

## ***Our Cultural Mandate – Part VI<sup>1</sup>***

In our look at Biblical justifications for our cultural mandate, the Book of Proverbs is sometimes overlooked. We're familiar with verses encouraging advice to kings (Prov 11:14; 24:5-6), and how wise leaders should seek out godly counselors (Prov 12:15; 15:22; 19:20). In our day we have unprecedented opportunity to do just that - influence those in power to do what's right. We can lobby, support election campaigns, take out ads, write letters and blogs, and we can vote. However, the Book of Proverbs contains specific principles that should guide our leaders, and provide a standard for us to judge their competency to rule over us. Since these Proverbs are wisdom for the ages, the application of eternal truths and principles in a just manner for the good of those that abide by them. They transcend types of governments and cultures and apply to any that have eyes to see and ears to hear. Their application also guides us in our chosen field of work, the values we think society should embrace, and the principles unpinning our treatment of each other. To illustrate, the following are a sampling of principles we should work to inculcate in our government and its leaders.

First and foremost, elected leaders must recognize they're not only accountable to us, but ultimately to the Lord. As Proverbs 15:3 says: "The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good". Unlike the general public, the Lord doesn't forget, and can't be fooled by deceptive words or actions. The high calling of leadership is to serve to please God, to rule in a just and moral manner – consistent with God's revealed truths. Leadership bears an awesome responsibility, since they will answer to God for their action or inaction. Without the restraining influence of knowing ultimate judgment awaits, self serving interests can eventually rationalize any perverse thing.

Proverbs 28:9 says: "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable". Obviously, a nation ruled by just laws is a blessed nation. When leaders are above the law, or activist judges invalidate laws intended for the common good, dire consequences occur. Take the *Roe v. Wade* and follow-on decisions - they overturned every legal protection of the unborn throughout the nation. As abortionists are protected, and Pro-Lifers trying to save lives are jailed, this becomes a classic example of Proverbs 17:15: "Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent – the Lord detests them both". In like manner the current push to legalize same-sex marriage perverts true marriage and will eventually criminalize any dissent. When political correctness confuses right and wrong (e.g. creating hate crimes; allowing pornography in public libraries; using eminent domain to gain more tax revenue), or just laws are ignored (e.g. condemning public obscenity, punishing illegal aliens), how can God's blessing be expected? Our duty is to work diligently for justice, and not allow mainstreaming of evil and the condemnation of good (Prov 18:5).

How about different standards? Proverbs 20:23 says: "The Lord detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please Him". Not only do hate crimes come to mind, but one judge may be vastly more lenient than another for the same crime. Tax

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laws are “progressive”, extracting a far greater percentage from the rich, thus punishing success. Congress routinely exempts themselves from the very laws they force on everyone else, yet tell us they are for our own good (Prov 16:10). This is not equal justice or treatment, yet we allow it to occur. How did we get here? Proverbs 23:10-11 says: “Do not move an ancient boundary stone, or encroach on the fields of the fatherless, for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against them”. For me, boundary stones include the foundational, Biblical principles our nation was built on. They’re our societal rock. When different meanings are read into laws, the boundary stone is moved. Life becomes a matter of definition, marriage becomes whatever someone wants it to be, property ownership is only a source of revenue for the government, truth becomes hate speech, and on and on. How can we not have a passion to restore the plumb line that God intended?

The Book of Proverbs contains many other principles – ones relating to personal accountability, condemning bribery, just punishment, indebtedness, the value of honesty and hard work, the destructiveness of lying, the treatment of the poor, and the like. These sayings are practical tools to be applied with both care and persistence in all our relationships, and to the institutions of our nation. To ignore the relevance of God’s truths to our society is to bury His treasures, to the detriment of others and our own harm. Is there a cultural mandate in the Book of Proverbs? I believe so, one we ignore at our own peril.

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