

7 YOUR
DUTIES *as a*
CHRISTIAN
CITIZEN

[BILL BRIGHT
&
BRAD BRIGHT]



Bright Media
FOUNDATION

Your 7 Duties As a Christian Citizen

Bright Media Foundation
100 Lake Hart Drive, 5100
Orlando, FL 32832

© 2016, 2018, 2020 Bright Media Foundation. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Formerly *Your 5 Duties As a Christian Citizen* © 1976, 2000 by Bill Bright

Edited by Lynn Copeland

Design and layout by Genesis Group

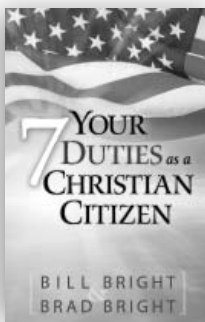
Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9840437-2-9

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*[®]. Copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. Scripture quotations marked “NKJV” are taken from the *New King James Version*[®]. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Scripture quotations marked “NIV” are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*[®], NIV[®]. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.[®]

You can find us at BrightMedia.org

To order additional booklets or
to download a free ebook version, go to
BrightMedia.org





CONTENTS

Your Christian Citizen Checklist 9

God's Plan for a Nation's Leadership. 11

THE SEVEN DUTIES

1. Pray. 12

2. Register to Vote 15

3. Become Informed 17

4. Help Elect Godly People 23

5. Vote. 28

6. Keep Going! 33

7. Make God the Issue. 40

Would You Like to Know God Personally? . . . 50

In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate—look to his character. . . . It is alleged by men of loose principles, or defective views of the subject, that religion and morality are not necessary or important qualifications for political stations. But the Scriptures teach a different doctrine. They direct that rulers should be men who rule in the fear of God, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. . . .

When a citizen gives his vote to a man of known immorality, he abuses his civic responsibility; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor; he betrays the interest of his country.

—NOAH WEBSTER (1758–1843)

CITIZENSHIP IN a free country is a blessing from God. Our great system of self-government assures every Christian an opportunity to have a voice in the affairs of the nation. It allows us to say by our actions, “May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Just as in the church and in the home, God wants us to do His will in government.

But too often we have disobeyed our Lord by our inaction. We have ceased to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world,” as Christ has commanded us. As a result, the moral fiber of America is rotting away—and our priceless freedom is in grave jeopardy. Secularism is hijacking every area of our national life and trying to silence the voices of all Christians. America is faced with the greatest crisis in its history. We are in danger of losing our nation, and our God-given freedoms to those who disdain the God of our nation’s founders.

If that should happen, our opportunity to help fulfill the Great Commission throughout the United States and the world could also be lost. We may lose the opportunity to tell hundreds of millions about our Savior.

British statesman Edmund Burke said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for

good men to do nothing.” In other words, **if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.** America is one of the last strongholds of freedom on earth—and citizens who are dedicated to God are the primary resource for the preservation of our freedoms, including the freedom to serve Him. Our founding fathers began the Bill of Rights guaranteeing freedom of religion for this very reason, because it is the only sure basis for all of our other freedoms.

Tens of millions of the people in the United States profess faith in Jesus Christ. Citizenship in a republic like ours implies clear responsibilities for Christ’s followers that did not exist in the first-century Roman Empire.

By following the simple guidelines contained in this booklet, even a small percentage of us can be used by God to set this nation on a new path for His glory. From the Book of Acts to the Abolitionist Movement, the past demonstrates again and again that a handful of dedicated individuals who band together can change the course of history. This booklet describes seven duties for the Christian who sincerely desires to be a part of the solution in America.

Charles Finney, who helped introduce half a million Americans to Christ, wrote in 1835:

The time has come that Christians must vote for honest men and take consistent ground in politics, or the Lord will curse them... God cannot sustain this free and blessed country, which we love and pray for, unless the Church will take right ground. Politics are a part of religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to the country as part of their duty to God... God will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics.

The reality is, honest men and women aren't always on the ballot. What do we do then? This booklet will help you navigate those challenging waters. Regardless, Finney's words are no less true for us today. Our nation's course is up to us.

YOUR CHRISTIAN CITIZEN CHECKLIST

Mark Twain understood the importance of a Christian's responsibility as a citizen. He wrote:

A Christian's first duty is to God. It then follows, as a matter of course, that it is his duty to carry his Christian code of morals

*to the polls and vote them... If Christians should vote their duty to God at the polls, they would carry every election, and do it with ease... it would bring about a moral revolution that would be incalculably beneficent. It would save the country.*¹

With so much at stake in our nation, honestly answer these questions about your role:

- Do I pray faithfully for a spiritual revival to sweep America?
- Am I registered to vote? Do I encourage other Christians to register?
- Am I making a serious effort, along with my Christian friends, to become informed about the candidates and issues?
- Am I actively involved in helping to select and elect godly candidates to office?
- Do I vote in every election for the best candidates, regardless of party?
- Do I know how to make God the issue in any situation, just like Jesus did, instead of reacting defensively to every cultural vice that comes along?

