

Our Country is Sacred
(A Look at the Christian and Patriotism)

Foundational biblical ideas that should shape our view of patriotism

1. God is concerned about individual nations and their peoples
 - God created the nations (Gen 11)
 - His plan of redemption is designed to reach people of every nation (Gen 12:2-3; Matt 28:18; Acts 10:35)
 - God has set each person in the nation they reside so that he might draw them to himself (Acts 17:26-27)
 - God longs to redeem the nations (Is 19:23-25; Jon 4:11)
 - God seeks glory from every nation (Ps 67:3-5)
 - God will see that people retain their national identity in heaven (Ps 87; Rev 7:9)
2. God is supportive of nations having governmental authority structures
 - God is said to be the one who sets kings in their place (Dan 3:20; 4:25; John 19:10-11)
 - God calls believers to respect and honor governmental authorities (Titus 3:1; Rom 13:1-7)
 - God calls believers to pray for those in authority over them (1 Tim 2:1-3)
3. Nations can be decidedly evil
 - They can be evil because they are made of people who can be evil (Rom 3:10-18)
 - They can be evil because they pursue other gods (2 Kings 7:7-15)
 - They can be evil because of the way they treat people (Amos 1:9; Oba 1:11-14)
 - They can be evil because they have leadership that is evil (1 Kings 12:31-33)
4. God promises to judge the nations
 - God will act as judge over and between the nations (Ps 110:6; Amos 1-2; Isa 2:4)
 - God has consistently humbled the nation that has taken ungodly pride in itself (Egypt during Exodus; Babylon by the Persians; Edom as seen in Obadiah)
 - God uses wicked nations as instruments of judgment towards other wicked nation (Isa 10:5-6; Habakkuk)
5. We are called to be thankful for all that God has created, which would include our own country (1 Tim 4:4)
 - The call to thankfulness is a call to be grateful for the country in which we live.

- A gratitude for our country is similar to a gratitude for our family or the countryside on which we were raised. They are parts of our upbringing. They are part of the sights and sounds and smells and touch that have brought us joy in our lives, and so is our country.
6. As citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20), we are to be more concerned about advancing God's kingdom than building an earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6-8)

Based on the above foundations, it would seem proper to conclude that affection or patriotism for one's own country is not an inappropriate Christian attitude. A healthy affection or patriotism for own country, however, should...

- Lead to God-directed thankfulness for the country in which we reside. This need not be just a vague thankfulness for freedom. It can be a freedom for the little joys our country brings, for even if we did not enjoy the freedoms we are still called to be thankful for our country.
- Avoid giving any sense of superiority over other nations because of greater power, industriousness, spirituality, or racial considerations than other nations (Deut 7:6-8, 9:4-6; Ps 33:10-22). Remember it is possible to have pride without a comparative spirit (Gal 6:4).
- Allow room for others to be equally proud of their country.
- Cause us to have a healthy fear of God's place of judgment over our nation. In the United States, this means that when we speak of being a nation under God, it is not so much a declaration of present spiritual status but an understanding that we are under his jurisdiction (whether some recognize it or not) and will one day be called to give an account.
- Resist a wholesale, unexamined celebration of our own country.
- Keep the church positioned as salt and light in the culture and therefore prophets against any evil that springs up within our country.
- Cause us to humbly seek God for the welfare of our country.
- Move us to respect and honor governing authorities and pray for them. This includes submitting to their authority except if they are in clear violation of Scripture.
- Cause us to have a love for our country that makes us willing to sacrifice our own well being to see God-honoring change in our land. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of his love for country even while he worked to change it and said "Whom you would change, you must first love."
- Allow us to love our country while still being willing to leave it in order to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20).
- Avoid connecting the agenda of the country with the agenda of the church.
- Not glorify the past and whitewash the immoral and ungodly past of one's country for the sake of honoring the country today.