

One Nation Under God – A Guide for Christians Choosing Leaders

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A quotation often misattributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, that actually came from the 18th century French philosopher Joseph de Maistre, states: “Every nation gets the government it deserves.”

America’s looming November 2016 elections are widely expected to be among the most consequential in recent memory. Not only are control of the U.S. Senate and the White House up for grabs, but the next president is expected to nominate at least one and possibly three U.S. Supreme Court justices. That means he or she could well hold the legal course of our nation in their hands. That could be a scary thought, but fortunately the Bible teaches us that all leaders ultimately are in God’s hands -- whether they realize it or not.

We are called to pray for those God places in authority over us. But why wait until the leaders are installed in their high office? Ought we not pray in advance for God to send us leaders whose hearts He has prepared and molded to serve His Holy Will? And given the form of our government -- that is, as a representative republic where we have the opportunity to cast ballots for our preferred candidates -- should we not also be in prayer for the Holy Spirit to guide us in our discernment so that our selection of political leaders would be pleasing in God’s eyes?

This prayer guide for the upcoming elections has been prepared with those twin objectives in mind: First, that we would effectively pray for God to raise up leaders with hearts obedient to Him; and secondly, that the Holy Spirit would mercifully enable us to discern God’s chosen leaders from those who merely feign obedience.

Rather than pray that God sends the leaders we deserve, let us pray He sends those that the Lord Jesus Christ has, in His boundless mercy and grace, set aside to lead us. Those are the ones we need.

Introductory Reading: Proverbs 25:1-5.

Note that the word "king" is used five times in chapter 25, and over 30 times in the entire book of Proverbs.

In Proverbs, Solomon acknowledges the following:

- God is greater than the king
- God knows the wisdom of the universe and all wisdom is found in Him
- God reveals his wisdom to the kings who search for it
- The king is subordinate to God
- The king's role is to fear God - that is, discern His wisdom and rely on His power
- The king's role, and his ability to make godly, wise decisions, are tied to God's sovereignty.

None of us is a king and most of us have never lived in a monarchy. However, we do experience being a leader - or working with a leader - almost on a daily basis.

The principles in Proverbs regarding leaders apply to many areas of our life - home, church, government, and work. The attitudes and wisdom that made a good King in 1000 B.C. will also make a good 21st-century leader. Let's look at kings, leaders, and rulers first, and then make the connection to current-day leaders.

When we are leaders, we too often concentrate on our rights, our power, and the allies on our side. It is natural to assume that God is on our side. But what side is God really on?

One is reminded of Lincoln's response when a clergyman once said he hoped "God is on our side." Lincoln's reply: "I'm not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

The Bible teaches us to focus on:

- Responsibility, not rights
- Service, not power
- Obedience, not taking sides

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Are you for us or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What says my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose your shoe from off your foot; for the place whereon you stand is holy. And Joshua did so. [Joshua 5:13-15]

Characteristic No.1 -- Humility

Key Verses:

The reward of humility and the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life. Proverbs 22:4 AMP

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. Philippians 2:2-4 NLT

Then He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the [servant's] towel with which He was girded. John 13:5 AMP

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Colossians 3:12 NLT

Do nothing from factional motives [through contentiousness, strife, selfishness, or for unworthy ends] or prompted by conceit and empty arrogance. Instead, in the true spirit of humility (lowliness of mind) let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of one another than you do of yourselves]. Philippians 2:3 AMP

Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant]. James 4:10

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who have an anointing for God-given humility.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates truly have genuine humility before the Lord.*

Characteristic No. 2 -- Wisdom and Discernment/Not Easily Ensnared

Key Verses:

By me (wisdom) kings reign and rulers make laws that are just. Proverbs 8:15

When a king sits on his throne to judge, he winnows out all evil with his eyes. Proverbs 20:8

The king by judgment establishes the land: but he that receives gifts overthrows it. A man that flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous sing and rejoice. Proverbs 29:4-6

You are snared with the words of your mouth, you are taken with the words of your mouth. Proverbs 6:2

The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips; but the just shall come out of trouble. Proverbs 12:13

All of Psalm 124

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him [the devil] to do his [the devil's] will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who discern and comprehend what God blesses, and what God does not bless.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates God has graced with discernment.*

Characteristic No. 3 – Integrity

Key Verses:

Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness. Proverbs 16:12

*By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.
Proverbs 29:4*

*Love and truth form a good leader; sound leadership is founded on loving integrity. Proverbs
20:28*