1. *Collier's Magazine* (September 2, 1905): 17.

If you answered “no” to one or more of these questions, this booklet is a must read for you. It will bring you to a new realization that faith in our Lord implies obligation and duty to serve Him in all areas of life—including citizenship. And what is far more important, you will learn how to practice your citizenship for His glory.

GOD’S PLAN FOR A NATION’S LEADERSHIP

To protect His people, God warns against ungodly leaders. The rule of the wicked is a direct violation of His will. “The wicked will not rule the land of the godly, for then the godly might be tempted to do wrong” (Psalm 125:3). Instead, God’s plan is for us to have leaders who know Him and will rule according to His Word. “He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God” (2 Samuel 23:3, NKJV).

John Jay, first Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, was one of the three men most responsible for drafting the Constitution. In 1816 he wrote:

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty—as well as the privilege and interest—of our

Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.

Voting for and supporting moral candidates who support moral public policies is the minimum required of Christian citizens in a system of self-government. Godly people must vote for godly rulers whenever possible. Christian lawyer Michael Whitehead put it this way: “If America is to be saved, saved Americans must lead the way.”

THE SEVEN DUTIES



1. PRAY

Pray that God will send a great spiritual awakening to America, that many millions of our citizens will trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and that Christians will dedicate themselves to live Christ-centered lives, actively serving others within their families, their churches, and our nation.

GOD'S PROMISE TO HEAL A REPENTANT NATION

It is undeniable that our once great country, now mired in numerous social ills, is facing an unparalleled moral crisis, as well as a potential econom-

ic calamity because of our national debt. God alone holds the solution to our nation's problems—and we hold the key. The healing of our nation begins with the prayers of His followers. “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

We can pray in the following ways.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

PRAY daily that the Spirit of God will enable you, by His power, to live a life that pleases God and to introduce others to Christ as their Savior and Lord. This is the first step to good citizenship.

PRAY daily that God will change the hearts of public officials who are godless, worldly, and disobedient to Him, or else remove them from their positions of leadership. Remember that godless leadership in a nation is contagious. As King Solomon said, “If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked” (Proverbs 29:12, NIV).

PRAY daily that men and women of God will be elected to public office at all levels of leadership—local, state, and national—so that righteous authority is restored to government. Then

our land will be healed and our country will experience the abundant blessings of God. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD” (Psalm 33:12, NIV).

PRAY daily “for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:2). In a democracy we must hold our leaders accountable, but praying for them is even more significant and effective. Pray that our leaders will be filled with godly wisdom and stand for what is right and true.

There are numerous resources online designed to help you pray more effectively for our nation. PrayForLeaders.com is one that can help get you started.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14 and answer these questions²:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

2. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Go to PrayForLeaders.com and sign up.
- Ask three friends to sign up as well.
- Take three minutes every morning to pray for one elected official.

After earnest prayer...

2. REGISTER TO VOTE

Register to vote so you can fulfill your God-given civic duty, fulfilling both your accountability to God and your responsibility for your fellow man.

IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY REGISTERED, DO SO AT ONCE

To serve God as a citizen, you must become a regularly participating voter. But you cannot vote until you have registered your name, address, and other information with the proper authorities.

PRACTICE GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Voting is a matter of stewardship under God, yet many **millions of God's people throughout America are not even registered to vote.** How

can we as Christian citizens expect God to restore righteous leadership through us if we are unwilling to take a few minutes to register? Only as a registered voter will you be in a position to help elect godly officials. King Solomon writes, “Upright citizens are good for a city [state or nation] and make it prosper” (Proverbs 11:11).

Register as soon as possible so that you can vote in the next election, and in every election, as a service to God. If you are not familiar with registration procedures, go to iVoterGuide.com/vote, select your state and then look for “Register to Vote.” It will redirect you to a site where you can register.

There may be a registration deadline several weeks before the election, so do not wait until it is too late. Voter registration forms are often readily available at post offices, libraries, or motor vehicle licensing agencies. In addition, churches are permitted by law to invite a registrar to come to the church to register people to vote.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read Proverbs 11:11 and answer these questions³:

3. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Register to vote. Go to iVoterGuide.com.
- Get three Christian friends to register to vote.
- Ask your church to encourage its members to register to vote.

Once you have registered to vote, join with others...

3. BECOME INFORMED

Jesus said, “I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). Jesus said we are to be “shrewd” (wise with street smarts) as we go out and engage society. Do you think it is possible to be “shrewd as snakes,” as Jesus commanded, if you are not well-informed?

