

Christian Citizenship

1 Peter 2:9-17

July 4, 2010

The New Testament presents the fact that as Christians we have dual citizenship. Philippians 3:20, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

1. We Are Citizens of Heaven (9-10)

Citizens by the New Birth

- **Realize that we are a nation within a nation**

In this age God calls people out of each nation to become part of the Church. The word church is *ekklesia*, which means a "called out assembly", Acts 15:14. God chose us out of our "generation" calling us

to salvation. Christ's church is to be "a holy nation". The Church of Christ will by the end of the age exist in every nation according to Revelation 5:9. As American Christians we are God's "own special people". We are His purchased possession through the blood of Christ.

Separation Involves Contact without Contamination

- **Recognize that we are a light within the darkness**

The world lies in the darkness. Paul calls it "the darkness of this age", Ephesians 6:12. Paul reveals that before we were saved we lived in darkness but not now, Ephesians 5:8. Paul asks the penetrating question in 2 Corinthians 6:14. The word "proclaim" is a form of the word angel, which means messenger. We are to advertise the excellence of Christ to a dark and dying world, Philippians 2:15.

Separation Involves Contact with Conviction

2. We Are Aliens on Earth (11-12)

In but Not Of the World

The Greek word "sojourners" is a compound word from "beside" and "house". We live alongside the people of the world. Christians do not belong to the culture like the unbeliever does. The word "pilgrims" basically refers to a visitor who makes a brief stay.

- **Understand that we are constantly at war**

This is an urgent passionate plea from the Apostle. We live in a pagan pornographic culture. Peter says "abstain". The word means to "hold oneself away from". "Fleshly lusts" is a general term for all of the cravings of our fallen nature. This is an internal struggle of our fallen nature and God's Spirit within us. Paul repeatedly emphasized the

same thing: 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Timothy 6:11, and 2 Timothy 2:22.

We can only win this struggle by yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

We Are Called To Live a Godly Life in a Hostile Environment

- **Understand that we are constantly under observation**

Our inward abstaining will be revealed in our outward daily living.

The word "honorable" is also translated as "good" and "honest". The

phrase "day of visitation" is used in the Old Testament of God visiting people for either judgment or blessing. In the New Testament it is

used in the context of salvation. We just saw Acts 15:14, "...God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name."

The word "glorify" is used 61 times in the New Testament and never of unsaved people. Peter is referring to people who come to know Christ.

He connects their salvation to the lives of believers that they have come in contact with.

Is my testimony believable to the unsaved people around me?

God Has Called Us "Out from" Our Generation but Until He Calls "Away From" Our Generation We Are To Be a Witness "Within" Our Generation

3. We Are Also Citizens on Earth (13-17)

Involved not Isolated

We must not be so focused upon heaven that we become indifferent to the world. Jesus did not pray that for us, John 17:15-18,.

- **Accept that we are commanded to submit to human government**

Peter does not want believers to think that they have no responsibilities to the governing authorities in their lives. He refers to human government, the family and the church. God is the One who establishes the governing authorities, Romans 13:1. When man's law does not contradict God's law we are to obey, no exceptions, Romans 13:7. We are to do this for the Lord. We are submitting to God when we submit to the governing authorities.

How We Conduct Ourselves in This Matter Will Either Bring Honor or Dishonor to Christ

- **Understand that godly living silences criticism**

(15) "For this is the will of God that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"

The word means to gag or muzzle them. Christians have always faced criticism in every culture. In some cultures they also face persecution.

Is my life hurting or helping the cause of Christ?

Many Christians hurt the testimony of Christ because they see their liberty as license. (16) "...as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God." We are to use our civil and spiritual liberties as opportunities to serve God and reach people with the Gospel.

(17) "Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." All of life is outlined in this verse: the world, other Christians, God, and civil authority.

As American Christians We Have the Awesome Privileges of Civil and Spiritual Liberty—What Are We Doing With These Great Gifts?