

God is Pro-Life, Pro-Marriage, Pro-Justice, & Pro-Work: Our Biblical Convictions as Citizens Of Heaven While Living On Earth

1 Peter 2:11-17

God's Word is our source of truth, Jesus Christ Himself is the Truth; and we are to exercise the Discipline of Truth: knowing and defending His truth.

That led us to ask: What are our Biblical Convictions (those based upon God's Truth)—as Citizens of Heaven, while living on Earth?

If we were to apply the truths or doctrines of the Scriptures as far as they relate to the current issues in human society, I would say that revealed in His Word:

- **GOD is Pro-Life**—God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception.
- **GOD is Pro-Marriage**—God is opposed to Gay Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality.
- **GOD is Pro-Justice**—God is opposed to murder, violence, discrimination, prejudice, and abuse of the weak, poor, and unborn; He invented capital punishment, and commands societies to have a just legal system.
- **GOD is Pro-Work**—God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and every form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

Point One—Biblical Convictions start with the Bible

Stand, read 1 Peter 2:11-17 (NKJV), and pray.

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good

you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Citizens of Heaven Respect Authority on Earth

Peter, the voice for God, writing God's Word down for us our Biblical responsibilities said: **be subject** to the leader of your land in which you live, whenever it is in the future, where ever you live on the planet. That is clear; but what is shocking is to step back and look at the man whose shadow fell across Peter's world—it was Nero's.

Nero was a debased, depraved, defiled, and deliberately an outspoken advocate of the homosexual lifestyle. And Peter said to be subject to him? Yes, and he says the same to us whatever administration comes to wherever you live, whenever you live. Does that mean fatalism, un-involvement and withdrawal from society? Not at all:

Citizens of Heaven Expose Evil on Earth

In Ephesians 5:11 Paul explains what citizens of Heaven do while being subject (even to the point of being in prison) to the powers that be. In Ephesians Paul adds the second element of our responsibility as believers—**we expose evil**.

Our responsibilities as Biblical Christians are to **be subject** to government and to **expose evil in our culture**.

Of all people on earth we should have the most consistent, loving advice—**abstain from everything that is evil**. We should also have the most compelling reason—**it doesn't please God**. That is why we should engage our culture and point out that there are absolutes.

Point Two—Biblical Convictions start with the Bible, because we are Citizens of Heaven

This world is only my temporary home. Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven...*

God selects the rulers of this world. Daniel 4:17" ... *the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'*

God tells us our primary responsibility is to PRAY, that is how we influence the outcome of any current political situation. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*

Point Three—Biblical Convictions start with the Bible, because we are Citizens of Heaven—Living on Earth

How do we live out those Biblical Convictions about God's revelation of what is right and wrong? Applying the doctrines taught in God's Word we see:

First, **GOD is Pro-Life**—God is opposed to Abortion and Euthanasia. He is the Creator of Life, the One who grants conception. All human life is His personal act of power as the God of this Universe allowing another human in His image to be conceived.

Believers Declare the Truth: Abortion is Murder

As Christ's children, we need to act as His salt and His light to those around us. We need to expose the fact that there are nearly 1.2 million children murdered by abortions each year in America. That means we have hidden the remains of over 50 million murdered bodies since the Supreme Court overturned the right to life of babies over 40 years ago.

*Abortion is one of the darkest works of the human race – **it is child sacrifice.*** We need to expose the fact that 70% of abortions are performed between the seventh and tenth week when the baby is uniquely and unquestionably human.

Second, **GOD is Pro-Marriage**—God is opposed to Gay Unions, as well as divorce, adultery, fornication, pornography, and any other form of immorality. As Christ's children, we need to act as His salt and His light to those around us, and:

Believers Declare the Truth: Marriage is only Between a Man & Woman

God has given us two reasons why two men or two women cannot have a marriage God recognizes: First, God's will in creation was for one man and one woman to be married (Mt. 19:4-6, NKJV). From cover to cover the Bible always says the same thing: God designed marriage as a covenant with a sexual union between one man and one woman.

Second, God says that marriage is to be “held in honor” (Hebrews 13:4), but also declares that any homosexual activity is: dishonorable, shameless, and contrary to nature in Romans 1:26-27.

