



# Beyond the Ballot

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# Beyond the Ballot

*PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT*

“Your zeal for eternal life... keeps a man entirely devoted to himself, and does not, even by one expression, arouse him to sanctify the name of God... Set before man, as the prime motive of his existence, zeal to illustrate the glory of God!”

— John Calvin

Why start here on a talk about engaging government?

- Evangelical zeal for politics hasn't been driven by a passion for God and His glory, but for America and her glory.
- Much of the zeal seems to be a result of fear and anger.



- Many good causes, but with the wrong reasons and goals.
- We should ask in all things, how can I...
  - “illustrate the glory of God” through my job?
  - “illustrate the glory of God” through my friendships?
  - “illustrate the glory of God” through the sanctity of life?
  - “illustrate the glory of God” through politics?
- The end goal is not America’s greatness, but God’s glory through your redeemed life.

# I. A Biblical Concept of Government

Government exists to manage creation and to provide order by restraining evil.

- Government *should* stand against sin, but government cannot change sinners.
- *If we can just get this law passed, this crime outlawed...*
  - Ex: Prohibition.
  - Alcohol stands in the way of national transformation.
  - Historical connection between legislation and national revival.
  - Other examples: slavery, alcohol, immigrants, evolution, abortion, etc.

# I. A Biblical Concept of Government

*If we can just get this law passed, this crime outlawed...*

“If we could resolve our top ten crises in the world today, we would still have the devil on our back, sin mastering our heart, and everlasting death as the penalty for our mutiny” — Horton.

Government exists to stand against sin, as a dam against water.

- Does not exist to transform sinners and their nation.
- No law is the key to change or has spiritual power.
- We should want good laws, while realizing their limited power.

## II. A Biblical Attitude Toward Political Leaders

Is government the enemy?

- Alan Keyes called it “the focus of evil.”
- James Dobson likened SCOTUS to the Ku Klux Klan
- Tony Perkins said the judiciary is worse than terrorists

Problem: Society is becoming increasingly godless.

Reason: Nancy Pelosi!

## II. A Biblical Attitude Toward Political Leaders

- Many have no problem slandering Nancy Pelosi  
*After all, she's destroying America*
- Many feel no shame judging the heart of Hilary Clinton  
*And why should we? She's evil.*

...a good political rally, a juicy soundbite, little bits of gossip, half-truths about our enemies, a slab of political red meat

...and not even a tinge of the Spirit's conviction.



## II. A Biblical Attitude Toward Political Leaders

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people”— Titus 3:1-2.

→ If our zeal is for God’s glory...

- We don’t place our hope in government to save us.
- We don’t speak evil of those whom God has appointed.

### III. A Biblical Foundation for Political Positions

“The Bible doesn’t say how you balance the federal budget!”  
— President Carter, 1980.

- Evangelicals have declared the “Christian” position.
- However, do we know God’s decreed will on...
  - Flat vs. graduated tax for Illinois?
  - Increase vs. decrease federal military spending?
  - Net-neutrality?

### III. A Biblical Foundation for Political Positions

- If our positions are truly biblical, we need to show it.
  - Weyrich and Reed urged the Right to avoid doing this.
  - Be “non-religious”, and use “pro-family” language.
- Evangelicals posit their positions as “Christian”
  - Study by Margaret Mitchell, U. of Chicago.  
Ex: *Focus on Family*—scores of political positions, few verses.  
No articles wrestling to develop a biblical position.
  - Conclusion: Evangelicals widely affirm the authority of the Bible.  
Rarely use the Bible or even a verse to support their positions.



### III. A Biblical Foundation for Political Positions

“Therefore, when we talk about cloning technology, for instance, Christians must explain that human beings are made uniquely in the image of God.

When we discuss legislation on assisted suicide and euthanasia, we must deal with the biblical prohibition against unjust killing.

When we talk about divorce, we must talk not only about the negative impact on children, but about God’s ideal for marriage as a one-man-one-woman-one-flesh relationship for life.”

— C. Ben Mitchell.

## IV. A Biblical Unity in the Political Arena

Evangelicalism has an “ability to maintain a core set of convictions without being so rigid that it cannot cooperate with others who do not share them” — Michael Lindsay.

- United with theological liberals and Catholics in the 1910s in the fight for Prohibition.
- United with Catholics, Mormons, Jews, and all moral conservatives in the fight for life.

Lindsay says this unity happens without a “blurring of the lines” because evangelicals have an “elastic orthodoxy.”

## IV. A Biblical Unity in the Political Arena

- Could evangelical lines become blurrier?
  - Liberal and conservative Protestants, Mormons, and Catholics can all agree that the Bible is an authority.
  - We do not agree what Books God has inspired, how sinners are reconciled to God or even if Jesus is God.

“We end up with a public witness in which Mormon talk-show hosts and serially-monogamous casino magnates and prosperity-gospel preachers are welcomed into our ranks, regardless of what violence they do to the gospel. They are, after all, ‘right on the issues’” — Russell Moore.



