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God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

543-A

Series: The Beatitudes



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God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

In recent lessons, we have been studying one of the problems of an impure heart. This is the double-mindedness that comes from Satan's deceptions in the world. In other words, his believable lies. These are lies about the character of man and about man's relationship with God. These are lies about what constitutes success and morality. These are lies about marriage and the home. These are lies about the role of man and woman in the world. Most recently, these are lies about authority and discipline where our children are concerned.

In this lesson, we will continue our study of Satan's lies and God's truths concerning three basic areas: authority, rebellion and patriotism. Satan has fostered basic lies in each of these three areas. As always, he has a deeper goal in mind, and that is to discredit God in each case.

SATAN'S FIRST LIE - AUTHORITY

Satan says that authority, as we know it, is outdated and must give way to mutual expression. Each person should have equal say in the final decision. This way, no one person tells anyone else what to do. Life becomes a majority rule issue. If no agreement ensues, then each person does that which is right in his own eyes. This line of thinking has permeated our schools. It has affected our homes, our churches and our government. Teachers no longer want to be authority figures for fear of damaging their "creativity" with their class. Parents no longer rule in the home, instead, they plead. Respect for authority has reached an all time low.

What kinds of alternatives are there? I think there are at least three kinds of relationships in this regard. An example of the first far extreme would be the ruler ruling over the servant without love, or a dictatorship or one who rules by force without love. Another relationship is at the other extreme where we see two people on a peer level relationship with no authority. It is response without rule. Many people feel that this is the way our children should be raised today. They feel this is the way our children should be taught in school. They feel this is the way the marriage relationship should be today. But in the center, there is God's kind of alternative. This is one person having authority over another, in some cases, and

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

yet still with the freedom to be a friend. In this illustration, the authority figure plays two roles. He is authority, and he is friend. As a friend, he listens, he cares, he responds and he serves. But as an authority, he decides, he leads, and, if necessary, he disciplines.

One example of this would be if your best friend were a policeman. On Saturday nights, your two families get together to go out to dinner. You have had great fellowship with this policeman and his family. If you had a need, you could call him in the middle of the night, and he would be there as a friend. But, one day, you rob a bank. Now the policeman is still your friend, but as a friend, he must exercise the authority vested in him. Though your friend, he will have to be the arm of discipline in your life.

You might be a friend of the president and have dinner in the White House on a regular basis, but on certain occasions your friendship must give way to a different relationship. Teachers, you can be a friend and an authority to the people you teach at school. By doing so, you can teach them a deep, spiritual principle at the same time, but you also have to show your authority over them.

Why is Satan so bent on destroying this philosophy? Where was man in the garden before the fall? God and man walked together as friends. God, man's friend, ruled the universe and the angelic host and was over Adam and Eve. He was Lord, but He was a friend. Satan's cry to Eve was, "If He really is your friend, what right does He have to make your decisions? To limit your freedoms? To insult your intelligence by saying that you don't have the capacity to be in charge? Eve, express yourself and do what appeals to you. If God has that right, so should you. Eve, look at the fruit. You want it don't you? Take it." Eve came out from under the authority of her best friend, Jehovah, and she was never the same again.

Why? What is Satan's goal? Satan's goal is to convince man of this lie, that God cannot be both friend and Lord at the same time. He must either be a cold, impassioned despot or a loving friend who never interferes with what you want to do. That is a lie. John 15 tells the truth,

I have loved you even as the Father has loved Me. Live within
My love. When you obey Me, you are living in My love just as
I obey the Father and live in His love. (John 15:9 TLB)

In other words, the exercise of love is obedience. We read on,

I have told you this so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes,
your cup of joy will overflow.

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

I demand that you love each other as much as I love you.

And here is how to measure it-the greatest love is shown when a person lays down his life for his friend.

You are My friends if you obey Me.

I no longer call you slaves because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are My friends, proved by the fact that I have told you everything the Father told Me.

(John 15:11-15 TLB)

Friends. You are the friend of God. Then why is it that Paul, years later wrote, "Paul, bondsman, servant by choice of Jesus Christ." He said this because from God's perspective, Paul was now His friend. From Paul's' perspective, he was still God's servant. It is a truth basic to enjoying the Christian walk. Satan hates it.