Third, **GOD is Pro-Justice**—God is opposed to murder, violence, discrimination, prejudice, and abuse of the weak, poor, and unborn; He invented capital punishment, and commands societies to have a just legal system.

Today, millions of lives around the world are in the grip of injustice.

Trafficking in humans generates profits in excess of 32 billion dollars a year for those who, by force and deception, sell human lives into slavery and sexual bondage. Nearly 2 million children are exploited in the commercial sex industry. The AIDS pandemic continues to rage, and the oppression of trafficking victims in the global sex trade contributes to the disease's spread.

The land rights of women are violated on a massive scale worldwide, but with particular ferocity in Africa, leaving widows and other women in vulnerable positions unable to care for themselves or their children. Around the world, women suffer the double trauma of rape - and seeing their perpetrators face no consequences.

Often lacking access to their own justice systems and unable to protect themselves or their families from those more powerful, it is overwhelmingly the poor who are the victims of these brutal forms of abuse.

Believers need to Shine their Lives into the Darkness of Injustice

If God is Pro-Justice, and He is, what would He have us do in light of our unjust, sin-driven culture that lies in darkness all around us? Here are just a few suggestions that all of us should pray about today.

- 1. Budget for Regularly Helping the Poor.** Have money set aside just to help poor, sick, handicapped, and suffering people. If you are unsure who is really needy, start by volunteering at the KGM or with our ministry staff who lead our local ministries like Loaves & Fishes, Healthy Homes, and Angel Tree. Touch directly the lives of the poor, needy, troubled, and hurting right here in the Kalamazoo area.
- 2. Consider supporting ministries like International Justice Mission.** We are surrounded by injustice today. More children, women and men are held in slavery right now than over the course of the entire trans-Atlantic slave trade: Millions toil

in bondage, their work and even their bodies the property of an owner. In collaboration with local authorities, IJM addresses these specific points of brokenness to meet the urgent needs of victims of injustice.

- 3. Consider using your most powerful tool--always pray.** If you haven't started yet, get literature about the horrors of injustice here in America and globally, and start to plead with the God of Heaven to deliver us from this evil. Ask for lives to be intercepted by loving and just believers, and for souls to come to faith in Christ's offer of salvation through your investment. Think of it as another way to take someone with you to Heaven.

Finally, **GOD is Pro-Work**—God is against indolence, sloth, entitlements, oppression of the poor by the rich, and ever form of false hope produced by gambling and lotteries.

Believers Expose the Grave Errors of American Gambling

We have become a nation selling hope for money from people who can not afford to buy it but are offered hope that is unreal, impossible, and destructive. Lotteries like drug addiction, and drunkenness offer what only God can give freely!

America, it's fair to say, is wild about gambling. In 1962, American place about \$2 billion in bets. By the year 2010, that number had grown to \$866 billion. And now, the country is headed for a staggering trillion dollars a year in wagers. These bets take place in over four hundred casinos nationally; and in vast lotteries, embraced by state governments as revenue godsend; and at horse tracks and dog tracks and sporting events; and on 35,000 internet sites devoted to gambling. Imagine it. Americans spend \$60 billion spent a year on all amusement parks, movies, plays, concerts, live performances, on all sports events. And nearly a trillion dollars on gambling.”¹

We need to Shine Our Life into the Darkness of Materialism

- 1. As Believers we need to Repent of the Bad-Eye Disease.** Jesus gives us one of the most amazing tests in life. He asks us to measure what looks most precious to us. We are to look down at treasures on earth, then look up at treasures in Heaven and compare which one “looks” better. If Earth is more beautiful than Heaven, Jesus said we have “bad eyes”.

¹ Tom Ashbrook, **The Business of Gambling: Testing America's Luck, NPR Radio**, Aired: Wednesday, September 18, 2002

Turn back with me to Matthew 6:19-24, and see what exactly Jesus meant about the bad eye we should avoid. So the flow of thought would go like this:

v. 19-21 **Seek True Treasures** (the ones that can't ever be lost) Don't lay up treasures on earth, but lay up treasures in heaven. Show that your heart values what God says is precious.

v. 22-23 **Seek True Sight** (seeing heavenly treasures as most desirable) Make sure that your eye is good not bad. Good eyes see heavenly treasure as infinitely more precious than all earthly wealth. When our eyes see this way, we are full of light.

v. 24 **Seek True Servitude** (serving God not money) Only two choices on the shelf: pleasing God or pleasing self. Living for God's kingdom or for earthly wealth and pleasures.