VALUE KNOWLEDGE

Just as the untrained soldier is at the mercy of his enemy, the uninformed Christian cannot prevail against evil forces in the world of politics. Knowledge is essential to effective action. “The wise are mightier than the strong, and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger” (Proverbs 24:5). To serve God effectively as a citizen, you must learn how to act for His glory within the framework of existing political processes.

How can you best begin?

ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP

The Bible says, “A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12). This is why Jesus never sent out His disciples alone.

In light of Jesus’ example, I urge you to start a Community Action Group with other believers or join an existing group, to educate yourself and others concerning the structure of government, cultural issues, specific candidates, and how to serve God effectively in the political arena at your level of influence.

GATHER INFORMATION

You need reliable information and solid analysis, so do not rely on social media in your research. Many sources of information are available on the political process. Numerous organizations and ministries have educational websites providing summaries of current issues and updates on pending legislation. Many will send you regular updates by email if you request them. Newsletters, brochures, and fact sheets on specific topics can also put timely information at your fingertips.

Divide up the ballot issues and candidates (including judges and local officials) to research. Find out everything you can about candidates, keeping in mind that their demonstrated character is far more important than their words. Plan to meet regularly, discuss the issues and candidates each person has researched, and then ask God for wisdom and insight.

KNOW THE CANDIDATES' VIEWS

Make a sincere effort to obtain reliable information about all issues and candidates. Take time to attend any candidate forums, view online interviews, or watch televised debates. Look very closely at the organizations they have associated

with, endorsed, been endorsed by, given money to, or received donations from. Whenever possible, try to discern how they have actually voted or behaved in the past. Don't be deceived by what they say today. **Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.** Understanding this is critical to being “as shrewd as snakes” like Jesus commanded.

If any candidates are running for reelection, find out how they voted on issues of critical importance impacting our families and nation. Any candidate who has not vigorously defended religious freedom and supported biblical morality, in both word and deed, should never receive your vote (unless there is truly no better alternative).

In this regard, when voting for the President or a United States Senator, keep in mind that they appoint judges to our federal courts. Because the federal courts have become the most powerful branch of government in the United States, support only candidates who will appoint judges to the courts who are committed to protecting religious freedom—our first right guaranteed under the Constitution. This will help ensure the gospel may be freely preached in its entirety. Keep in mind, our religious freedom in America is also

the basis for all of our other freedoms. If we surrender our religious freedom, all our other freedoms will fall as well.

Some organizations, such as iVoterGuide, produce non-partisan online voter education guides to help you better understand candidates' views in presidential, congressional, and many state races. They work diligently to evaluate every contender fairly, utilizing the exact same criteria across the political spectrum.

God's Word says, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6, NIV). You have a responsibility to be fully informed before choosing those who will rule over you.

BEGIN NOW

Don't procrastinate. None of us seem to have enough hours in the day, but knowing that your efforts here will greatly impact your family and community, elevate this to a high priority. Delay can be fatal to America. Do not allow anything to hinder you from becoming a well-informed Christian citizen. Forming a Community Action Group will help immensely. Who are three people you could ask to join with you today?

THINK ABOUT IT

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 and answer these questions⁴:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Start a Community Action Group with three or more Christian friends.
- Go to iVoterGuide.com and explore the helpful resources they offer.
- Divide up the candidates and ballot issues to research among the members of your Community Action Group.
- Evaluate the candidates and issues with your Bible open. For helpful resources, go to BradBright.org.

Knowledge is useless without action...

4. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

4. HELP ELECT GODLY PEOPLE

Help select and elect men and women who honor God to public office at the local, state, and national levels. Support them faithfully throughout their terms of public service by lovingly sharing with them the biblical views on issues, praying for them, and encouraging them.

HELP RESTORE RIGHTEOUS RULE

Righteous rule brings rejoicing. “When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, they groan” (Proverbs 29:2). The most effective way to restore righteous rule and rejoicing in America is to elect godly people to positions of authority. This can be done only by informed, praying Christians like you.

How can you accomplish this?

SELECT GODLY CANDIDATES

The Word of God gives us the basic qualifications of a good candidate. “Select . . . capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders . . .” (Exodus 18:21).

The four qualifications listed in this passage are: demonstrated capability (competence in man-

aging business or professional affairs), honesty, godliness (spiritual maturity), and rock-solid integrity. Apply these God-given standards carefully and prayerfully in selecting your candidates.

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR PRECINCT

Local political precincts are the key to victory for a godly candidate. Contact the office of the candidate you support to learn how to get involved in your precinct. They can help you find other like-minded people in your precinct to serve with you.

Consider becoming a precinct captain. Acquire the official map covering your precinct, and assign each volunteer specific streets to canvas so that every home will be visited. Hand out iVoterGuide door hangers so your neighbors know where to go for reliable information. Go to iVoterGuide.com to learn more.

A handful of godly people involved at the precinct level can help influence the direction of our nation back toward biblical principles and government officials who revere God.

