



# 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.**

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## **Blessings for Obedience, Curses for Disobedience**

Deuteronomy 28 is a hard read for Christian citizens. But, as the *Lutheran Study Bible* commentary on verse 37 notes, "Israel would become a horrible object lesson of what happens when a nation fails to serve the Lord." Blessings can be radically reversed when people no longer live in obedience to God, but take up idols and follow the ways of Gnosticism, secret societies, false teachers, social experiments, fear, ignorance, arrogance, and unrepentance. Just as He said to Joshua, the Lord God says to us: ". . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him . . ." (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

**What can we do?** Read Deuteronomy 28. Discuss: What does it mean that God is a just God? Does God still inflict punishment on those who disobey Him and follow after other gods? Deuteronomy 28:53-57 illustrates "possibly the most gruesome scenes in the Bible. Moses does not mince words when warning about the consequences of divine judgment." How should we think of abortion, infanticide, sacrifice of children to satanic worship, child sex trafficking, pedophilia, mutilation of young bodies by transgender hormones and surgeries, assisted suicide, and euthanasia? As members of the Body of Christ, discuss the following verses from 2 Timothy: 1:7-9; 13; 2:21-26; 3:1-5; and 4:3-5, 7.

**Please pray** to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God... in Jesus' name.

## **Christianity and Our National Life**

Josh Hawley is a Christian who serves as a U.S. Senator from Missouri. In his article published in *First*

*Things* (2-2024), Hawley quotes Christopher Dawson, an English historian, whose lifelong thesis was this: Every great culture in the history of mankind has depended on "a common moral order and a common religious ideal." America's ideal, writes Hawley, "has been the religion of the Bible, Christianity in particular. That is changing now, obviously, and not for the better. As the left works to impose an arid secularism, American culture increasingly has no memory of the religious tradition that made it and, without that tradition, no moral order to bind us together."

Hawley points out the consequences, which include an economy that is "less than hospitable to hearth and home," a decrease in the number of Americans who "bother to marry or raise children," and not even being able to agree on the definition of "man" and "woman." Students who are "unfamiliar with the moral and spiritual foundations of their society . . . take to campus quadrangles and social media to mimic the violent rhetoric of terrorists . . . [there is] a pulsating hatred for Jews and Christians and the religion of the Bible that unites them. Meanwhile, a startling percentage of American youth are medicated for psychiatric disorders." There is drug and alcohol abuse and a growing suicide rate.

Christian culture, says Hawley, "has been America's common ground. We need to recover that common ground today. Why? Because America as we know it cannot survive without biblical Christianity. The rights we cherish, the freedoms we enjoy, the ideals we love together—all are rooted in and sustained by the tradition of the Bible. Christianity is the electric current of our national life. Turn it off, and the light will fade. If we care about the future of our country, we must renew the influence of biblical faith in America."

It is unfortunate that too many Christians relegate their faith to Sunday-only and, on occasion, moral issues. "The Gospel," writes Hawley, "concerns the whole of society and life. . . . Aristotle had it right two and a half millennia ago. 'The end and purpose of a polis'—a city, a society—'is the good life,' he said, 'and the institutions of social life are means to that end.' Further: 'Any polis which is truly so called, and is not merely one in name, must devote itself to the end of encouraging godness.' It's not so complicated, when

you think about it. Society is forged by bonds of mutual loyalty, mutual affections and loves, and those affections are nourished by a shared idea of what is good: a moral vision. Society is a venture in shared meaning.”

Of all people, observes Hawley, Christians are the ones “who most need reminding of society’s spiritual foundations. . . . We have long been tempted to divide the world into ‘sacred’ and ‘secular,’ the City of God and the City of Man with society and government written off as necessary evils. This mentality gives Christians a pass, an out, an excuse to do nothing when instead we have a duty, to our neighbors and our Lord, to work for a just society leavened by the gospel. That duty has never been more urgent.” (Excerpted from “Our Christian Nation” by Josh Hawley, *First Things*, 2-2024.)

**What can we do?** We can help our fellow citizens and neighbors understand the importance of Christianity’s influence on a culture and society. “Through faith in Jesus Christ, individuals become agents of history,” says Hawley. “We cannot underestimate the importance of this change. Class, tribe, and even nation paled now in import compared to the call of God: The idea of the individual was born.” We can point to the Constitution and Bill of Rights which emphasize individual liberty. (The idea of the individual and individual liberty was unknown in the ancient world.) We can remember, as Hawley points out: “Christian liberty is not merely freedom from sin, moral decay, and death. It is a positive freedom, one exercised as we serve God and answer His call. What God has commanded no government is at liberty to deny. The Ten Commandments (for example) are moral duties, to be sure, but they also adumbrate individual rights. They define the obligations of individuals, which entail the political freedoms individuals must enjoy in order to meet them. Over time, Christian theorists would come to see that God’s injunctions require the rights to worship, to marry, to pursue an honest profession, and to live generally in a manner pleasing to the Lord.” Every day, we can remind ourselves and others that “the Greeks praised liberty, but only for the ‘reasonable;’ the Romans lauded self-government, but only for the few. Christ, by contrast, died for all. In Him, there is ‘neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male and female,” for all are called of God, regardless of status.” As Christians, we must work to “re-Christianize the great institutions of our society by rearticulating the gospel’s meaning for every aspect of life.” We must work to shape modern conditions according to the

gospel and, in doing so, contrast freedom in Christ with the slavery of secularism. We must “stoutly defend the seminal Christian influence in our history. We need to talk about it, point it out, and teach it.”

**Please pray** that, for the sake of generations, we speak, teach, and live as Christians ... in Jesus’ name.

## What About the Children?

When adults turn their back on God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, what becomes of the children? Who is waiting to have their way with them?

Planned Parenthood measures its corporate success by the number of babies they abort, fetal organs they harvest, and young teens they assist with hormones which may be the first step before referral to a surgeon for body mutilating transgender surgery.

False teachers and religions entice children by way of social media, videos and films, Drag Queen Story Hour, and after school clubs. Amazon Prime rolled out a trailer for a new animated series titled *Hazbin Hotel* in which “Lucifer and the spawn of demons are the courageous heroes, Adam’s original ‘sin’ is patriarchy, God and His angels are the cruel villains, and humanity’s free will is lionized as the highest good” (John Daniel Davidson, Senior Editor of the *Federalist*). (Source: *The Christian Post*, 1-22-2024.) According to their website, The After School Satan Club “does not believe in introducing religion into public schools and will only open a club if other religious groups are operating on campus. ASSC exists to provide a safe and inclusive alternative to the religious clubs that use threats of eternal damnation to convert school children to their belief system.”

**What can we do?** Parents should familiarize themselves with the history, practices, and services of Planned Parenthood (PP). Research the worldview and beliefs of Margaret Sanger, founder of PP. Warn other parents and members of your congregation about Amazon Prime’s new series, *Hazbin Hotel*. We cannot resist what we don’t know exists. Be familiar with after school programs in your community. Visit [www.thesatanictemple.com/pages/after-school-satan](http://www.thesatanictemple.com/pages/after-school-satan). Learn why parents in Chimneyrock, TN., together with more than 40 pastors and other religious leaders gathered to express concern. (*The Guardian*, 12-14-2023.) Read “Colorado’s First-Ever ‘After School Satan Club’ to Launch at Elementary School” (ColoradoNewsLine.com 2023-03-03).

**Please pray** for faithful parents, children, and congregations ... in Jesus’ name.