SATAN'S SECOND LIE - REBELLION

This lie is an extension of the first. It says that rebellion is an acceptable means to a reasonable end. If no one is to rule over us, and then someone tries, we cooperate only if we agree with their goals, agree with their methods and agree with their timing. If not, an acceptable means of expression is to rise up and oppose that authority. Of course, we must then presuppose that authorities that be are not ordained of God. This is no problem. We just take a pair of scissors to our Bibles and cut out Romans 13, I Peter 2 and Ephesians 5 only to find that every place we turn, it is still there. Rebellion is Satan's trademark.

This means, children obey your parents unless you disagree with their instructions, then you throw a temper tantrum. It means students listen and obey your teachers, if they teach the way you choose. If they don't, rebel, argue and undermine their authority. It means citizens obey the laws provided the laws meet with your approval, otherwise defy them. It means wives submit to your husbands, if they are worthy of your respect, otherwise, you refuse. It means employees do as you are told provided the boss is pleasing you and meeting your needs, otherwise you strike. It means soldier obey the commander in chief, unless you don't approve of the war, then you refuse to serve.

Satan argues that you are the final authority. "I will exalt myself," he said, "I will be my own boss." The funny thing is that Satan himself, who hates authority, believes in it when he is it. In Matthew 4, we see that when Satan was in control of the situation, he really loved having authority. Everyone does. It is

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

amazing the people who stand and defy the concept of authority, yet, have their whole life change when they are the authority. What man is saying is, "I don't believe in authority, unless I am that authority." It is called rebellion. It is acceptable behavior in today's society, but it is still a dirty word in God's vocabulary.

What is Satan's goal? It is to discredit God by fortifying his own philosophy. His own philosophy is founded on a concept of rebellion. What is rebellion? It is that spirit in man that refuses to allow another to rule over him. It expresses itself subtly or overtly by resisting man's authority and God's authority. A shorter definition of rebellion is defiance or reluctance over another's control.

How does God feel about rebellion? I Samuel 15 tells us a little bit about how God feels about a rebellious spirit. The background is found in verses 1-9,

One day Samuel said to Saul, "I crowned you king of Israel because God told me to. Now be sure that you obey Him.

Here is His commandment to you: "I have decided to settle account with the nation of Amalek for refusing to allow My people to cross their territory when Israel came to Egypt.

Now you go and completely destroy the nation-men, women, babies, little children, oxen, sheep, camels and donkeys."

So Saul mobilized his army at Telaim. There were two thousand troops in addition to ten thousand men from Judah.

The Amalekites were camped in the valley below them.

Saul sent a message to the Kenites, telling them to get out from among the Amalekites or else die with them. "For you were kind to the people of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt," he explained.

Then Saul butchered the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, east of Egypt.

He captured Agag (which he was not supposed to do, he was supposed to kill him), the king of the Amalekites, but killed everyone else.

However Saul and his men kept the best of the sheep and oxen and the fattest of the lamb – everything in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.

(I Samuel 15:1-9 TLB)

Now here is where our story begins. Saul compromised the command of God. The reason God was so desperately against what Saul had done is that the believer does not need the spoils

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

of the world. This was a picture of that. Saul went in and kept the things he wasn't supposed to keep. We call it the IBC syndrome, the Itty Bitty Compromise. Moses was guilty of the same thing.

In verse 11, Saul's sin, having done the itty bitty compromise, breaks the heart of God. I think this is one of the saddest verses in all of Scripture. As I read this, God really worked me over. I could see some areas where God was saying this about me.

I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has again refused to obey Me. (I Samuel 15:11 TLB)

Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard what God was saying that he cried to the Lord all night. Saul's sin broke the heart of God, and it broke the heart of God's man. I couldn't help but wonder this week about how often we cry and weep before the Lord when men in positions of responsibility break God's heart, or, do we just kind of smugly sit back and say to ourselves, "Boy, I wouldn't have done that like that person did." It broke the heart of God, and it broke the heart of God's man. In verse 12 Saul stole the glory of God.

Early the next morning he went out to find Saul. Someone said that he had gone to Mount Carmel to erect a monument to himself; and had then gone on to Gilgal.

(I Samuel 15:12 TLB)

Some of us have done the same thing. Then in verse 13, he rejected the truth of God by lying.

