

Our Cultural Mandate – Part V¹

In Part IV we began gleaning principles from the Gospel of Matthew to guide the application of a Biblical worldview to our cultural mandate. The principles God reveals to us are not only for our good, but demonstrate His loving kindness towards all mankind. For example, from the beginning, both society and government have tried to redefine or weaken marriage through ill intent, or just plain ignorance. In Matthew 19:1-12 Jesus clearly teaches that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman for life. Political correctness (radical feminist movement, no fault divorce), counterfeit marriages (domestic partnerships, civil unions, polygamy), or legalizing of perversion (same-sex marriages) will not change what's best for us all. Jesus goes even further by condemning anyone trying to destroy a marriage. Since a stable family is the foundation of our society, shouldn't we encourage government to do everything in its power to strengthen it, protect it, incentivize it – and discourage anything illegitimately trying to co-opt its role and worthiness? Marriage is a gift from God that's not to be trifled with. It provides the social foundation for our very existence – anything less than a faithful, committed, monogamous marriage is irresponsible at best

It's no accident that when marriage is mentioned in Matthew, Jesus also talks about children (Matt 18:5-6; 19:13-15). He warns against causing them to sin or hindering their coming to Him. In a Christian family, children are exposed to their parent's faith at an early age. In year's past, children from non-Christian homes were at least exposed in public schools to the existence of the divine as well as our deep Christian heritage as a nation. Over the last generation, however, government usurped its authority and removed from schools anything specifically Christian. What has replaced this influence, too many times its a dangerous, drug laden, coarse, disrespectful environment that harms our children – causing them to sin! Shouldn't we as tax payers demand better of our government schools? Why should we be forced to support an educational system that does exactly what Jesus warned against? By inaction or the removal of our children do we really think the situation will improve for others? Remember, we're the ones that need to protect the "little ones".

What about our mandate towards the less fortunate? Loving our neighbor (Matt 22:39) is easy when they look like us, but what of those with nothing, or are poor, sick or in prison many times due to circumstances beyond their control? Jesus clearly said we're to have compassion on them (Matt 25:31-46) and serve them as if we're serving the Lord Himself. It's not government's role to do this for us. Allowing bureaucrat's to compete for our blessings not only encourages our inaction, but is a heartless means to try to accomplish good. Shouldn't government programs be the last option, if at all? Instead, we've allowed (or even encouraged) government to co-opt our role of mercy and accountability to

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those in need of help (Matt 6:3; 19:16-24) instead of directly giving from what God has so generously given to us (Matt 10:8).

What of those that aspire to be leaders in our society? Matthew gives us some criteria to measure the worth of a candidate or public official. Look at their life's decisions and actions (Matt 7:15-20; 12:33-37). Have they stood for righteousness, integrity, Biblical morals, personal and governmental responsibility and accountability, or do they have a dismal record of self-interest and pandering to those who are morally bankrupt and irreligious? The same applies to government activities. What real fruit has come from literally thousands of programs? Has our nation been brought to a place of greater appreciation for God's blessings? Has the program been abolished because it succeeded in correcting a problem, or has it created harmful dependency? Our say in what government does is even more important when we realize it's our money being used (Matt 22:15-22). Unlike in Matthew's time, we can impact both the collection and distribution of tax monies.

We have incredible opportunity to influence our community and nation to encourage what is good, and discourage the bad. On what basis do we justify walking away from this duty? For that matter, why wouldn't our pastors and church teachers consider their role in thoroughly equipping us for this good (2 Tim 3:16-17)? The Lord said if we have the faith of a mustard seed (Matt 17:20-21) His kingdom will advance, as a matter of fact – the gates of hell will not prevail against us (Matt 16:18). I believe our mandate is clear, but all too often we decide to not engage the enemy.

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