**PRINCIPLES FOR THE CITIZEN**

Sunday School Lesson 4

*Bible Principles for Daily Living*

Ephesians 2:19

7/3/2022

**Introduction:** Through our first three lessons on Bible principles for daily living, we have looked at principles for life, discipleship, and time management. For our fourth lesson, we are going to shift gears to Bible principles for the citizen. This should be a fitting topic for us on the day before Independence Day. This may also be a challenging topic for us on this weekend, as there is a great divide in opinions when it comes to the Biblical appropriateness of Christian patriotism. The simple question is this: are there Bible principles that we should consider as American citizens? Yes, there most certainly are. Before we look at those principles, though, there is an important note to be made. It should be obvious to the Bible student that the United States of America is not mentioned in the Bible. Unfortunately, there have been some recent Bible teachers who have tried to find a way to fit America into the Bible and end-time prophecy. As American Christians, there’s a natural desire for our nation to be relevant to the final events of the world, and there is great dismay at the thought of what reasons may cause America to not be relevant. Although America is absent from Scripture, it does not mean that the Bible is silent on how we ought to behave as American citizens. I believe the Bible outlines some specific principles that every Christian should apply and live by in respect to being a citizen of whatever nation the Lord has placed you in. We are going to look at a few of those this morning.

1. **WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE ARE CITIZENS OF A BETTER COUNTRY.**

* I’m glad to be an American. I can truly say that I am blessed to be born in this country. When I think of some of the places that I could have been born in this world, I can’t help but thank God for America. Yet, as a believer, I must never lose sight that I am a citizen of a far better country. In **Hebrews 11:13-16**, the Bible speaks of the faith of several men who lived before Israel was a full-blown nation. The Bible shows us that all of these individuals shared the same perspective regarding living in this world. They all saw themselves as sojourners and pilgrims. They were seeking a better country, and the Bible is not referring to Israel here. The Bible is referring to that Heavenly country that we ought to be looking forward to. The Bible specifically mentions this in the book of Hebrews as a reminder to the Jews that they ought not to place more emphasis on being a Jew than on being a part of that Heavenly kingdom! When it comes to eternity, there will only be one nation and one King. **1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 2:19**

1. **WE OUGHT TO EMBRACE THE INDIVIDUALITY OF OUR NATION AS GOD ORDAINED.**

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* Christians ought to be strongly opposed to globalization. Whose design was it for there to be many nations on this earth? It was the Lord’s. After the fall of man, we see that globalization is not something to be praised because it is marked by rebellion of God and praise of man’s own works. There is only one person fit to be the Ruler of the world. We also see that globalization is the goal of the anti-Christ in rallying the world together around the worship of Satan and rejection of the Lord. We are Americans. That is the individual nation that God has allowed us to be a part of while on this earth. For the missionary sent to another country, he must understand that he is not going out to convert the lost of other nations to Americanism. His goal ought to be to convert these lost souls to Christ. America is not the nation of Israel. We are not called to bring all people into our nation. We are called to bring them into the church. We are called to bring them to the saving power of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus will bring all nations unto Him when He reigns forever. **Genesis 9:1; 11:1-9; Rev. 14:8; 15:4; Acts 14:15-17; Matt. 28:19**

1. **WE SHOULD NEVER CONFLATE PATRIOTISM WITH SPIRITUALITY.**

* This can be a very hard thing for us. I believe we are living in a day where there are wicked and evil people in our nation who hate both God and their own country. As American Christians, there is a real danger to conflate patriotism and spirituality together. Loving and being thankful for your nation does not make you a good Christian. Of course, it does not make you a Christian at all. A separated believer is not separated unto those who are like-minded about the country. A separated believer is separated unto God and with other believers. There are unsaved people who love our country, and there are unsaved people who hate our country. I think a good example of this would be the parable of the good Samaritan. We know that the Samaritans and the Jews had no dealings with each other. In the parable, the fallen Jew found no Godly help from his fellow Jews. Instead, he found help from the most unlikely place – a Samaritan. One could argue that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were very zealous about their nation, but that did not transfer to true zeal for God. **Luke 10:30-37; John 11:48-52; Mark 12:30**

1. **WE OUGHT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE HOW THE LORD HAS BLESSED US.**

