

## “God and Government”

*Romans 13:1-7*

### Introduction

*“One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”* Whether intentional or not, the writers of the Pledge of Allegiance illustrate an important principle with this line. It highlights a fundamental truth that a nation choosing to come under the protection and authority of God will enjoy the benefits of that relationship: unity, liberty and justice. The reality, however, is a far cry from that. When God is taken out of the equation in our public and private lives, the result is the chaos we have seen played over and over on our news channels. Part of understanding what is going on today means looking at what God intended for us when it comes to government and authority in our country, and how far we have drifted from that mark.

In God’s Kingdom, there are four distinct covenants that He initiates throughout Scripture: personal, familial, church and national. The purpose is that when we, as humans (whether individually, as a family, as a church body or as a country), agree to walk in the character and policies of God, the benefit to be enjoyed is one of God’s covering. Like David said in Psalm 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.” Blessings follow when we, as a nation, *choose* to recognize God in how we operate as a society. As we seek to become Kingdom Voters, our hope is not to be found in aligning ourselves with a political party. Instead, we should seek the governance of God – His person and His policies – through the civil government in place.

Paul reminds us in Romans 13:1 that we are to submit to the governing authorities because they are God’s servants. As God’s servants, those in civil government are called to maintain safety, justice and righteousness in a compassionately responsible environment for freedom to flourish. Government, by God’s design, was meant to reflect God’s image for the well-being of society. Nonetheless, it only takes one headline of scandal to remind us how far we have fallen from that ideal. As a Kingdom Voter, we must learn how to use the design God intended for civil authority as a framework through which we make our choices in the ballot box.

Government is not just a political enterprise; it is a spiritual one as well. And because so much more is at stake than mere political agendas, we as followers must take the responsibility of becoming a Kingdom Voter seriously. Additionally, those holding civic leadership positions must take seriously their call to be ministers of God. Kingdom Voters recognize that part of our job as ambassadors for Christ is to call into account those entrusted with leadership in our country. We can do this by praying for our leaders (1 Tim 2:2) and encouraging our governing officials towards righteousness with our vote and individual involvement, knowing ultimately, God will uphold His standard.

Throughout history, we can see the devastating effects of leaving God out of government. As we move towards an election, let us, as Kingdom Voters, work to bring healing to our nation by making kingdom choices instead of political ones. We do this so that we may truly experience: *One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all!*

### Getting Started

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1. What are the specific benefits of a covenantal relationship with God for an individual, a family, a church and a nation?
2. After hearing this week's sermon, in what ways is government a spiritual enterprise? Do you think it falls short in this way? Why or why not? What do you allow to influence your decision most when it comes to politics – the Bible, a political party or culture?

### Let's Get Personal

1. As a Kingdom Voter, how well have you been fulfilling *your* God-given obligation to our nation and community leaders? Do you regularly pray for them and even those with whom you disagree? Do you hold governing civil authorities accountable for their actions, both in policy and how they live their lives? Do you know what's going on in your local community? Are you involved in any way?
2. Thinking about the current state of affairs in this country, in what ways have you seen God left out when it comes to our government? How could bringing God in, both in policy and person, help bring healing right now?
3. How does a better understanding of God's intentions for government, and those in authority, help you as you prayerfully make decisions on how to cast your vote?

### Take the Next Step

1. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, "First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." Make a list of your national, state and local leaders. Commit to praying for them regularly.
2. If you haven't already, start looking at where candidates on your upcoming ballot stand on matters of kingdom importance. How do candidates live up to their call to be a minister of God in both policy and person? Pray for wisdom in the choices you will make on election day.
3. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Psalm 22:28; Deuteronomy 29:29; Romans 1:18-32; Proverbs 8:15; Isaiah 5:20-21; and Genesis 11:1-9.

### Renew Your Mind

*"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities.  
For there is no authority except from God,  
and those which exist are established by God."*

*Romans 13:1*

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