YOUR KEY ROLE UNDER GOD

Since the key to election victory is at the precinct level, God's people can and must serve in the pre-

cincts of America as a high-priority duty to Him. Five to ten dedicated Christians, each of whom spend four to five hours every month in precinct service, can often help win their precinct for a qualified candidate who is spiritually mature. If this is done in a majority of the precincts in your election district, your candidate is much more likely to win the election.

GOD WILL USE YOU

Most importantly, your precinct service will provide excellent opportunities to share God's love and forgiveness with others. As you serve God in your precinct, carry copies of *The Four Spiritual Laws*, *Would You Like to Know God Personally?*, or *4 Keys 4 Kids* with you. Ask God to lead you to those who are ready to place their trust in Christ. Share God's wonderful plan of salvation with them and invite them to worship God with you in your church. You will be a blessing to others, and your own life will be enriched.

MULTIPLY YOURSELF

Did you know you can impact the lives of over half a million people in a year? Yes, I mean you. Here is how:

1. Find three friends who will read this booklet and get together with you a few times this month to discuss it as a group.
2. At the end of the month challenge each of your three friends to each find three additional friends (a total of nine) who will read through the booklet and discuss it over the course of the following month.
3. At the end of that month the nine will, in turn, each challenge three friends (a total of 27) to go through the booklet and discuss it.
4. Keep going.

After twelve months repeating this very simple process, you would have reached 797,160 people! Even if you only reach 10 percent of your goal, you will still have reached almost 80,000 people. Do you think that could make a difference?

This is the same basic multiplication strategy we used in Campus Crusade for Christ to touch the lives of billions of people around the globe in our first fifty years.

In order to help streamline the process, this booklet is available for free download so anyone can obtain a copy at any time at no cost. Just go to BrightMedia.org. If you prefer a booklet you

can hold in your hand, those are available for purchase as well. Our goal is simple: we want to help you change your community and your nation.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read Exodus 18:21 and answer these four questions⁵:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Multiply yourself. Who are three people you can ask to read and discuss this booklet with you who could then repeat this process with others, who could in turn repeat the process again? See how many people you can influence in twelve months.
- Along with your Community Action Group, hand out iVoterGuide door hangers in your neighborhood. (Go to iVoterGuide.com.)

5. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

- Find out how you and your Community Action Group can help canvass your precinct for your candidate.
- Become a precinct captain.
- Urge everyone who supports your candidate to register.

Now that you are prepared . . .

5. VOTE

After becoming informed about the various candidates and issues, and wisely evaluating them on the basis of the Word of God, vote consistently in every election, and encourage other believers to vote. It is your God-given duty.

WHY YOU MUST VOTE

In addition to praying, you must cast your vote to fulfill your Christian responsibility in a democratic republic like America. Exercise the opportunity for influence that God has given you through our unique system of self-government. If you fail to vote conscientiously for godly rule, evil will continue to increase in our nation. “When the wicked are in authority, sin flourishes” (Prov-

erbs 29:16). Remember, our nation will bear the consequences of the leaders we choose. “When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you . . .” (1 Samuel 8:18, NIV).

If you choose not to vote, you forfeit your moral right to decry the ungodly actions of your elected leaders. By not voting, you helped elect them. You bear the blame, and your children and grandchildren will suffer for it. Always vote—including in the primaries. And vote as wisely as possible so that your conscience is clear before God. Be part of the solution, not the problem.

It is commonly believed that elections in America are decided by a majority of the people. This is not so. Elections are decided by a majority of *those who vote*. As few as 16 percent of all eligible voters in a district can elect a member of Congress. Even presidents have been elected by an average of one-half the votes per precinct nationwide. The 2000 presidential election was decided by 537 votes in Florida (a difference of only one vote per 9 precincts).

Make sure you vote in the primary as well as the general election. Fewer people typically vote in the primary so your vote then carries more weight. Also, due to political gerrymandering,

most congressional races are effectively decided in the primary, not the general election. Make your vote count.

How can you know for whom you should vote? Remember...

LET GOD'S WORD BE YOUR GUIDE

In making your decisions, let the Word of God be your guide. "Godliness makes a nation great" (Proverbs 14:34), so it is important to prayerfully seek God's will in all political decisions. Israel invited God's anger by selecting leaders without consulting Him: "They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval" (Hosea 8:4, NIV).

If there is no qualified candidate who is spiritually mature, vote for the one whose personal principles and platform most closely agree with God's Word. When confronted with two truly bad candidates, choose the one you think will do the least harm to the cause of Christ. And remember, the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, so as much as possible vote based on their track record not their promises. A small step in the right direction is better than no step at all.

Keep in mind that not voting is not an option for the Christian who takes seriously the command of Jesus to be both salt and light.