## IV. A Biblical Unity in the Political Arena

“There is no fellowship between light and darkness.”

— 2 Cor 7:14.

*But there's strength in numbers. We need a coalition!*

- The church becomes a vehicle of political activism.
- The church begins to take on a new identity: “Pro-family” (not so much a people celebrating their union in Christ)
- The church loses its biblical identity and is willing to let dilute the “faith once for all delivered to the saints.”

## V. A Biblical Mission for Political Action

According to George Marsden, evangelicals have been driven to “restore America’s original Christian heritage.”

- Christianity has greatly influenced American History.
  - That influence is declining.
  - American culture is more immoral. *We can't let that happen!!*
- Should we care? Yes.
  - A God-centered zeal confronts the world but not to save a nation.
  - We confront the world because immorality dishonors God.
  - We confront not with the hope of reviving this nation, but of pointing sinners to Christ and His eternal kingdom.

## V. A Biblical Mission for Political Action

“Neither the Lord in His ministry nor the apostles in theirs set about to reform society as an end in itself...

The final end of the church’s witness of good works is revealed everywhere in Scripture as that of causing others to acknowledge God and glorify Him” — Robert Saucy.

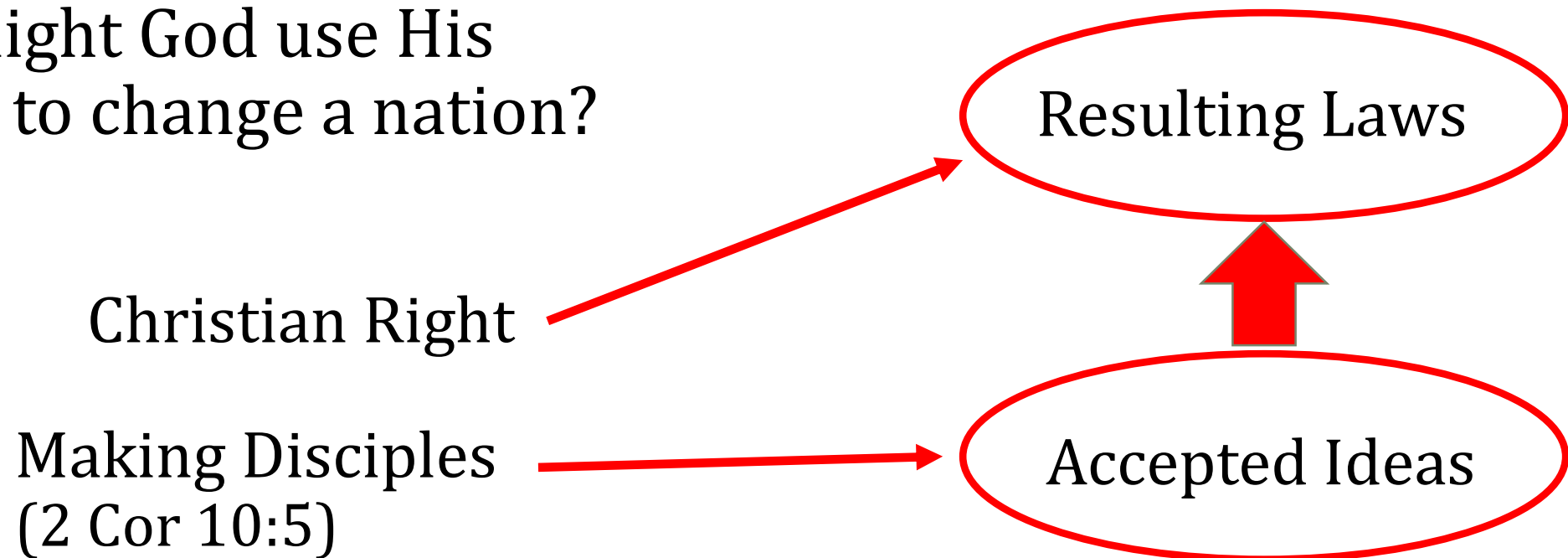
- The confrontation must be an issue of sin and righteousness
  - Show how some issue dishonors God (always use Scripture).
  - Gently confront and then talk of your hope in Christ.



## V. A Biblical Mission for Political Action

“Politics is the place where ideas that have already shaped society find their legislative applications” — Michael Horton.

How might God use His church to change a nation?



# The Five Principles

If our zeal is for God's glory in the political arena...

- We understand that changes in government can't save us.
- We seek to honor those whom God has appointed.
- We make it clear that God's Word is our foundation.
- We guard our identity as a people united in Christ.
- We confront the world with the intent of making disciples.

# The Five Principles

- I. A Biblical Concept of Government
- II. A Biblical Attitude towards Political Leaders
- III. A Biblical Foundation for Political Positions
- IV. A Biblical Unity in the Political Arena
- V. A Biblical Mission for Political Action