*Be strong and of good courage; for unto this people shall you divide for an inheritance the land,
which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous that you may
observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded you: turn not from
it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper whithersoever you go. This book of the
law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate therein day and night, that you
may observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then you shall make your way
prosperous, and then you shall have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and
of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you
whithersoever you go. Joshua 1:6-9*

Proverbs 28:6 in the Amplified Bible because it is frequently misinterpreted. The verse says;

*Better is the poor man who walks in his integrity than he who willfully goes in double and wrong
ways, though he is rich. [Wickedness of the heart is the focus here, not money. Money or the
lack thereof brings out what is in a person's heart.]*

Remember, personal integrity is demonstrated by who we are and what we do when no one is
looking.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of
government who have true integrity.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been
graced with integrity.*

Characteristic No. 4 -- Love and Forgiveness

Key Verses:

Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure. Proverbs 20:28

*Watch, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with
charity. 1 Corinthians 16:13, 14*

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Psalm 66:18

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3:13

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who exemplify love and forgiveness.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with the ability to truly exemplify love and forgiveness.*

Characteristic No. 5 -- Seeks Good Advisers and Listens Well

Key Verses:

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure. Proverbs 11:14

Remove the dross from silver and out comes material for the silversmith; remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness. Proverbs 25:4, 5

Every effective leader needs advice and seeks advice. The ability to listen to the advice of others is the mark of a great leader.

Understand [this], my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear [a ready listener], slow to speak, slow to take offense and to get angry. James 1:19 AMP

But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don't just hear and forget. James 1:25 CEV

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who are adept at attracting the help of excellent advisers, and who are willing to listen to them.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with the ability to attract excellent advisers, and who are willing to listen to them.*

Characteristic No. 6 -- Self Control

Key Verses:

Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over helpless people. Proverbs 28:15

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith...1 Peter 5:8, 9a

The leader who cannot control himself will not be able to command the respect of those he leads.

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who exhibit godly self control.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with the ability to exhibit godly self-control.*

Characteristic No. 7 -- Awareness of his influence/confidence

Key Verses:

When the righteous thrive, people rejoice; when the wicked rule, people groan. Proverbs 29:2

In the day of my trouble I will call upon You; for You will answer me. Psalm 86:7

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it comes. For the LORD shall be your confidence, and shall keep your foot from being taken. Proverbs 3:26

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes. The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. Psalm 118:8, 9, 14

In almost every era, no country has been able to rise above its leaders. For better or worse, people become like those they follow.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who are influential and confident.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with the ability to be influential and confident.*

Characteristics – No. 8 Compassion

Key Verses:

If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure. Proverbs 29:14

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter. Proverbs 25:2

Jesus is the ultimate model of taking time for the poor, the outcasts, and children. He was naturally drawn to those who were weak and needed an advocate. That is why James teaches us that pure religion is to look after orphans and widows in their distress.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who are impartial and judge fairly.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with the ability to be impartial and judge fairly.*

Characteristic No. 9 -- Proper Motivation (No Need for Public Approval; Fear of God; Believes in the Cause)

Key Verses:

A man's heart devises his way; but the LORD directs his steps. A divine sentence is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresses not in judgment. It is abomination to kings to commit wickedness; for the throne is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love the one that speaks right. The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it. In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favor is as a cloud of the latter rain. Proverbs 16:9, 10, 12-15.

For do I now persuade men; or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. Galatians 1:10

But the fearful [cowardly], and unbelieving, and the abominable, and ... and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire....which is the second death. Revelation 21:8

The greatest freedom is having nothing to prove and no one to impress. Good leaders are more concerned about pleasing God than their popularity with others. The desire for honor among men makes trusting God almost impossible. The leader who has his eyes on receiving the praise of men is not focused on obeying and pleasing God. Good leaders motivate, do not mislead, and do not exploit.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government with the proper motives.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with the ability to have proper motives.*

Characteristic No. 10 -- Moderation

Key Verses:

It is not for kings to drink wine; not for rulers to crave beer; lest they drink and forget what the law decrees and deprive all the oppressed of their rights. Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Proverbs 31:4-6

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. Proverbs 20:1

You have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or strong drink: that you might know that I am the LORD your God. Deut. 29:6

Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has babbling? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Proverbs 23:29, 39 [and following]

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who are sober and given to moderation.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with an ability to judge soberly and to live with moderation.*

Characteristic No. 11 -- Submission to God

Key Verses:

The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it whithersoever He will [like a water course wherever He pleases]. Proverbs 21:1
When Christ entered the world He said, Here I am, O Lord, I have come to do your will. Hebrews 10:5

When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. KJV Psalm 27:8

Nehemiah 1 and 9, Ezra 9, Daniel 9 - Willing to pray on behalf of the people; willing to repent on behalf of the people.