Bottom line: If you are emotionally drawn more by material things than by Christ, pray that God would give you a good eye and awaken you from the spiritual blindness of the "bad-eye disease."

2. Believers Need to Understand that God Said it is Wrong to Want to be Rich

God warns us that the heart that is hot after money is not pursuing God. Look at 1st Timothy 6:9-10 (NKJV):

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Paul goes on to say that God asks us to pursue "righteousness, godliness, faith, love." Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these other things will be added to you."

This passage clearly teaches that we should not want to get rich. It may not seem like the American way, but it is *God's* way. We are "aliens and exiles" in this fallen world and are not to be conformed to the motives of the world (Romans 12:1-2).

Bottom line: Our pursuit in life is not to get rich—neither quickly or slowly. Our passion in life is to be pure and holy and loving and sold out to the cause of Christ.

3. **Believers Need to Ask for Christ's Compassion over the poor and needy.**

When Jesus saw the poor, the needy, and the hungry: His heart was MOVED with compassion (Mt. 9:36).

Just as an example of having Christ's compassion, listen to the Apostle John in 1 John 3:17 (NKJV)

But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

APPENDIX:

DARE TO BE A DANIEL

The challenge of our new century in which we live is to bring leaders of great moral conviction to the forefront of our nations government without the baggage of moral imposition. The greatest example of this is in the trio of great politicians from three of the greatest empires of ancient history. These men are so great they are known by their first names: Joseph of Egypt, Daniel of Babylon, and Nehemiah of Persia. Each of these men was of unwavering Biblical integrity. Each of these men had convictions they would stand for, suffer for, and even go to death for. But none of them ever imposed by way of legislation, those convictions upon those they governed.

There is a revealed civil code God laid down after the flood – human government in Genesis 9. It is basically restated in the 2nd half of the Law of Moses (commandments 5-10) and is known in one way or another around the world. Basic laws against murder, theft, lying, and so on make up the laws for mankind's good. But these statesmen - Joseph, Daniel, and Nehemiah, did not impose all the rest of the religious laws of Israel upon society.

One of the great needs of American governance is to see men who can be trusted as men of integrity, yet who will not be seeking to impose morals upon the citizens that are not the black and white clearly written laws of God for SOCIETY. The clear laws are against murder of the born and unborn, sodomy and all other clearly described sexual perversions, and witchcraft, which is always linked to drug abuse in the Bible. The rest of the areas of society such as blue laws, alcohol, gambling, lotteries, and so on, are not part of the laws of society, they are for the individual not the society. They are matters of personal conviction, not of government imposition.

If we can have deeply religious leaders who are not bringing their convictions to bear on other individuals through policies, laws, and legislation, then the character of government will be less partisan, the people will be more open to the persuasion of those individuals who live out their personal convictions, and government will not get confused with the church.

Gambling Destroys Loving of neighbors -Jesus commanded, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). Gambling, meanwhile, is predicated on the losses, pain, and suffering of others. For one to win at gambling, others must lose. For many, the ramifications attributable to their gambling losses are profound. Families touched by a gambling addiction are at greatly increased risk for such negative outcomes as divorce, bankruptcy, child abuse, domestic violence, crime, and suicide. More than 15 million Americans already struggle with a gambling problem, and the number continues to grow as gambling expands.

- Matthew 7:12 *Therefore, **whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them**, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*
- Luke 6:31 *And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.*
- Romans 12:10 *Be **kindly affectionate to one another** with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*
- Philippians 2:3-4 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself**. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Gambling Exploits the Poor -Gambling preys on the desperation of the poor. The National Gambling Impact Study Commission found that those with incomes less than \$10,000 spend more on lottery tickets than any other income group. High school dropouts spend four times as much as college graduates. Scripture exhorts us to look out for the poor and disadvantaged, and issues strong warnings against taking advantage of their plight.