PRINCIPLES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PARTY

Remember that the candidates' principles are far more important than their party affiliation. To place confidence in unworthy candidates is a miscarriage of Christian stewardship. "Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot" (Proverbs 25:19). Therefore, vote for men and women of proven character and moral integrity over your party loyalty.

In 1832, founding father Noah Webster warned young people that the preservation of our government depends on their choosing righteous leaders:

When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty; if the

*citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made, not for the public good, so much as for selfish or local purposes; corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the laws; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizens will be violated or discarded. If a republican government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the divine commands, and elect bad men to make and administer the laws.*⁶

The reason we often fail to have godly candidates on the ballot in the general election is that too few Christians take seriously their duty to vote in the primary. If Christ's followers in America would always vote in primaries, undoubtedly more godly men and women would run in the primaries and ultimately be elected to office. Primaries are the key to electing people to office who will honor God.

6. Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven, CT: Durrie & Peck, 1832), 336–337.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read Proverbs 29:16 and answer these questions⁷:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Vote in the primary.
- Urge three other Christian friends to vote in the primary.
- Vote in the general election.
- Urge three other Christian friends to vote in the general election.
- Drive someone to the polls on election day.

6. KEEP GOING!

After election day, keep going! Keep your Community Action Group together. Pray and work closely with other godly people to help bring God

7. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

back into the public forum as the founders of this nation intended and modeled.

Rome wasn't built in a day, the slave trade was not outlawed in a year, and America will not be turned around in one election cycle. To be good stewards of our responsibilities as Christian citizens, we must take a serious look at everything we do and say each day and then make intentional decisions about how and where we will invest our time, talent, and treasure.

Meet monthly for prayer and discussion and invite others to join you. Read and discuss books and articles that will help you become more knowledgeable and effective. See BradBright.org for resources and suggestions.

Ask God to show you specific areas where you can continue to make a difference for your families and community. Consider how you can impact the future in the following ways...

IMPACT THE FUTURE WITH YOUR PHONE

There are many ways you can impact the future with your phone.

When an issue being considered by Congress, your state legislature, your city council, or the local school board impacts the religious or moral

environment in your community, call the appropriate person to express your support or opposition. Gather the contact information of your elected officials ahead of time so you can act while you are thinking about it. (PrayForLeaders.com daily emails contain this information.) Each time you act, let your Community Action Group and friends know what you have done and ask them to do likewise. Be intentional!

Calling has an immediate impact. If your elected representative's office receives a high volume of phone calls on an issue, it is far more likely to be passed along to your representative quickly, especially if the phone lines get tied up making it difficult for the staff to conduct business.

When a company engages in behavior that impacts the religious or moral climate in your community, call the appropriate person to register your gratitude or disappointment. Do not call just when you are displeased. Encouraging good behavior usually motivates companies to continue more of the same. This could be a movie theater, a television station, a local business, or even a corporate advertiser on the other side of the country.

The point is, you have a phone; make your voice heard. Use your phone and social media to help shape America's future. Be persistent, but

always be considerate. Remember, as followers of Jesus, we don't just want to win a battle, we want to win people.

IMPACT THE FUTURE WITH YOUR POCKETBOOK

In America we make choices every day about where we will spend our money. Jesus said we are to be “faithful stewards.” This has direct implications for the material resources God has given to each of us. This means more than just investing wisely and tithing faithfully. This also means strategically spending our money every day in ways that will promote God's kingdom while withholding resources from the forces of evil. Exercise your freedom to choose by becoming a strategic consumer.

So what does this look like? At the bare minimum it means supporting Christian-led companies like Hobby Lobby, Interstate Batteries, and Maguiar's Automotive Products with your finances. They regularly take courageous stands for Christ by being clear about their primary allegiance to God in all they do, and also by refusing to bow to the will of godless government officials when they try to coerce these businesses into violating God's commands.

Similarly, the Timothy Plan, a family of thirteen mutual funds, invests only in morally responsible companies so you do not inadvertently fund businesses that promote ungodly agendas.

When you have a choice of where to invest or shop, use your money to reward the businesses that most closely align with biblical values. You may find 2ndVote.com helpful; you can sort by specific issues such as *marriage* or *religious liberty*.

Another way to vote with your pocketbook is by choosing to not be an accomplice to blasphemy. Every time we pay to see a movie that blasphemes the name of Jesus we become an accomplice by giving Hollywood financial incentive to do it again. If we want Hollywood to stop, we must stop.

MovieGuide.org and Dove.org track which movies degrade the name of Jesus. Hollywood creates movies in order to make money. We can each do our part to put Hollywood on a fiscal diet until they change their behavior. Money is leverage—for good or for evil.

The primary goal is not to boycott businesses, but to take steps each day to promote God's perspective throughout our society as a steward of your God-given financial resources. You can do that by choosing to support businesses and people who either promote what is good, or at least don't

encourage what is contrary to God's character. As a Christian, you can be a good citizen by making strategic spending choices with your finances every day.

