

# **THE GOOD CITIZEN: HOW TO BE A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN IN POST-CHRISTIAN AMERICA**

**BIG IDEA:** AS CHRISTIANS, WE SHOULD NOT WITHDRAW FROM PUBLIC LIFE OR ENGAGE IN CULTURE WARRING OUT OF FEAR AND SELF-PRESERVATION. RATHER, WE SHOULD BE GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZENS THAT MAKE DISCIPLES AND SEEK THE COMMON GOOD (MATTHEW 5:16; JEREMIAH 29). THIS IS THE BEST STRATEGY FOR FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION, CHAMPIONING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND PRESERVING THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT IN ORDERED LIBERTY.

**OUR PROMISE:** BECAUSE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES ARE INCREASINGLY DIVISIVE, WE DO NOT ADDRESS SPECIFIC POLITICAL ISSUES OR POLITICIANS IN THIS PRESENTATION. RATHER, WE FOCUS ON PROVIDING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND WISDOM SO THAT CHRISTIANS CAN APPLY THEM IN THEIR CONTEXT AND ACCORDING TO THEIR CONSCIENCE.

## **TOPICS COVERED:**

- **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT**
- **A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP**
- **THE TENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN POST-CHRISTIAN AMERICA**
- **PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BECOMING A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN**

## **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT**

RECENT DATA TELLS US THAT MOST CHRISTIANS DO NOT LOOK TO THEIR CHURCH FOR GUIDANCE OR DISCIPLESHIP ON POLITICAL ISSUES. AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS MAY APPEAR TO BE A GOOD THING, BUT IS IT? SCRIPTURE CONTAINS MANY PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE PROPER ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND OUR RELATION TO GOVERNMENT, AND WE SHOULD KNOW THEM SO WE CAN APPLY THEM.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP**

MOST CHRISTIANS KNOW LITTLE ABOUT CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP OTHER THAN THE RECENT CULTURE WARS AND, PERHAPS, THE AMERICAN FOUNDERS. BUT, THE CHURCH'S HISTORY IS RICH WITH EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIANS THAT NAVIGATED THE TENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN HOSTILE AND EVEN PAGAN CULTURES. WE SHOULD KNOW THESE EXAMPLES (FOR EXAMPLE, THE EARLY CHURCH IN ROME, AUGUSTINE, LUTHER, WILBERFORCE, ETC.) AND FOLLOW THEM.

## **THE TENSIONS OF PUBLIC LIFE**

AS DUAL CITIZENS (CITIZENS OF HEAVEN AND CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES), WE WILL ENCOUNTER TENSIONS IN PUBLIC LIFE. WE WILL BE ASKED TO ABANDON PRINCIPLE FOR THE SAKE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY. WE WILL BE TEMPTED TO TREAT OUR IDEOLOGICAL OPPONENTS AS ENEMIES TO BE CRUSHED RATHER THAN PEOPLE TO BE REACHED. WE MUST LEARN TO MANAGE THESE TENSIONS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL AND OUR PUBLIC WITNESS.

## **PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BECOMING A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN**

WE ARE WORKING TO RECLAIM THE WORD "CITIZEN." THINK NEIGHBOR BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR CITY, STATE AND NATION. MOST CHURCH LEADERS AND COMMITTED CHRISTIANS WE MEET WANT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS, HELP SOLVE THE TOUGH PROBLEMS IN OUR CITIES AND STATES AND IMPACT THE NATION THROUGH THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. WELL, IN THIS PART OF THE PRESENTATION, WE SHARE FIVE PROVEN STEPS FOR BECOMING A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN AND REACHING THOSE GOALS.

## **MATERIALS PROVIDED**

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION  
HANDOUT FOR NOTE TAKING  
PHOTO AND BIO OF SPEAKER