

In our most recent series of articles we focused on the way the writer of Ephesians describes Christians as soldiers. There is a battle on for the very souls of mankind. Our country is currently in a delicate balance of legalizing many things that are opposed by God in His Word. We may not wish to stand on street corners vocalizing our opposition, but we can, and should vote. Many Christians *are* aware of the numerous issues that have become a part of politics, yet others *avoid* knowing anything that will cause them to have to make a conscious decision that requires action on their part. It's only a few months until the elections. There is ample time to listen, read and learn about serious issues that will affect many things we take for granted as freedoms and rights in America. Because of the level of determination to advance anti-Christian movements it is now necessary to realize that it's not easy to get information that is not influenced by the political agenda of individuals and entire media sources. There was a time that major media outlets (i.e. television networks, news papers, news magazines) were careful to report well researched facts. Today that's not the case and thus it places more responsibility on each individual to discern what is true. A good soldier of Christ will make every effort to understand and back those candidates and issues that are good in the sight of God.

Some of the issues currently at stake in our country may include these:

- Abortion of an unwanted child
- Acceptance of homosexual marriages as normal
- Freedom to worship and proclaim the Gospel
- Freedom to teach the Bible as truth and not as opinion
- Public schools – what they teach
- Keeping decency standards in line with the view of the majority, not the vocal minority

The following words of Edmund Burke are very appropriate for us today —
“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”
(Edmund Burke 1729-1797)

So, how do we make ourselves heard as an instrument of God and not just noisy Christians bent on making everyone accept “our view” of God’s will for mankind? Current events allow us two great advantages not always available. The recent acceptance of the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, and our current political season gives a timely platform for discussion and yes, the specific responsibility to act. Opportunities come and go, but these are here today for our use. Not only might we have a chance to freely discuss our relationship with God through Christ, but we must also use our vote to assist in protecting beliefs that are well established in Scripture. Let’s be active participating soldiers of Christ.

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DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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The Political Christian

“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” (Romans 13:1 NIV)

“...Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.’ They brought the coin, and (Jesus) asked them, ‘Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?’ ‘Caesar’s,’ they replied. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s...’” (Mark 12: 16-17 NIV)

It should be crystal clear that the word “*everyone*” in the first of these two Scriptures listed above undoubtedly includes those of us who are Christians. At the time Paul wrote those words, there was a group of Jews — the Zealots — who refused to pay any taxes to the Romans on the grounds that God was their *only* king and paying taxes to the Romans was a violation of their honoring *only* God. After reading just these two Scriptures above it would be difficult for Christians today to hold to that same belief. Since the authority of governments is “...*established by God...*” we, as Christians are commanded to obey them, unless of course they order us to do something that is in direct contradiction to God’s law (Acts 4:19).

So let’s consider for a moment the fact that since we are commanded to submit to “*the governing authorities,*” how very blessed we are to reside in a country that is free. But we must understand that such wonderful freedom also has some costs. One of those costs we must consider is that such great freedom exposes us to an unfettered opportunity for the Devil to use countless people (including government officials) to advance all sorts of evil schemes. So it is because of these freedoms that we as Christians are “thrown into” a position of being political regardless of (or lack of) our actions. Let’s examine this political position of Christians for a few minutes in this article.

As our nations political season currently moves into full swing, Christians become more important politically. Whether or not we actively promote specific candidates or positions, our actions or inactions *will have* impact. The very fact that we are in a country that uses a process of elections to select our leaders, automatically makes every person responsible for their freedom. This is true of Christians and non-Christians alike. The unfortunate reality is that far too often Christians assume a position of non-involvement even to the extreme of not voting.

Christians who take absolutely no interest in learning about those who run for public offices or knowing where they stand on certain issues, do not truly appreciate the freedom that God is allowing them to enjoy. Failure on the part of Christians to assume a level of responsibility for maintaining those God given freedoms allows the Devil ample room to use individuals over whom *he* has control, to push their own evil schemes and agendas — agendas that are in opposition to God and to His Word. We need not look very far to find numerous activist groups with various political persuasions that are opposed to God. These groups are usually engaged to the fullest extent in exerting their influence on the majority by getting their message out in *every* possible way. Most of these groups will stop at nothing in their effort to influence those in positions of authority within the ranks of our government. Even though some of these groups may be few in number, because of their extreme *vocal* nature, it begins to seem that they surely must be the majority rather than the minority.