IMPACT THE FUTURE WITH YOUR PRESENCE

Likewise, there are many ways we can make an impact on society with our presence. We can attend school board meetings, city council meetings, and town halls to make our voice heard. The forces of secularism are great at this; as representatives of the King of kings, we should likewise be willing to stand up for Jesus while opposing evil.

We can also volunteer for organizations like the Salvation Army or the Union Gospel Mission, which actively elevate Jesus while meeting the needs of the poor. We can personally serve others through food pantries and homeless shelters, where we find many opportunities to introduce hurting people to the God who deeply loves them.

And most important, be sure to teach your children how to be good citizens—not just of the United States, but also of God's kingdom. Make sure your children receive spiritual training from you. Daily family devotions and weekly church attendance are vital. Organizations like AWANA

can help you to teach your children Bible verses. Christian schools, or homeschooling, can be a wise choice. But no matter what else you do, your children need you to personally teach them who God is every day. Go to DiscoverGod4Kids.com if you need help getting started. And above all, pray for their spiritual health daily. Prayer moves the hand of God.

You can't do everything, but you can take steps today to have a godly impact on your family, community, and nation. Ask God what He wants you to do today.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read Matthew 25:14–30 and answer these questions⁸:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Read a book in your Community Action Group that will help you become a better

8. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

Christian citizen. Go to BradBright.org for recommendations.

- Put your elected officials on speed dial.
- With your Community Action Group, come up with a list of God-honoring businesses where you want to shop.
- As a Community Action Group decide on a local ministry you will support with your time, talent, and resources.

7. MAKE GOD THE ISSUE

Nothing in life is more important than how we see God. That is what drives us and determines our actions, including how we vote. In fact, we can trace all of our problems, personally and culturally, to our view of God. That is why it is of critical importance to make God the issue wherever we go every day. Rather than simply reacting to society's ills, we need to keep the focus on God as the starting point in all of our cultural debates.

YOUR VIEW OF GOD MATTERS

Our individual view of God determines whether we believe in “our God-given rights” and “our God-given freedoms,” or whether we demand

“my rights!” and “my freedoms!” Your view of God is the cause, and everything else is a symptom. Even your worldview is a symptom of your view of God. Understanding God’s character is therefore critical to making shrewd choices for the future of America. As Romans 1:21 says, “They began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.”

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

When America was founded in 1776, an American citizen heard an average of 3,000 sermons over the course of a lifetime regarding personal accountability to God and responsibility for our fellow man. As Jesus said, we are to love God and love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40). As a result, in the eighteenth century, if a man’s barn burned down, his neighbors viewed it as their personal responsibility to help rebuild it. When the farmer down the road was sick during the harvest, they helped bring in his harvest. This was even the driving motivation for the abolitionist movement in the nineteenth century.

On the other hand, if a man was lazy, he was offered a job, not a handout. If a student failed a class, he repeated it until he earned a passing

grade. If a reporter lied, he was fired on the first offense.

When most members of society believe they are accountable to God and responsible for their fellow man, the free market system works well because we don't leave people behind in our communities. We hold each other accountable but show compassion to those who truly need it. Even moral pollution decreases because we are better equipped to make others-centered decisions rather than pursuing our addiction to self-indulgence resulting in alienation from God and each other.

Here is the bottom line. If we teach children that God is irrelevant, like our public schools do today, they will act like it. If we want individuals to behave as though the God of the Bible exists, we must teach them that He does. For over fifty years our educational system has taught our children that God, at best, is irrelevant and now our leaders behave as though God is irrelevant. It's a simple case of cause and effect.

If the core problem in society truly is how we see God, then the solution is obvious. The only credible answer is for us to help our neighbors to better understand who God is and why it matters. It is not a quick fix. It takes time. The local pastor cannot do it alone because many Americans rare-

ly walk into church anymore. Besides, it's not your pastor's responsibility to help your neighbors better understand who God is; it's yours. That's why God put us in this nation and in our communities.

YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION

So, here is our daily choice. Either we go out and engage our friends in dialogue over the core issue underlying all our cultural ills, or we go home, close the door, and concede the battle. Those are our only two real choices. No one else can make that daily choice for you or me. Continuing to play Whack-A-Mole with the cultural ills of our day is an insufficient strategy to cure America. Either we make God the issue or America will continue down its current path to her own demise. Choose today—and then again tomorrow.

The next time someone brings up a symptomatic issue, such as abortion, same-sex marriage, or racism, respond by saying, “There is nothing wrong with [*insert the issue*]*—unless God actually exists.*” Then add, “In fact, if God does not exist, even morality itself is something we made up, much like Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny.” Like Jesus modeled, intentionally move

the conversation from the symptom to the cause. In the long run, it is far more productive to talk about God's relevance to an issue than to have an argument about an isolated cultural ill outside of the larger context of who God is. If you want to learn more about how to make God the issue in effective ways, read *GOD Is the Issue: Becoming an Agent of Real Change* by Brad Bright.

