

## "Kingdom Citizenship"

*Philippians 3:20*

### Introduction

If you've ever lived in a foreign country, you know that, although you may engage with and be a part of that culture, there are certain things—such as language, customs or beliefs—that may be in stark contrast to the ones you are accustomed to in your homeland. Paul likened our experience on Earth to that of foreigners in a land that is not ours, awaiting our return home. Our citizenship, he argued, was in Heaven and not on Earth (Phil 3:20). There once was a time in the USA when there was a collective frame of reference to Judeo-Christian principles that would inform culture. Still, as secularism, humanism and idolatry crept into the American consciousness, this country drifted further from that point of reference. Rather than being a thermostat setting the cultural climate in our country, Christians have become more like a thermometer reflecting the culture's extreme temperatures. Our calling is not to mirror the world's ways and customs but to live unaltered by the push and pull of cultural norms.

So how do Christians live in a world that is not their home yet still engage its inhabitants toward making more citizens of Heaven? As believers, we must make radical adjustments to how we live and move if we ever want to see others come to know and trust the one true King of the world. This requires a shift in allegiance—not pledging unwavering devotion to a flag or a political party, but focusing our whole devotion on a much higher call. As James says, we must learn not to be double-minded, easily swayed by doubts and the workings of this world (Jas 1:5-8). Instead, we must choose to become wholly focused on serving and living our lives as the Lord prescribes in His Word. While the culture is entrapped in an all-out battle over earthly politics, Kingdom Citizens—those visible, verbal followers of Christ—should be spending all their time and energy bringing heavenly perspectives into the culture's concerns.

As Kingdom Citizens, our devotion is to the Lord alone. We should influence whatever areas of culture to which God has allowed us to be a part. We should be on the frontlines in our local communities, seeking to hold those in office accountable to Kingdom values. Rather than being swept up in the debates and divisions of this place, Christians should be the ones helping to make His Kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven.

### Getting Started

1. Have you ever been to or lived in a foreign country? What is it like to be in a place that is not your home? How did people view you and react to your presence? What differences made it difficult to navigate a land that was not your own?
2. What is the difference between a thermostat and a thermometer? How have you seen Christians reflect the temperature of the culture instead of informing it?

### Let's Get Personal

1. In what ways do you find yourself being more like an earthly citizen instead of a heavenly one? What keeps you from being entirely devoted to your true homeland?
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2. How have you responded to our current cultural climate? Do you feel like you helped to inform your culture, or did you allow the culture to inform your beliefs and ideas?
3. If someone looked at your life through your social media posts, your spending habits, the words you say and how you live in general, would they describe you as a devoted citizen of Heaven or an earthly citizen of this world?
4. What would it look like to live as a Kingdom Citizen in your workplace, home, neighborhood, community and country? What specific actions would a Kingdom Citizen do?

### Take the Next Step

1. One of the reasons many Christians struggle to live as heavenly citizens is that their knowledge of politics and worldly issues is greater than their understanding of Scripture. Honestly evaluate your time spent in God's Word. Do you invest as much in your knowledge of the character and story of God as you do in politics or earthly concerns? What is one thing you can do to grow in your understanding of the things of God?
2. How can your prayer life express your faithful citizenship to the Kingdom of Christ? Do you pray about the issues that concern you? Do you ask the Lord for wisdom as you engage culture, or do you merely express your opinions and ideas without consulting God and His Word?
3. After hearing this week's message, do you need to repent to the Lord? Have you been living as an earthly citizen instead of pledging your allegiance to Christ? If so, confess ways you've put your hope in and reliance on systems of this world rather than in Christ alone.
4. What is one way you can inform the culture in your home, workplace, neighborhood, community and country as a Kingdom Citizen? Boldly step out in faith and live out your true citizenship by acting accordingly this week.
5. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Luke 16:16; 22:29; 1 Peter 2:11; Matthew 5:13-16; 28:16-20; Colossians 1:13; Philippians 3:19; James 1:7-8; 3:17; John 18:33, 37; Judges 8:22-23; Ephesians 1:10, 22-23; and Galatians 1:4.

### Renew Your Mind

*"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;"*

*Philippians 3:20*