When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully, "Hello there," he said, "Well, I have carried out the Lord's command!"

"Then what was all the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen I heard?" Samuel demanded.

"It's true that the army spared the best of the sheep and oxen," Saul admitted, "but they are going to sacrifice them to the Lord your God; and we destroyed everything else."

(I Samuel 15:13-15 TLB)

God's Response to Samuel

The end justifies the means, Saul thought. Here was God's response in verse 17. There are four things God said to Samuel.

Response 1- You forgot where you were when I called you.

And Samuel told him, "When you didn't think much of yourself, God made you king of Israel." (I Samuel 15:17 TLB)

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

In other words, "God took you from nothing. How could you forget?" If you have a tendency, like most of us, to complain and murmur, have you ever imagined what your life might have been if you were continuing on the course you were on before you met Jesus Christ? Imagine you were still on that course you were on without Calvary, without forgiveness of sins, without a personal relationship with the Living God. Stop for a moment and let your television set switch back on that channel. In your heart, you ought to fall to your knees. Samuel said,

Saul, when you were nothing, God made you king.

(I Samuel 15:17 paraphrased)

Response 2- In the next three verses, Samuel told Saul that he not only forgot where he came from, but he had forgotten his responsibility. Saul answered by saying that he did almost everything God wanted. He wondered what God was after. Can you imagine Jesus almost going to Calvary? Can you imagine Him bargaining with God saying, "Father, I understand what You are saying, but I can do more good for You if I just get all beaten up and have pain inflicted for the sake of My people, then I can rise up and be King, and I won't have to die for their sins." A second reason Samuel gave was, "God, You ought to understand, because I was under pressure, and I didn't want to let the people down."

Response 3- Saul forgot what pleased the Lord. We see that in verse 22,

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

(I Samuel 15:22 NKJV)

Samuel told Saul that obedience was far better than sacrifice. God is much more interested in you listening to Him than in your offering of the fat of rams. In other words, God was not interested that you show your religiosity before men, but whether or not you do as you are told in the Word. It is not the size of your offering or your service, but the receptiveness of your heart to God.

Response 4- The key is how God feels about rebellion.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

(I Samuel 15:23 NKJV)

What is witchcraft? It is to trust a spirit rather than God's Spirit. What is stubbornness? It is an unteachable spirit that defies instruction. So what this passage says is that an unteachable

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

spirit, to God, is like idolizing Satan by exalting self. The spirit that cannot be ruled by another is, in effect, ruled by demons. Rebellion and witchcraft are equal in intensity, but they both invoke the same heart response from God. Sometime do a study about how God feels about witchcraft and idolatry, and then you will know how God feels about a stubborn spirit and a spirit of rebellion.

Evidences of a Rebellious Spirit

How do you detect rebellion in yourself, in your children and in those under you? I want to give you some suggestions and some evidences of a rebellious spirit.

Evidence 1- Do you encourage others in their rebellion?

Numbers 14 is a good reference.

Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land,

those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord.

But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

(Numbers 14:36-38 NKJV)

Now there are a lot of other verses that go into that story, especially, Numbers 16:1-4 is an even better illustration. Ask yourself this question, what is your affect on other people? What kind of counsel do you give? Do you say, "If the boss treats you like that, quit!" Do you say, "Leave him, no one should treat a wife like that." Your counsel expresses your heart. How you counsel people will tell basically, what rebellion is in your heart.

Evidence 2- Do you have a complaining or an ungrateful spirit?

Psalm 78 tells us that the people were never satisfied. Rebellion is the absence of contentment with God's provisions. If you are never satisfied with your lot in life, you have a rebellious spirit.

Evidence 3- Do you reject counsel that you know is right? We

see this in Isaiah 30 says,

"Woe to my rebellious children," says the Lord, "you ask advice from everyone but Me and decide to do what I don't want you to do. You yoke yourselves with unbelievers and thus piling up your sins.

For without consulting Me, you have gone to Egypt to find your aid and have put your trust in Pharaoh for his protection."

(Isaiah 30:1,2 TLB)

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

The principle is that they chose to listen to the voice of a stranger and took the easy way out. How many times do you receive counsel that you know comes from God, either from the Word or from someone else, and you spend the rest of your life justifying your way out of it. That is rebellion.

