

## #270 “God-Honoring Government”

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The ideal political platform before God is not necessarily what appeals to the most people or that which is most likely to get a politician elected. If God’s ways really are the best ways, not just for individuals but for nations, and, if Scripture is true when it says that blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Psalm 33:12), then it is imperative to figure out just how the fear of God ought to impact politics and government. Scripture is not silent on what is good for nations and societies and what it takes to be a godly ruler. Scripture does offer immense wisdom when it comes to crafting a political platform, and God’s Word never fails when it comes to needing to search out the good and bad in terms of what is offered up in the political arena.

**A God-honoring government recognizes that it is subject ultimately to God.** Romans 13:1b says, “For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” This doesn’t mean that every government is acting in accordance with the will and desires of God, but it does mean that God is sovereign over the affairs of men (Proverbs 21:1). Godly rulers will defer to God, acknowledge His final supremacy, and seek His wisdom and blessing as they lead. A God-honoring government would be one which seeks to operate as being accountable to God rather than just doing something for themselves or for the whims of various groups. *Leadership would be an issue of stewardship before God rather than some political game or charade.* Proverbs 16:10 says, “A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.” This doesn’t mean that a political leader literally speaks for God, but it means that he is accountable as a steward of his leadership duties before God. Thus, leaders must think through what God would have them do as they lead. As Proverbs 16:12 says, “It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, For a throne is established on righteousness.” A leader’s choices, policies, and decisions have far-reaching ramifications, and an entire people can be lifted up or cast downward based upon the leader’s actions. Righteousness is the best way to lead if an administration is to be strong and rejoiced over by the people.

**A God-honoring government is not oppressive toward those it is responsible for.** Proverbs 28:16 says, “A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, But he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.” A good government would allow for freedom, fairness, and justice for all. *It would not allow itself to be corrupted by bribes or favoritism, nor would it put into place policies that discriminate or enrich the ruling class at the expense of the working class and poor.* As Proverbs 22:16 says, “He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.” A good government wants there to be equal opportunity for all, and it wants to see its people succeed and prosper, not be micromanaged, dominated, or forced to live as slaves. A good government does not force its will upon the people, but it is there to be a help, a protection, a system of justice, and a guarder of rights and liberty. It would support the freedom of religion yet not force people to believe in God or discriminate against them for not doing so. A God-honoring government would protect the rights of people to voice their opinions, for truth is not afraid to be put to the test. Godly leadership brings joy,

but oppressors destroy and bring sorrow. As Ecclesiastes 4:1 says, "Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them."

**A God-honoring government stands up to evildoers.** Proverbs 20:26 says, "A wise king winnows the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them." This doesn't mean that he has to literally kill everybody who has ever committed a crime; rather, the idea is that wickedness no longer goes unpunished under a king who possesses wisdom. This idea corresponds to Proverbs 20:8, which says, "A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes." *A good administration seeks to punish evil and defend the innocent and what is good.* The more good is protected and promoted, the more freedom can reign. Scripture is clear that evil is at work in the world, and a God-honoring government protects its own from evil outside its borders and punishes those who do evil within its borders (Romans 13:4). It also may find it necessary to act to protect the innocent abroad even when it is not in its own personal interests to do so (Philippians 2:3-4). Any wars thus must have a moral imperative rather than just being for shallow, selfish gain.

**A God-honoring government seeks to reflect the moral standards of Scripture.** This doesn't mean that the government should be the official church or prevent others from practicing a different religion. What it means is that governments are morally accountable for how they conduct themselves. Nations are held accountable in Scripture for their deeds (Psalm 7:8), and God does punish nations that multiply their iniquities such as the Canaanites, Sodom and Gomorrah, and even Israel, God's own chosen nation, when it hardened its heart against God (Genesis 15:16, Genesis 19:24, Deuteronomy 9:4, Jeremiah 7:12). Thus, it is foolish for a government to challenge the mercy and patience of God, and governments will find the blessing of God when they uphold righteousness and justice in the land (Proverbs 13:6). The people, too, will rejoice when good people rule. Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, people groan." For some reason, modern society believes that righteousness oppresses, and moral liberty makes happy. *The reality is that wickedness shames a nation.* Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people." Only those who do things God's way and exalt in His standards can be a shining city on a hill. This means that if God defines marriage as between a man and a woman, which He does (Romans 1:26-27), then government should support and reinforce that idea. If Scripture infers that a baby in the womb is indeed a life, which it does (Psalm 139:13-16, Luke 1:41), then government should protect the innocent life. If God says that all people including the elderly and disabled matter, then a society should guard the rights of all, even the most despised and weak of the people. If Scripture teaches that people who are able should work for a living and not get free handouts, then government should encourage hard work and not laziness (2 Thessalonians 3:10). At the same time, Scripture says not to neglect the poor, the needy, the orphan, and the widow, and a God-honoring government does its part to help with the basics and to encourage those who are able to give to do so (Proverbs 19:17, 28:27, 29:7). Proverbs 14:31 says, "He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him." Morality also impacts a good environmental policy, and it should be defined as one which would protect God's creation while understanding that God has given resources for man to use for good

(Genesis 1:28-30). By heeding the righteous standards of God, righteousness flourishes, and a nation can prosper and be exalted.

**A God-honoring government is wise and fair in its finances.** It recognizes its authority to tax (Romans 13:6) not as a means of making its people suffer but simply as a means of taking in enough to meet its obligations, not that which unduly enriches the ruling class. *Fairness rules its tax policy so that the average person is not oppressed while the rich get off easy.* Scripture says not to borrow and then refuse to pay back (Psalm 37:21), so governments should not get into debt that they cannot pay back. Governments should not steal from future generations by excessive borrowing (Exodus 20:15), nor should governments allow monetary debasement which is also equivalent to stealing from the taxpayer (Isaiah 1:22). By having these moral checks, a government keeps from growing too large, too bloated, unstable, and corrupt.

**A God-honoring government is not corrupted by bribes.** It is not bought off by special interests, various members of the elite, or some powerful business entities. It upholds justice, due process, and the rule of law (Proverbs 18:17). Proverbs 29:14 says, "The king gives stability to the land by justice, But a man who takes bribes overthrows it." *A government that sells itself to the highest bidder will only bring pain and misery to all, but a ruler who has integrity will not allow his heart to be compromised.* A God-honoring government doesn't want to be elected by money alone, but it wants to be put into power by the people it rules on the basis of truth, sound ideas, and trustworthiness.

**A God-honoring government doesn't have an overinflated view of itself or try to power-grab.** It rejects the notion that government is inherently smarter or wiser than the people it has been entrusted to rule over or that it is the source of all that is good and successful in the life of the individual. A good government stays out of the business of the good so that they can live freely and prosper. It punishes the bad so that the good can keep doing good. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says, "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." *A God-honoring government allows people to thrive and prosper within the law, to be peaceable and cooperative, and to have the freedom to do good and be godly without Big Brother interfering and smothering them, stealing from them, or taking credit for what its people have accomplished on their own.*

In conclusion, a good government can do a lot of good, protect the innocent, and encourage morality and the propagation of truth. But it cannot do everything, nor should it. Ultimately, a nation's leaders reflect the moral fiber of its people, and the people must make moral choices driven by the fear of God if a nation is really to be the best that it can be. A nation is ultimately the summation of its people, but a good leader can lead the people in the right direction and set a proper example. "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law" (Proverbs 29:18). Leadership matters because righteousness matters, and a nation that promotes righteousness will be the brightest city on the highest hill.