The Bible says, "It is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it" (James 4:17). In other words, if you choose not to be part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

YOU CAN'T GIVE AWAY WHAT YOU DON'T OWN

Are you daily experiencing the joy and peace Jesus promised, despite your circumstances? Do you have a vibrant, personal relationship with the Creator God? If not, then you are unwittingly part of the problem, because unlike the federal government you can't give away what you do not own.

Let me be clear, I'm not talking about whether or not you wholeheartedly believe in Jesus or are going to heaven. That is simply the first step. I want you to look in the mirror and ask yourself whether the joy and peace that Jesus promised to you is your daily, moment-by-moment experi-

ence, or whether you are consistently weighed down by your fears, addictions, anxieties, or worries.

Have you tried hard to live the Christian life but still feel broken inside? Recent surveys indicate that 90–95% of people sitting in America's churches live in spiritual defeat. Either this means that Jesus lied, or they missed something. Which do you think it is? Now if this describes you, I assure you, there is hope!

In some cases, people believe they are Christians because they believe in God, go to church, and try to live good lives. However, they have never consciously made a decision to follow Jesus and begin a personal relationship with Him. If that describes you, go to the back of this booklet and read the section *Would You Like to Know God Personally?* Don't wait another day to begin the most exciting adventure you will ever know.

And let me encourage you to not keep this decision to yourself. Tell someone you know what you did. Either they will celebrate with you, or maybe it will be just the opportunity they need to begin their own relationship with the Creator who loves them.

For those who have already placed their trust in Jesus, but find the Christian life a tumultuous,

up-and-down spiritual rollercoaster, the problem is an erroneous or incomplete view of God.

YOU CAN'T FIX YOURSELF, BUT YOU CAN FIX YOUR VIEW OF GOD

Have you tried to fix the broken parts deep inside in order to please God but just ended up frustrated? The truth is, you can't fix yourself. (If you could, then why did Jesus have to die?) You *can*, however, fix your view of God. If with an open heart you intentionally deepen your understanding of God to more closely align with Scripture, you will soon wake up and realize you have changed. Why? Because you cannot deepen your view of our amazing God and not change in response. It really is that simple—and that profound.

The Christian life is nothing more than a trust relationship between you and the Creator God. You can trust God only to the extent that you actually know Him. Even your moral behavior cannot rise above your view of God. But always remember that God's primary goal is not to change your behavior; it is to change what you love. Do you think it is possible that you might have some misconceptions about God that could be preventing you from fully trusting and loving Him today?

To gain a better understanding of the Creator who loves you passionately, read *God, Who Are You Anyway?* by Bill Bright. And please visit us at GodWhoAreYouAnyway.com where you will find resources to assist you in laying a personal foundation today that will empower you to help change America tomorrow. We must begin by making God the central focus in our own daily lives, and then making Him the pivotal issue across America so that freedom may flourish like it once did. Either that, or we must concede defeat, forfeiting our God-given freedoms. That is our choice.

DEDICATION TO FREEDOM

When the signers of the Declaration of Independence affixed their signatures to that historic document, they were well aware that if the colonial cause failed they would be executed as traitors. They were that dedicated to the cause of freedom because they believed they were accountable to God and responsible for their fellow man. Any less dedication on our part will result in a loss of that precious freedom for which they and thousands of others were willing to die. We dare not fail them, ourselves, our children, and far more importantly, our Lord, to whom this nation was

dedicated. America is now faced with its greatest crisis in history. If you consider yourself a follower of Jesus and care about your country, now is the time to act.

THINK ABOUT IT

Read James 4:17 and answer these questions⁹:

1. What does it say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What can I do?
4. Who can I tell?

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

- Read and discuss *GOD Is the Issue* with your Community Action Group.
- Read and discuss *GOD, Who Are You Anyway?* with your Community Action Group.
- Learn how to better communicate to others how they can begin a personal relationship with God.
- Attend or schedule a *Your 7 Duties as a Christian Citizen* Workshop in your area. Go to BradBright.org to learn more.

9. Questions adapted from New Generations <NewGenerations.org/questions>.

Dear Friends,

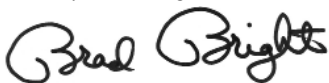
Do you want to be part of the solution? If you only do two things after reading this booklet, I pray you will:

- 1) Pursue knowing God through Christ with all your heart, soul, and mind.*
- 2) Harness the power of multiplication by asking three other people to read and discuss this booklet with you, who will then repeat this process with three others, who will in turn repeat this process again with three others.*

If this process repeats every month for twelve months, you can potentially influence almost 800,000 people in a year!

Imagine what America could look like if each of us did these two things! I'm in. Are you? Email me at Brad@BrightMedia.org and let me know. Let's do this together!