Evidence 4- Failure to admit your own condition or learn from the mistakes of others is another sign of rebellion. Jeremiah 3 says,

There is a law that if a man divorces a woman who then remarries, he is not to take her back again, for she has become corrupted. But though you have left me and married many lovers, yet I have invited you to come to me again, the Lord says,

Is there a single spot in all the land where you haven't been defiled by your adulteries-your worshipping these other gods That is why even the springtime rains have failed. For you are a prostitute and completely unashamed.

And yet you say to Me, 'O Father, you have always been my friend,

Surely you won't be angry about such a little thing! Surely you will just forget it? So you talk, and keep right on doing all the evil that you can.

This message from the Lord came to me during the reign of King Josiah: Have you seen what Israel does? Like a wanton wife who gives herself to other men at every chance., so Israel has worshiped other gods on every hill, beneath every shady tree.

I thought that someday she would return to me and once again be mine; but she didn't come back...

Yet she paid no attention even though she saw that I divorced faithless Israel. But now Judah too has left me and given herself to prostitution, for she has gone to other gods to worship them.

She treated it all so lightly-to her it was nothing at all that she would worship idols made of wood and stone.

In fact, faithless Israel is less guilty than treacherous Judah!

Therefore, go and say to Israel, "O My sinful people, come home to Me again for I am merciful;" (Jeremiah 3:1-12 TLB)

The whole principle is that they saw the mistakes of others, but they rejected that illustration. How many of us have been in families where we have seen problems from unequally yoking, drugs and the like. We have seen children go through situations where they have witnessed first hand the mistakes of others and

turned right around to make the same mistakes again. Scripture teaches that this is a rebellious spirit.

Evidence 5- Seeking friendships with others in rebellion.

The common bond of rebels is their guilt, the common bond of godly people is good will. (Proverbs 14:9 TLB)

I have had some experiences in school situations where a new person was brought in, even in a Christian school, and he was turned loose. Where he gravitates and the people he chooses for friends will reveal what his real spirit is. Many times, he will be drawn to friends who will do the things he would like to do, if there were no restraints. Seeking friendships with others in rebellion is evidence of a rebellious spirit.

Evidence 6- Speech that does not reflect love.

Evidence 7- A negative spirit.

Evidence 8- A desire to run the show or have things your way.

Don't be surprised if God surfaces rebellion in your life this week. My experience has been that God tests me the week before I have to teach a lesson like this, and He tests you the week after. If it will help prepare you at all, this has been one of the roughest weeks I have had in years. I have seen a rebellious spirit surface in my life that has scared me to death.

Let me give you some added thoughts on rebellion.

1- We don't need to hide rebellious ancestors. Read Psalm 78 in a modern translation. Sometimes we take our family trees and chop them up so that the dead limbs don't show. I think that is wrong. I think our children need to learn from the mistakes of others. There may be some people in your family tree that needed to hang there. Your children may need to know about them and the price that was paid for that action instead of just covering it up. It is an important principle.

2- Remembrances serve to prevent rebellion. Numbers 17:10-13 is a good reference. I think that psychologists will disagree with this, but I think that the Great Physician says that it is good medicine. When a child makes a serious mistake, let him make a remembrance of it and put it somewhere where he can look at it again and remember the grace of God and the fruit of that mistake.

3- Rebellion never affects only you. Joshua 22:16-23 is our reference for this principle.

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

4- The more responsible you are, the more your rebellion will affect other people. Refer to James 3:1 and Numbers 20:24.

Test your RQ- Rebellion Quotient

How about you? What is your RQ, your Rebellion Quotient? Let me ask you some questions to test your attitudes.

- How does your inner spirit respond when asked by your boss to do something that you know is unnecessary?
- Do you find it natural to assume the negative position in most conversations?
- How quickly do you question God when circumstances do not go your way?
- Do you consider paying taxes a privilege, a necessity or a crime?
- Are you drawn to friends who murmur? Murmuring is an undercurrent of negative conversation.
- Are you quick to question the motive as well as the judgment of those who lead you?
- How open are you to godly counsel, and how obedient are you when you receive it?
- Remember that from God's perspective, rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and a stubborn spirit is, in essence, idolatry.