- Proverbs 14:21 *He who despises his neighbor sins; But he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he.*
- Proverbs 14:31 ***He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker**, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy. Lotteries reproach God!*
- Proverbs 22:16 *He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches, And he who gives to the rich, **will surely come to poverty**. Lotteries invite the judgment of God!*
- Isaiah 3:14-15 *The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of His people And His princes: "For you have eaten up the vineyard; **The plunder of the poor is in your houses**.15 What do you mean by **crushing My people** And **grinding the faces of the poor**?" Says the Lord God of hosts.*
- Amos 5:11-12 *Therefore, because you **tread down the poor** And take grain taxes from him, Though you have built houses of hewn stone, Yet you shall not dwell in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, But you shall not drink wine from them. 12 For I know your manifold transgressions And your mighty sins: Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate.*
- Zechariah 7:10 ***Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.***

Gambling Destroys Godly Work ethics -Work has been part of God's design for mankind from the very beginning. We are to invest our time and energies into labors that supply our needs and those of our families (Proverbs 31, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8) and that allow us to share with others (Ephesians 4:28). Scripture is replete with exhortations toward industriousness and admonitions against slothfulness. Gambling, meanwhile, portends something for nothing. Indeed, gambling advertising and marketing frequently belittles hard work and diligence.

- Genesis 2:15 *Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to tend and keep it.***
- Exodus 20:9 **Six days you shall labor and do all your work,**
- Proverbs 12:11 *He who **tills his land will be satisfied with bread,** But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding.*
- Proverbs 13:4 *The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of **the diligent shall be made rich.***
- Proverbs 21:25 *The **desire of the lazy man kills him,** For his hands refuse to labor.*
- 2 Thessalonians 3:10 *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.***
- 1 Timothy 5:8 *But if **anyone does not provide for his own,** and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Gambling Promotes Greed -Gambling is founded on greed and undergirded by a "get-rich-quick" appeal. In a recent national poll, two-thirds of respondents stated that the reason they gamble is to win money.

- Proverbs 15:27 ***He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house,** But he who hates bribes will live.*
- Proverbs 28:20 *A faithful man will abound with blessings, But **he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.***
- Luke 12:15 *And He said to them, "**Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.**"*
- Colossians 3:5 *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, **and covetousness, which is idolatry.***
- 1 Timothy 6:9-10 *But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.***

Gambling Promotes the Idolatry of Covetousness -The 10th Commandment (Exodus 20:17) prohibits Christians from coveting another's possessions. Gambling is precisely the attempt to obtain the resources of others without providing anything of value in return. Some have rightly described gambling as consensual theft.

- Exodus 20:17 ***"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."***
- Colossians 3:5 *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, **and covetousness, which is idolatry.***
- Hebrews 13:5 ***Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."***

Gambling Denies Biblical Stewardship -Christians are responsible before God for how they invest the resources entrusted to them, as the parable of the talents makes clear. In many cases, money

spent on gambling is money that should have gone to provide for the well-being of one's family or the advancement of a worthy cause. In all cases, it is an unwise investment with an almost-certain negative return. More importantly, such spending propagates an immoral, predatory and exploitative industry.

- Matthew 25:14-19, 27-30 *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them....27 **So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.** 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*
- Romans 14:12 *So then **each of us shall give account of himself to God.***
- Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,** giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Gambling Promotes Temptations -Gambling establishments are often host to other corrupting vices, including prostitution and drunkenness. Christians are urged to avoid such environments (1 Thessalonians 5:22: "Avoid every kind of evil."). In 1 Corinthians 15:33, Paul writes, "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" Other Scriptures warn believers to flee temptation (1 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Timothy 2:22).

- 1 Corinthians 6:18 *Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*
- 1 Corinthians 15:33 *Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.”*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22 *“Abstain from every form of evil.”*
- 2 Timothy 2:22 *Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

Gambling Promotes Distrust in God -The Bible teaches that Christians are to look to God as their provider, and that we are to be content with the material blessings we receive from His hand. To engage in gambling indicates both a lack of trust in and dissatisfaction with God's provision.²

- Matthew 6:25-34 *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you,*

² These points drawn from Focus on the Family at www.family.org/cforum/research/papers/a0008570.html

*O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 **For after all these things the Gentiles seek.** For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

- *Philippians 4:11-12, 19 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 19 **And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.***
- *1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness **with contentment** is great gain.*
- *Hebrews 13:5 **Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.** For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*