

Insight for the Issues

Prov. 4:23

# NE→XT STEPS

“Christians and Politics”



Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

1 Chron. 12:32 “...***which were men*** that had understanding of **the times, to know what Israel ought to do...**”

Est. 1:13 “...the wise men, **which knew the times...**”

Mt. 16:3 “...O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**”

Prov. 22:3 A prudent *man* **foreseeth...**”



# I. THE FOCUS IS UPON THE SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN THE EARTHLY

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

A. The Primary Challenge = the Heart

B. The Practical Challenge = The Head

❖ The believer must be in control of his “thought-life.”

Prov. 23:7 For **as he thinketh in his heart**, so is he...”

❖ The believer must “think on” some things, and NOT think about other things:



## II. THE FOUNDATION IS UPON THE SCRIPTURES RATHER THAN THE EMOTIONAL

❖ In order to focus upon the spiritual rather than the earthly, we must go to the Scriptures – “the sword of the Spirit”

A. The Establishment of Spirituality

B. The Exercise of Spirituality



### III. THE FORESIGHT IS UPON THE SPIRITUALITY RATHER THAN THE EXPERIENTIAL

A. Foresight may be conflicted – 4:1a “Beloved, believe not every spirit...”

1 Jn. 4:3b “...and this is that *spirit* of antichrist...”

B. Foresight must be clarified – 4:1b “...but try the spirits whether they are of God...”

C. Foresight may be controversial – 4:3a “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh **is not of God**...”

D. Foresight manifests convictions – 1 Cor. 2:13-16



Tonight, we will look at these three principles as we consider “*Insight for the Issues*”...in regard to “Christians and Politics.” This very controversial subject is an important issue for us to consider. Let’s begin with an example from the Lord Jesus Christ in Mt. 22:15:

Mt. 22:15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? **Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?**

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription?

21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, **Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.



# I. THE FOCUS IS UPON THE SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN THE EARTHLY

A. The Entanglement, Mt. 22:15 “...took counsel how they might entangle him...”

❖ Which candidate, or party, connives to entangle Christians into ungodly and unscriptural practices?

B. The Enlightenment, Mt. 22:18a “But Jesus perceived their wickedness...”

❖ When entering into a discussion of a religious/political nature, we must be wise to discern the motive for such a discussion – with whom and why are we engaged in such a discussion?



C. The Encumberment, Mt. 22:21b “...Then saith he unto them,  
**Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's;  
and unto God the things that are God's.**

“Death, taxes and childbirth! There's never any convenient time for any of them.”

— Margaret Mitchell, Gone with the Wind

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/taxes>

❖ Which candidate, or party, does or does not advocate spiritual principles over political pandering?

## II. THE FOUNDATION IS UPON THE SCRIPTURES RATHER THAN THE EMOTIONAL

❖ In the Old Testament, Joseph and Daniel served in civil government, exerting influence to further the flourishing of their nations.



Mt. 17:27 Notwithstanding, **lest we should offend them**, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that **take, and give unto them for me and thee**.

Eccl. 8:2 I *counsel thee* to keep the king's commandment, **and that in regard of the oath of God**.

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to **be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,**

Prov. 11:11 **By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted**: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Prov. 16:12 *It is* an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for **the throne is established by righteousness**.

Isa 16:5 And **in mercy shall the throne be established**: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.



## A. The Rendering, Mt. 22:21b, Rom. 13:7

**Original Word:** ἀποδίδωμι

**Transliteration:** apodidómi

**Definition:** to give up, give back, return, restore, to pay, reward

**Usage:** (a) I give back, return, restore, (b) I give, render, as due, (c) mid: I sell.

*apodídōmi* (from *apó*, "from" and *dídōmi*, "give") – properly, *give from*, i.e. to *return* (**especially as a payment**), in relation to the source of the giving back <https://biblehub.com/str/greek/591.htm>

Mt. 22:21b “...Then saith he unto them, **Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**”

Rom. 13:7 **Render therefore to all their dues:** tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.



## B. The Reality, Rom. 13:1-7, 12:18, JN. 19:10-11

Rom. 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For **he is the minister of God to thee for good**. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: **for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil**.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For **for this cause pay ye tribute also**: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 **Render therefore to all their dues**: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.



❖ Government is God's program, 13:1

❖ Government is under God's control, 13:1 – Jn. 19:10-11

Jn. 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, **Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above**: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

C. The Reason, 13:4, 6

Rom. 13:4 For **he is the minister of God to thee for good**. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: **for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil**.

6 For **for this cause pay ye tribute also**: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.



- ❖ Government's design is to provide social order which includes a restraint upon sin.
- ❖ When the government promotes sin, then the righteous must restrain it.
- ❖ Such restraint of the government is available by the voting prerogatives of its citizenry.
- ❖ As government follows God's principles, believers are free to pursue God's will in peace.

Rom. 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, **live peaceably with all men.**

Christians are anything but helpless in our country, however. We have a right to take action — and also, as Tom Minnery points out, a responsibility.



*Unlike the Roman Empire in the first century, our country is a participatory republic. We have the obligation to make our voices heard and to get involved in dialogue. Our government asks us, as citizens, to participate, not merely to shut up and obey. In the United States, 'We, the people' means Christians as well as non-Christians. Submission in our political system includes being willing to contribute to the political process, not withdraw from it.*

*Minnery, p. 100. <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/understanding-the-issues/biblical-citizenship/christians-and-politics>*

### III. THE FORESIGHT IS UPON THE SPIRITUALITY RATHER THAN THE EXPERIENTIAL

#### A. The Proper Perspective

- ❖ A believer should always be concerned to look at the “big picture” regarding the proper perspective of God’s rule.



Prov. 25:5 Take away the wicked *from* before the king, and **his throne shall be established in righteousness.**

- ❖ In the future, which candidate or political party will produce laws and judgments that compatible with Scriptural principles?

Prov. 14:34 **Righteousness exalteth a nation:** but sin *is* a reproach to any people.

## B. The Proper Participation

- ❖ A believer should have a Scriptural worldview and promote those whose values will be the same.



Prov. 28:2 **For the transgression of a land many *are* the princes thereof:** but **by a man of understanding *and* knowledge the state *thereof*** shall be **prolonged**.

❖ The foresight of the believer should be to establish a government that future descendants may enjoy the peace and joy of serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 2:13 **Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;**

14 **Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.**



## Conclusion

Our role in politics, secondary to our role in church, will be a powerful influence upon society in the future. We should honor the Lord and establish principles that will benefit our descendants, for His glory.

1 Tim. 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, **first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;**

2 **For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.**

3 **For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;**

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.