SATAN'S THIRD LIE - PATRIOTISM

The third lie of Satan builds, as always, on the other two. It says that if authority yields to expression, and finally if necessary to rebellion, then the needs and ideals of the one exceed the importance of the many. Loyalty to a group or a nation, patriotism, if you will, is a thing of the past. It is a lie.

God Works Through Nations

What is the purpose of the lie? Satan wants to discredit the national purposes of God. God delights to magnify Himself through the nations. He reveals His will often through the nations. A world that talks or laughs its way through the national anthem at football games is in trouble. Have you ever wondered why God works through the nations? Let me give you some reasons to chew on.

Reason 1- He can choose their leaders.

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes. (Proverbs 21:1 NKJV)

In I Samuel 16:7 they were choosing the wrong king and Jehovah said, "Wait a minute, he is the wrong one. He is not the one I have chosen." In Psalm 75:6-7 it says that God puts up one and puts down another. God works through nations, because He can choose their leaders.

Reason 2- He can gain the attention of multitudes. This is why God scattered the people of Babel. He didn't want a one world rule. The nations are His checks and balance system to keep society from running headlong into disaster. He can gain the attention of multitudes through it. If you have a scuffle on a downtown street, you may attract a few people, but if you have a world war, the whole world wakes up.

Reason 3- He can develop missionary activity. You can look at Acts 2:1-12. God takes nations and uses them as a mission base to send people to other places to spread the gospel. He has from the very beginning of time as He called out Israel. From the very beginning of time, Jesus came into the world to form the church.

Reason 4- He can depict spiritual warfare. This is one of Paul's favorite illustrations. Paul said, "If you want to learn how to deal with the enemy, you look at war. You get ready for war. You learn about the preparation for battle." You learn about the roles of men and women, the affects of compromise, the affects of unholy alliances, the need to be armed, the need to be sober, the need to be alert and much more.

Reason 5- He can demonstrate justice and authority.

Reason 6- He can punish ungodliness, and create a system for discipline.

Reason 7- He can teach about the coming kingdom.

God desires to work through the nations. God desires allegiance through the nations He does work through. What are some qualities He can develop through patriotism? What is patriotism? It is allegiance to a nation as an instrument of God.

Five Qualities that Patriotism Develops.

Loyalty- is an attitude of faithfulness demonstrated by adverse circumstances.

Submission- is an attitude of yielding rights to help others

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

succeed.

Sacrifice- is the act of giving up benefits to meet another's needs.

Respect- is the attitude of bestowing gracious honor on another.

Commitment- is the steadfastness of purpose that endures.

Unfortunately, all five of these qualities seem best developed in a nation in a time of struggle such as war, shortages, internal strife, but most of all during war. There is a great lesson in that. The greatest qualities in our lives come out of struggles and spiritual warfare, out of the victories and even out of the defeats.

The Christian has certain responsibilities to his nation. Scripture is very plain about this. We need to look at those responsibilities.

1- We need to pray. We see this in I Timothy 2 says,

Here are my directions: Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; and give thanks for all He is going to do for them.

Pray in this way for kings and all others who are in authority over us, or in places of high responsibility, so that we can live in peace and quietness, spending our time in godly living and thinking much about the Lord.

This is good and it pleases God our Savior,
for He longs for all to be saved and understand this one truth:

that God is on one side and all the people are on the other side and Jesus Christ, Himself man, is between them to bring them together,

by giving His life for all mankind. (I Timothy 2:1-6 TLB)

This is the goal. The vehicle that the will of God be done, that the gospel be shared, is that you pray for everyone who is in authority over you. This is a command. Let me ask, How many of you think you can even name the people in authority over you? I want to give you the list.

The President of the United States. We stopped in this class a few months ago to pray for the President. How many of you continued to pray for him on a regular basis since that time? The Vice-President of the United State. Do you ever wonder why you should pray for him? For one reason, it says to in I Timothy. Do you realize that the future of this nation is in his

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

hands if anything happens to the president? He may be one of the strongest influences on the president.

Who would volunteer to stand up and name the justices on the Supreme Court so that we can pray for them? We can't even name them let alone pray for them. When was the last time you prayed for the Supreme Court? It shapes history. The Congressional leaders and the Cabinet. How many of you pray for the cabinet? Most of us don't even know where the door to the cabinet is, let alone how to pray for them.

World leaders. How many of you pray for the leaders of Israel? This is the most important nation in the history of the world. It is also the most important nation in the future of the world. How many of you pray for its leaders?

