



Christian Citizenship

“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.

Put Down the Newspaper!

“Most people think that consuming the news makes one an informed citizen who is equipped to form intelligent opinions on social and political issues.” Is this true? Academy of Ideas argues “that the opposite is true: news consumption fosters ignorance, intolerance, passivity, and chronic stress.” In their classic video, “Why the News Promotes Ignorance and Mental Illness” (June 14, 2025), Academy of Ideas draws upon Rolf Dobelli’s book *Stop Reading the News: A Manifesto for a Happier, Calmer and Wiser Life*. What follows are excerpts from the video transcript ~

One of the reasons the news leaves us less informed is because it radically oversimplifies what it reports on. The news reduces events to simplistic narratives, sound bites, and catchphrases—which it presents as the truth. These simplified explanations of social and political events are far from unbiased. Rather, they are filtered through the news outlet’s political agenda and shaped by the interests of government agencies and corporate advertisers. “These days,” writes Rolf Dobelli, “it’s much harder to distinguish between truthful, unbiased news items and those with an ulterior motive. There’s a vast industry of lobbying and leverage at work behind the scenes.”

The news cultivates an intellectual hubris in its consumers. Today, many people hold strong opinions on virtually every issue amplified by the media, and with each new trending news topic, public discourse and social media are flooded with self-assured commentary. In effect, the news is cultivating individuals who are so convinced they know the truth that they are intolerant and even hateful toward those who hold opposing views. Hence, news consumption deepens societal polarization, erodes the possibility of civic discourse, and turns neighbors who might

otherwise be friends into ideological enemies. In an age when, thanks in large part to the news, the average citizen is highly opinionated, profoundly ignorant, and increasingly intolerant, the following wisdom of Marcus Aurelius is sorely needed: “You are at liberty not to form opinions about all and sundry, thereby sparing your soul unrest.” Or, as Dobelli echoes, “. . . [T]he news is constantly urging us to form opinions. This robs us of concentration and inner peace.” Twenty-four hour news channels and headlines keep our minds in a state of perpetual distraction.

The news manipulates public opinion—frequently to the advantage of those in power—and fosters learned helplessness rather than action, [therefore] it should come as no surprise that “the American Revolution,” writes Dobelli, “and the fall of the Soviet Union . . . did not need current affairs programmes, news websites or feeds.” The most influential figures of these movements informed themselves—and inspired others—through books, pamphlets, public gatherings, speeches, debates, and meaningful conversation. Abstaining from the news [putting down the newspaper and turning off the TV] gives us the opportunity to redirect our attention toward what truly matters and what we can influence—our mental and physical health, our relationships, and our work.

What can we do? In his book, Dobelli suggests that we experiment with abstaining from the news for 30 days. If we relapse, we start again. Abstaining from the news does not mean we have to stick our head in the sand. We have access to a wide range of informational sources that can help us stay informed without falling prey to the pitfalls of news consumption. Long form content, such as books, well-researched articles, podcasts, documentaries, textbooks, and online courses are available to us. With a clearer understanding of the world, we are better equipped to act as a genuine force for good in society. “Ninety-nine point nine per cent of all world events are outside your control,” writes Dobelli. “Devote your energies to things you can influence. There are more than enough of those—but an earthquake on the other side of the planet isn’t one of them.” Visit Academy of Ideas: Free Minds for a Free Society at (www.academyofideas.com). A subscription allows you

to view all of their thought-provoking videos on many topics. Read Isaiah 26:3; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:13.

Please pray for the peace of mind in Christ that passes all understanding... in Jesus' name.

Dispensationalism, the USA, and Israel

Many Christians have questions about the current state of affairs between the USA and Israel. Many know very little about AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee). In discussions with friends, family, and even members in our own congregations, we may hear fellow Christians proclaim that "God will bless those who bless Israel." We may not realize that in the rubble of two world wars and the establishment of the modern state of Israel, a relatively new and emerging theological system called Dispensationalism exploded in popularity in America. This teaching is not the same as the biblical teaching of Covenant Theology

What can we do? Make use of the video provided by Right Response Ministries which live-streamed on June 20, 2025, following the confrontational interview of Sen. Ted Cruz by Tucker Carlson. (Many agree that the discussion had by Cruz and Carlson was poor.) The video from Right Response Ministries is titled "Dispensationalism Is on Its Last Leg." The moderator is Joel Webbon, Pastor of Covenant Bible Church in Austin, TX. You can find the video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/2zKc1DESCOs>

Learn how Dispensationalism differs from Covenant Theology, how it influences the way Americans see Israel, and the role of AIPAC. Pray for the conversion of Jewish men, women, and children that, confessing faith in Jesus Christ, they may be delivered from their darkness by the Light of truth.

Please pray for thoughtful and biblically based discussions among Christian citizens... in Jesus' name.

The 1916 Project

The 1916 Project is a documentary that exposes the corruption of the American family and the architects of our current culture of death. "Planned Parenthood is the linchpin of our decaying nation." What do we need to know about Planned Parenthood? What are its roots? Why has this organization dedicated itself to the sexualization of adolescents and teens, and the promotion of transgender hormones and surgery?

What can we do? View the trailer of *The 1916 Project* at www.the1916project.com. Order a copy of the DVD for viewing with family or congregational members. This video was produced by The White Rose Resistance, a nationwide movement whose mission is to be a voice for unborn children. The inspiration for Seth Gruber and The White Rose is Hans and Sophie Scholl, the German Lutheran brother and sister who were executed after fearlessly condemning and exposing the Third Reich and its death camps. Hans and Sophie desired to "prick the conscience of the culture" and "awaken the church." Read more about Hans and Sophie Scholl. Then, learn more about the work of the White Rose Resistance.

Please pray that many more Christians understand the time, resist evil, and rebuild a culture of life... in Jesus' name.

Family-Centered Economies

Gather and Grow is a Christian ministry dedicated to rebuilding the family economy. Ten years ago, Rory and Becca Groves moved their family to the country near Northfield, MN., with the hopes of building a more durable, self-sufficient life. The most important lesson they learned is how to work together as a family. The Groves family founded Gather & Grow to help other families build their own family economies and become better prepared for the days that are ahead. What do the Groves believe? "The lines have fallen for me in the pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance" (Ps. 16:6). What do they do? "Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11). (Source: *The Grovestead*, Vol 10, Issue 2, Spring 2025.)

What can we do? Visit www.gatherandgrow.us.

Consider this model and meet other families who are building productive households by attending the fifth annual *Grovestead Gathering* this Labor Day Weekend. The theme for 2025 is "Hope for Hard Times." Order a copy of *The Family Economy: Discovering the Family as It Was Designed to Work*, and *Durable Trades: Family-Centered Economics That Have Stood the Test of Time*, both by Rory Groves. Being of encouragement to the Church family is also important to the Groves' family. Visit www.gatherandgrow.us/church to request a packet of information.

Please pray for families, that they be intentional, encouraged, and trusting in God... in Jesus' name.