Nehemiah 13 - Willing to take reforms that would move this nation Away from sin and closer to God.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who submit to Your Holy Will.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with an ability to submit to God's Holy Will.*

Characteristic No. 12 -- Has a Plan and Pursues what is Right

Key Verses:

Ezekiel 34 The True Shepherd

Psalm 23

[Ephesians 2:10](#) - For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who have a plan and who pursue what is right.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced who have a plan and who pursue what is right.*

Characteristic No. 13 -- Hope

Key Verse:

Doesn't your reverence for God give you confidence? Doesn't your life of integrity give you hope? Job 4:6 NLT

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who have a plan and who pursue hope.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have been graced with hope and who pursue what is right.*

Characteristic No. 14 -- Believes in and Brings out the potential in others

Key Verses:

He says unto him [Peter] the third time, Simon, son of Jona, do you love [phileo] Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [phileo] You. Jesus said unto him, Feed My sheep. John 21:17

General Attributes to Ponder and Pray for:

That the godly leader will be grounded in the love of God. Philippians 2:12, 13; Ephesians 3:14-21.

That the godly leader will pray properly, think properly, and act properly. Philippians 4:4-9.

That the godly leader will stay in tune with the Living God and will discern good from evil.

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:14

That the godly leader will be full of God, enthusiastic. Ephesians 6:7

Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Ephesians 6:7

[Ephesians 3:20](#) - Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

[Philippians 4:13](#) - I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

Action Steps:

- *Pray in Jesus' Name for God to raise up leaders for our nation at every level of government who believe in and have the ability to bring out the best in others.*
- *Pray in Jesus' Name for the Holy Spirit to help you discern which candidates have the ability to bring out the best in others.*

Additional Guidance:

Pray Psalm 72; 1 Timothy 3

Pray for Godly Kings Who Are:

1. Chosen by God; observe the words of the Covenant of the LORD (Deut. 17:14-20)
2. Anointed by the Holy Spirit (cf. Isaiah 45, Cyrus, though not a Child of the Covenant)
3. Anointed by the Prophets (e.g., Saul, David, Jehu...) *Anointing a king* was equivalent to crowning him (1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 2:4, etc.). *Prophets* were also *anointed* (1 Kings 19:16; 1 Chr. 16:22; Ps. 105:15).
4. Royal Warriors 2 Samuel 5.6-11, 17ff
5. Able to secure rest from enemies, rest of session on the throne 2 Samuel 7:1ff, 11; Psalm 89
6. Warrior-Saviors, and Deliverers Psalm 132
7. Faithful servants 1 Kings 3:6; 2 Samuel 5 and 6
8. Builders who establish 1 Kings 5
9. Shepherd-kings – pastoral, tending, watching, guarding from enemies, alert, leading...Psalm 23, John 10:1-18; Ezekiel 34

Pray God gives you the ability to discern these other qualities:

1. Passion—does the leader have energy and is he passionate about what he believes?
2. Communication skills—tells it like it is; asserts his viewpoint; has a communication style that elicits trust; speaks the truth in love; not a naysayer; generates a positive outlook
3. Equal opportunity fighter—no respecter of persons when fighting for what he thinks is right; fights for all kinds of people regardless of class, race, gender, nationality, wealth, etc.

4. Vision—has a clear vision in his mind and heart and has the ability to manage the vision or to lead others in the management of the vision. Can cast a strategic vision. Habakkuk 2:2
5. Management skills--can choose the right people for the right job; can communicate the vision clearly to others; can actually lead; has the ability to mobilize people. Habakkuk 2:2
6. Builder and expander—can build and expand both with words and with actions.
7. Negotiating skills
8. Ability to understand biblical and historical truths
9. Knowledge – has experiential knowledge (oida in Greek) and not just mere acquaintance with things like the constitution, policies, government, the Bible, etc.
10. Perseverance – ability to keep pressing toward the mark in the face of challenges and adversity. Philippians 3:14
11. Exercises good moral character – arête in Greek. [Mary Craig Ministries - Arete \(pdf\)](#)
www.marycraig.org/NewsViews/Arete.pdf
12. Reads Proverbs daily.
13. Takes responsibility

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