How many of you pray for the governor of Texas whether you voted for him or not? How many of you pray for the mayor of this city whether you voted for him or not? How many of you pray for the police chief? How many of you just pray for Christian policemen that you know are out there as God's instruments day by day to protect us? How about the other authorities over you? There are the senators and the congressmen that represent this district. Can you name them? So the first thing then, we are supposed to do is pray for those in authority over us.

2- We need to show respect for the government. I Peter 2 says,

You are free from the law but that doesn't mean that you are free to do wrong. Live as those who are free to do only God's will at all times.

Show respect for everyone. Love Christians everywhere. Fear God and honor the government.

Servants, respect your masters and do whatever they tell you to not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are tough and cruel.

Praise the Lord if you are punished for doing what is right!
(I Peter 2:16-19 TLB)

Obey the government for God is the one who put it there. There is no government anywhere that God did not put in power.

Obey those over you and give honor and respect to whom honor and respect is due.
(Romans 13:1, 7 TLB)

That means you respect your country when you salute the flag, when you discuss its heritage, revere its offices and when

you pray for its future.

3- Your responsibility is to pay taxes. Romans 13 says,

Pay your taxes TOO, for these same two reasons. For government workers need to be paid so that they can keep on doing God's work, serving you.

Pay everyone whatever he ought to have: pay your taxes and your import duties gladly, (Romans 13:6,7 TLB)

It is an exercise of obedience to demonstrate loyalty.

4- Vote. Matthew 5 says that we are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor and there is no seasoning, and then what is the world going to do?

5- Obey the laws that are placed over you. I Peter 2 says,

For the Lord's sake, obey every law of your government:... (I Peter 2:13 TLB)

And back to Romans 13,

So those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will follow. (Romans 13:2 TLB)

The policemen do not frighten people who are doing what is right. The policemen is sent by God to help you. If you are doing something wrong, you ought to be afraid.

6- Pay your debts. Romans 13 says,

Pay to everyone whatever he ought to have: pay your taxes and import duties gladly, obey those over you and give honor and respect to all those whom it is due.

Pay all of your debts except the debt of love for others-never finish paying that! (Romans 13:7,8 TLB)

You may ask what that has to do with national unity? The financial strength of a nation is proportionate to the credit of its people. I don't believe this verse is placed here accidentally. Credit represents integrity. Every time we sin, Jesus goes to the Father and says, "Charge that to My account." God never fails to do it, because Jesus' credit rating is perfect. He always pays.

7- Exercise love in every situation.

If you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself you will not want to harm or cheat him, or kill him or steal from him. And you won't sin with his wife or want what is his, or do anything else the Ten Commandments say is wrong. All ten are wrapped up in this one, to love your neighbor as yourself. (Romans 13:9 TLB)

God's Truth About Rebellion and Patriotism

In closing, is America a Christian nation? No. America is not a Christian nation. But, America is a nation founded on Christian principles. Christian principles have dominated our legal system. Christian principles have shaped our moral codes. Christian principles have assured us of our basic freedoms. Even more important, this nation only 50 years ago was the hope of the Christian faith. It was God's mission base to send Christ to the four corners of the world. Today, many of our missionaries are no longer welcome in other parts of the world. Sometimes they are not welcome because of resistance to the gospel and sometimes because of resistance to Americans.

In many ways, much of what made this nation spiritually great is gone. Men and women, alike, in government have bowed before humanistic idols and worshipped. "One nation under God" is teetering, because that one nation is not under God as once it was. As we fall prey to Satanic pressures, make unholy alliances with our enemies, waver on our support of God's nation Israel, we stand on the precipice to be sure of losing our mantle of spiritual leadership.

But mark this, this nation was ordained of God as a nation to proclaim the truth. This nation's heritage is one of honor, dignity and righteousness. This nation is worthy even today, Scripturally, of your respect. This nation holds memories of being mightily used of God. Our eyes should still water when we say the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. There should still be a lump in our throats when we sing the national anthem. This nation is God's, and it, like God, is not dead. You and I must begin caring again for America, crying again for America, singing again about America, praying again for America. Satan says this is foolishness, but Satan is a liar.

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly "hear" his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It's been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that's a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you "hear" as you read.

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