* Are we not commanded to give thanks in everything? Shouldn’t that include the things that we have seen God do for our nation? Our nation miraculously won its freedom as a nation against great odds, and I believe that the Lord’s hand was in the founding of America. Of course, we have never been a perfect nation or a perfect people, but there were men who humbled themselves before God, and He blessed them for it. He also has blessed us for our friendship to Israel over the years. If we do not acknowledge and celebrate what God has done for our nation, we are in jeopardy of provoking the wrath and judgment of the Lord. This is what happened with Israel, but this also happened with other nations as well. King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon are a great example of this. God had allowed the king to prosper as a result of His divine plan for Israel. Yet, the king refused to give any acknowledgement to God for the success that he had experienced. He gave himself all of the credit instead. The Lord punished him and then later took the kingdom from Belshazzar. **1 Thessalonians 5:18; Daniel 4; Genesis 27:29; Psalm 33:12**

1. **WE RECOGNIZE A SCRIPTURAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.**

* There is much that could be said about this, but I’ll summarize it by stating that Christians should be engaged in the governance of the nation. It’s not so much about being political, as it is about doing everything with all of our might and decently and in order. If that applies in the home and in the job, why wouldn’t it apply to our responsibilities as citizens? Additionally, I believe that a Christian has a responsibility to be involved because we are called to do good. If there is a proposed law that promotes wickedness and evil practices, shouldn’t we take the time to go and vote against it? If there is a proposed law that will infringe upon the Christian’s ability to legally follow his faith, don’t we have a responsibility to be involved in keeping that law from passing? If there is an election that could potentially put a wicked leader into a position of power, why would we not be involved in stopping that? Don’t we know what the Bible says about when the wicked bear rule? The key is to ensure that engagement doesn’t become entanglement. **James 4:17; 2 Timothy 2:4; Proverbs 28:15; 29:2.**

1. **WE RECOGNIZE A SCRIPTURAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CIVIL OBEDIENCE.**

* This is why civic engagement is important for the Christian. We are commanded to practice civil obedience as much as possible. Ideally, we are able to serve God freely without any conflict with our call for civil obedience. We are called to live peaceably with all men. We are called to obey all of the ordinances of man for the Lord’s sake. It is the will of God that our well doing may put to silence those foolish and ignorant individuals in this world who constantly look for an occasion to accuse the brethren. Unfortunately, we know that civil obedience is not always going to be possible for us. It took place for the disciples. It took place for Daniel and his friends. It even took place for Jesus Himself. His teachings were in direct conflict many times to the manmade rules that the chief priests had implemented for the people. They accused Him of breaking the Law when He healed a man on the Sabbath. The sinless, perfect Saviour never broke God’s Law, but He was regularly in opposition to the laws of the so-called religious leaders of that day. **1 Peter 2:13-17; Mark 12:17; Acts 5:29; 9:14; Daniel 3:1-30.**

1. **WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS OUR DUTY TO REACH OUR NATION WITH THE GOSPEL.**

* In the Great Commission, we see a local focus first before we see a world-wide focus. The call for them was to go to Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. Their focus first was on the house of Israel. Although Paul was called to be an apostle for the Gentiles, we see that his heart’s desire was always to reach his brethren. It was needful, though, that a Jew had to go out to the Gentiles in order to teach them all of the Scriptures. Overall, we understand from the Great Commission that the person best suited to reach a nation is a member of that nation. God has placed us here in America, and unless He gives you a heart for a different people/nation, then you are the one that He has called to reach the lost souls here. Love America by sharing the Gospel. **Acts 1:8; Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24; Rom. 10:1-2**

1. **WE SHOW OUR LOVE OF COUNTRY BY CALLING OUT ITS WICKEDNESS AND PRAYING.**

* Aside from sharing the Gospel, the best way to show your love for America is to confess and call out its wickedness and seek the mercy of God upon this land. We do not deserve God’s mercy. In fact, it’s safe to say that our nation deserves the swift and painful judgment of the Lord upon. It. Yet, we might find mercy at the throne of Heaven by appealing to our loving and merciful Creator. Not only are we to pray to the Lord for His mercy, but we are also to pray to the Lord for our leaders. We mentioned civic responsibility earlier, but it is important to understand that the Gospel will bring about true change to a nation. Let’s pray every day for God to bless America! Let’s pray for our president, justices, congressmen, governors, and local officials. **1 Tim. 2:1-2; 2 Chron. 7:14; Isaiah 1:4; Prov. 28:1-14**