation

Once accountability has died at the level of litter, queues, and household discipline, the same vacancy creates room for something far more dangerous than mess. A community that has already learned that small wrongs go unanswered becomes fertile ground for large wrongs to take root, because the predator and the victim are both operating inside the same lesson: no one is watching, and no one will respond.

This is the stage where the drug trade finds its footing. A drug lord does not need a community to approve of what they do. They need a community that has already been trained not to report what it sees, not to challenge what it suspects, and not to expect any consequence even if it speaks up. Where personal accountability is intact, where neighbors challenge a stranger loitering near children, where a household raises sons who answer for their actions, the operating space for that trade narrows sharply. Where personal accountability has already collapsed at the level of the street and the home, the trade expands into the vacancy that anarchy created long before the first transaction took place.

The same vacancy explains how theft moves from opportunity to enterprise. A stolen item that can be resold openly in a community, with neighbors aware of its origin and saying nothing, is only possible where the habit of looking away has already been formed by years of smaller silences. The same applies to abuse within homes and communities, where perpetrators rely on the same absence of accountability that allowed the pole to stay fallen for months. An abuser counts on silence the same way a negligent official counts on no one checking whether the repair was done. Both are exploiting the identical gap.

This is also why a government can only act decisively against organized crime, against drug shipments entering a community, against syndicates that prey on the vulnerable, once the lower levels of accountability have already been restored. A state that tries to fight large scale predation in a population that still tolerates small scale disorder is fighting the symptom while leaving the root system fully intact.

The president and the credence for serious government intervention against drug networks and trafficking grows directly out of communities that have already demonstrated they will not tolerate disorder at the personal level. Where citizens hold one another accountable for the small things, they create the social foundation that makes large scale enforcement effective rather than performative.

The System That Threatens The State

What begins as a dropped wrapper and ends as a captured municipality follows a single unbroken line. Corruption at the highest levels of government is not a separate phenomenon from the broken queue and the fallen pole. It is the same disease, fully matured, operating with larger budgets and greater consequence. A government official who diverts funds meant for infrastructure is applying the identical logic as the worker who never returns to fix the pole: no one is watching closely enough to stop me, and even if they notice, nothing will happen.

South Africa's current pressures, illegal mining operations running unchecked in abandoned shafts, infrastructure failures that leave entire regions without reliable power and water, vigilante responses that emerge when communities conclude that formal protection will never arrive, are not isolated crises. They are the advanced stage of the same anarchy that began with small disobedience left uncorrected. When that anarchy is allowed to mature at every level without challenge, it eventually produces populations and even factions willing to challenge the institutions of government directly, because government has already demonstrated, through years of unrepaired poles and unprosecuted theft, that its authority carries no enforceable weight.

This is the warning embedded in the entire pattern. Anarchy that is permitted at the level of a household or a street corner does not remain there. It climbs. It reaches the municipal office, then the provincial department, then the highest offices of state, because each level learns its tolerance for disorder from the level below it. A nation cannot expect integrity in its parliament while tolerating impunity in its streets, because both are governed by the same underlying culture of accountability or its absence.

The Answer

Rebuilding a society starts with rebuilding leadership that refuses to let small disobedience pass unchallenged, beginning in the home and extending outward through every level of public life. A parent who corrects a child's first act of carelessness prevents the adult who later abandons a queue or ignores a fallen pole. A community leader who corrects the first broken queue prevents the hundredth. A leader who tracks the fallen pole until it stands again teaches an entire system that work has witnesses. Order is not maintained by law alone. It is maintained by leaders willing to enforce law consistently enough that citizens learn to expect consequence and therefore choose compliance before they are forced into it.

The same logic from 1 Timothy 3:5 that governs a household governs a nation. Leadership that cannot manage its own assignments has no standing to demand order from the public. The standard must run in both directions. Citizens respect law because leaders enforce it justly, and leaders enforce it justly because they answer to a higher accountability than public opinion.

When personal accountability is restored at the level of the home and the street, the entire structure above it changes shape. Littering without recall becomes a habit of the past rather than a daily occurrence. Waiting one's turn in a queue becomes the ordinary expectation rather than an exception that holds only when an official happens to be watching. Communities that hold one another to that standard make it difficult for a drug trade to take root, difficult for theft to become an open trade, difficult for abuse to hide behind community silence. That same culture of accountability, once established from the family upward, gives government the social foundation it needs to act decisively against organized crime, against corruption, and against every form of state capture that anarchy at the lower levels first made possible.

This is the work South Africa and the rest of the continent face in this season, where institutions of government are being challenged at every level without recourse. The challenge cannot be answered only from the top down, through new legislation or new enforcement units, because anarchy was never built only from the top down. It was built household by household, street corner by street corner, fallen pole by fallen pole, until it reached the size it now occupies. Its undoing must travel the same road in reverse, restoring accountability at the level of the family and the community first, so that the demand for accountability at the level of the nation finally has somewhere solid to stand.