Yours for making GOD the issue,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Bright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

P.S. You can download a free digital copy of Your 7 Duties As a Christian Citizen at BrightMedia.org.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW GOD PERSONALLY?

Yes, you can know God personally, as presumptuous as that might sound. God is so eager to establish a personal, loving relationship with you that He has already made all the arrangements. He is patiently and lovingly waiting for you to respond to His invitation. You can receive forgiveness of your sins and assurance of eternal life through faith in His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The major barrier that prevents us from knowing God personally is ignorance of who God is and what He has done for us. Read and discover for yourself the joyful reality of knowing God personally.

The following four principles will help you discover how to know God personally and experience the abundant life He promised.

1 *God loves you and created you to know Him personally.*

God's Love

“God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV).

God's Plan

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3, NIV).

What prevents us from knowing God personally?

2 *Man is **sinful** and **separated** from God, so he cannot know Him personally and experience His love.*

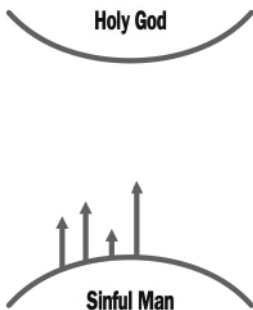
Man Is Sinful

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Man Is Separated

“The wages of sin is death” [spiritual separation from God] (Romans 6:23).



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful. A great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion—but he inevitably fails.

The third principle explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

3 *Jesus Christ is God's **only** provision for man's sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience His love.*

He Died In Our Place

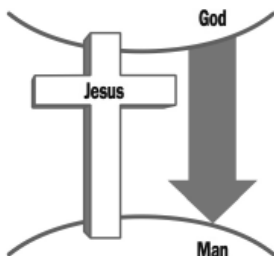
“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

He Rose From the Dead

“Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more that five hundred...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

He Is the Only Way to God

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me’” (John 14:6).



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough just to know these truths...

4 *We must individually **receive** Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know God personally and experience His love.*

We Must Receive Jesus Christ

“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

We Receive Christ Through Faith

“By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).

When We Receive Christ, We Experience a New Birth

(Read John 3:1–8.)

We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation

[Christ is speaking] “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him” (Rev. 3:20).

Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us the kind of person He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives:

Self-Directed Life

- ♠ – Self is on the throne
- † – Christ is outside the life
- – Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration



Christ-Directed Life

- † – Christ is in the life and on the throne
- ♠ – Self is yielding to Christ
- – Interests are directed by Christ, resulting in harmony with God's plan

Which circle best represents your life?

Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

The following explains how you can receive Christ.

You Can Receive Christ Right Now By Faith Through Prayer

(Prayer is talking with God)

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart? If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

How to Know That Christ Is in Your Life

Did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said He would come into your life and be your friend so you can know Him personally. Would He mislead you? On what authority do you know that God

has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word.)

The Bible Promises Eternal Life to All Who Receive Christ

“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life” (1 John 5:11,12).

Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life from the very moment you invite Him in. He will not deceive you.

An important reminder...

Do Not Depend on Feelings

The promise of God’s Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience). (Read John 14:21.)



The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, we, as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promise of His Word.

Now That You Have Begun a Personal Relationship With Christ

The moment you received Christ by faith, as an act of the will, many things happened, including the following:

- Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20; Colossians 1:27).
- Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14).
- You became a child of God (John 1:12).
- You received eternal life (John 5:24).
- You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10).

Can you think of anything more wonderful that could happen to you than beginning a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Would you like to thank God in prayer right now for what He has done for you? By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.

To enjoy your new relationship with God...

Suggestions for Christian Growth

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life, and to practice the following:

- G** *Go* to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).
- R** *Read* God's Word daily (Acts 17:11); begin with the Gospel of John.
- O** *Obey* God moment by moment (John 14:21).
- W** *Witness* for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).
- T** *Trust* God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).
- H** *Holy* Spirit—allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Galatians 5:16,17; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:18).

Fellowship in a Good Church

God's Word instructs us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). Several logs burn brightly together, but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Start this week, and make plans to attend regularly.

Remember

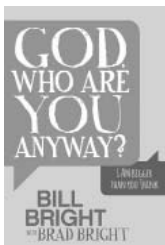
Your walk with Christ depends on what you allow Him to do in and through you empowered by the Holy Spirit, not what you do for Him through self-effort.

If you have come to know Christ personally through this presentation of the gospel or would like further help getting to know God personally, please go to:

GodWhoAreYouAnyway.com
BrightMedia.org

*We can trace all our human problems
to our view of God.*

AS INDIVIDUALS



*For more information go to
GodWhoAreYouAnyway.com*

AS A CULTURE



*For more information go to
BradBright.org*

To order additional booklets or
to download a free ebook version, go to
BrightMedia.org