While some of the issues that are a part of politics today may, on the surface seem to be void of moral implications, they may actually have great impact on society from the viewpoint of opposing what is taught in the Scriptures. There are other issues however, moving within our culture today that are *blatantly* opposed to the Scriptures. The number of *these* issues is increasing at an alarming rate. Many believers often avoid making an effort to learn the details and impact of these issues. Some may go so far as to say that God is in control anyway, so they see no great need to be overly concerned about such issues. Those individuals might want to consider that God may have placed them here, in this country for a reason (See Esther 4:14). As believers, we must always be alert to the fact that the very officials *we elect* are often the ones who will ultimately make the decisions and laws effecting the outcome of these issues. Will we be among those who might have to justify to God why we, as Christians, did nothing but sit back in an totally uninvolved state and allowed Satan total freedom to use those whom he had in *his* control to make those decisions? God has blessed us with freedoms that many do not have. Shouldn't we make every effort to see that we participate in having influence on those persons who will be making the decisions that will ultimately be for or against God and His Word? We are "*the salt of the earth*" and "*the light of the world.*" Is it acceptable for us to hide our influence "*under a bushel*"? (Matt. 5:13-16)

One example of a small *vocal* group exercising their influence over a silent disengaged majority is the most recent push by the homosexual community to normalize same sex marriage. While homosexuals claim that they make up 10% of the population, actual statistics state that number is nearer 1% and according to the 2000 Census figures actually *fewer than one half of one percent* of the households in the U.S. are same sex partners. Yet, from the "noise" we hear from this group, one would assume that figure was *much* larger. Why? Because they are *vocal* about their agenda. Silence and lack of interest on the part of Christians allows Satan to proceed *uncontested* to continue to exercise his

influence in our nations governmental positions of authority. Because of issues like this it is not acceptable for Christians to sit idly by while our nations laws, as well as God's laws are ignored or changed — changed in a way that is spoken of as an "*abomination*" (God's words — Leviticus 20:13 KJV). The intention of such a movement is to make evil legal and socially acceptable.

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20 NASB)

For Christians to be either unaware or worse yet, to not care, that some candidates openly endorse same sex marriage while other candidates oppose it, is not good stewardship of the freedom God allows us to enjoy. God is certainly willing and able to forgive those who cease practicing homosexual acts just as he is willing and able to forgive any other sin. But for Christians to not *oppose* normalization of same sex marriage is in fact support of it. When Christians vote *for* candidates who *support* such evil practices they are lending a helping hand to Satan's evil schemes and slapping God in His face. When Christians *fail* to vote for candidates who *oppose* such evil practices, the value of the vote is doubled for those who *do* vote to support the Devil's schemes. Yes, brothers and sisters, we *are* political whether active or inactive in the voting process. Either way, a vote is cast. We will be accountable for our actions *as well as for our inactions* if we do not exercise our God given freedoms to take a stand. We believe this includes exercising our right to vote and being certain that we cast our vote for those candidates who most closely align their political platforms with God's Word.

A second example of an issue of which Christians should consider the position that a candidate holds is that of abortion. Years ago when Roe vs. Wade legalized abortion, there were questions raised as to when a child is a child. Today with technological advances there is little doubt that a real person exists much earlier than had previously been thought. The Scriptures have *always* been quite clear as to when *God* considers a child to be a child.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5 NASB)

It is completely understandable that this is an extremely sensitive subject to many Christian women because of abusive situations or the wrongs that many have suffered. Complicated circumstances have lead some women to painfully accept that an abortion was an alternative to going full term with an unwanted pregnancy. The Scriptures are also clear that God is both willing and able to forgive repented women who found themselves at a crossroad and made emotionally driven or ill advised choices and aborted the unwelcome child. Just as with most sin, it is harder for us to forgive ourselves than it is for God to forgive our sin. But His grace is available and the sacrifice for sin was given once for all. Political candidates however, who see nothing wrong with abortion, are not in harmony with God's Word.