

REAL CITIZENSHIP

HOW *YOU* CAN MAKE AN IMPACT
ON YOUR CULTURE



TIM ECHOLS

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

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P R E F A C E

Real Citizenship refers to a worldview that we are both earthly citizens and, more importantly, heavenly citizens. But they are not mutually exclusive. We exercise our duties concurrently, keeping both kingdoms in mind. This book is a primer on how to get started in that process and how to make it a life skill.

Ask a typical man or woman on the street for their opinion about politics or government, and you're bound to get some combination of a blank stare, opinions regurgitated from the media, and apathy—lots of apathy. It is difficult to say whether the man or woman on the street's apathy is a product of their being uninformed or whether they are uninformed because of their apathy; nevertheless, making a difference is the last thing on their mind. The reality is that most people think it can't be done, and certainly not by one person, and most certainly not by a person who is too young to vote.

I feel comfortable in assuming that because you are reading this book, you are someone who is at least concerned about the state of America's political and popular culture. But you may, nonetheless, question your ability to help reverse America's spiritual, moral, and fiscal decline. So, can one person really make a difference? Is it possible for one person to make a difference if that person is not even old enough to vote? I believe that if the principles put forth in this book

are taken to heart, you and your family will become a significant part of the solution to America's woes. I believe this book will help you become a better steward of the God-given opportunity of living in America. Most importantly, I believe this book will challenge you to live a life more pleasing to God.

Is the term "real citizenship" presumptuous? Perhaps. But as I will lay out in the coming pages, believers in Christ are called to something greater than simply remembering to vote. As we live out Christ-like consideration for our fellow citizens, Christ-like civility and respect for the procedures and people we'll encounter in our civic involvement, and Christ-like charity which can only come from placing our hope in Christ, we will be examples of "real" citizens. Stated differently, as believers we are called to something greater than electoral or legislative success—we're called to be faithful to our citizenship in heaven.

Each chapter concludes with a "chapter challenge" section to spur you to make some application of the principles presented in the text. I hope you will finish each and every challenge. May God bless you as you seek to honor Him with your citizenship.

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CHAPTER ONE

WHERE POLITICS FALLS SHORT

SPIRITUAL REVIVAL IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Watch any television or internet news and you can quickly be overwhelmed with the problems facing our society: education, the border, inner cities, COVID-19, race relations, and the family. Respected cultural commentator Dr. James Dobson asserted that the social problems we are experiencing in America are too big and too deep for us to humanly solve. He said that spiritual revival is the answer to America's problems. The societal drift away from God has accelerated, and our culture is growing more and more hostile towards Christianity. The modernist movement has been a poison pill within our society, turning our citizens against the best ideas of Western Civilization. Inspired by the works of Darwin and Freud, secular humanists have attacked the spiritual foundation of all we hold dear. Church attendance is down and more and more families are struggling to stay together. That brings us back to revival.

Revival as portrayed in Scripture is a foreign concept to most of us. It has long been a tradition in certain southern denominations to spend a week each year doing "revival" services. But that is not the revival Dr. Dobson was talking about. The revival that America needs is a massive return to God—another Great Awakening of sorts. Biblical

revival is accompanied by repentance, brokenness, and people coming to Christ. These three fruits—not clever marketing of a man or a ministry—would bring about societal change. There have been pockets of revival in America, limited by denomination or geographic locale, but there have been none that have occurred across denominations or nationwide, at least not in my lifetime. It is for this kind of revival that we all need to be in prayer.

With the aid of technology, many groups meet for prayer over a conference call or video chat. Others gather in person in both small and large groups and call upon the Lord. At TeenPact, we conduct prayer walks throughout the Capitols. Prayerlessness is a sin that has dominated my life, and only God knows the price I have paid and will pay for it. You may feel the same way. In those times when prayer has been a priority, great things have happened: Family Resource Network, the ministry I founded in 1993, was born in private prayer; TeenPact was conceived by a group of men I prayed with at the Georgia Capitol; my election to statewide office was undergirded by a Sunday-night prayer team, and at various times God has revealed direction for my family through prayer. One would think with all of these experiences I would pray more. But no, I allow the busyness of life to crowd out this most important of Christian disciplines.

In II Chronicles 7:14, God says, “If My people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” This verse explains why I have linked revival to prayer. God promises to heal our land if we, His people, will

pray. Certainly, this failure to pray must be the Achilles' heel of the American church. And we cannot expect revival or radical change in our society if we do not correct this situation.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Start a weekly prayer group with some friends in person, by video chat, or by conference call.
2. Read Sammy Tippett's book, *The Prayer Factor* (Moody Publishers, 1988).
3. Begin journaling your prayers each day, and take the time to write down prayer requests that others share with you.
4. Explore the idea of taking a prayer walk. See the book *Prayer-walking* (Steve Hawthorne, Graham Kendrick, Creation House, 1993).
5. Begin to pray daily for revival, on behalf of those in authority, and for your family.

CHAPTER TWO

NO SUCH THING AS A JUNIOR CHRISTIAN

THE SPIRITUAL CAPACITY OF YOUTH

There is something you should know about me right upfront. I believe in the spiritual capacity of young people. Do you? Not sure? Well, ask yourself if you think children and teens receive a “kid’s portion” of God’s Spirit when they become Christians. Years ago, my friends at Youth With A Mission (YWAM) persuaded me that children and teens have a full measure of the Holy Spirit and that God can use these younger Christians in powerful ways. Ever since that time I have been challenging young people to trust God for big things.

One ramification of this truth is that God has a role for all believers. As Ephesians 2:10 states, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Some of these good works are for our children and teens.

We live in a culture that expects very little from young people. In fact, our culture presumes that teens will be disrespectful, disinterested, and irresponsible. Thus, it follows that our culture doesn’t generally challenge youth. This low view of our youth can seep into the church with the result that our young people miss out on God’s blessings that come from obedience. The task of reaching this culture

for Christ is daunting, so giving our youth a pass and encouraging them to just enjoy their teen years will not move us closer to fulfilling the Great Commission.

What should trouble us is the lack of young people in our country who want to be preachers, ministers, and missionaries. Those in the pulpit—whether real or virtual—need to speak hard truth to church members, preach the gospel to any who will listen, and equip the saints to be salt and light in their world.

In his book, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager*, Thomas Hine states, “Teenagers must be treated and educated as the young adults they are and encouraged to participate more fully in our social, economic, and political life.”

A foundational theme verse in TeenPact is I Timothy 4:12: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” David Alan Black emphasizes the same concern I have in his book, *The Myth of Adolescence: Raising Responsible Children in an Irresponsible Society*. Black writes, “We have the power and presence of the living Lord available to us, the inner working of the Holy Spirit, plus the divinely-inspired handbook of instruction on the home and family. Could it be that we have ignored what he has to say to us?” Black also correctly points out that,

“...the theory of adolescence undermines the Christian understanding of human nature. It underscores the modern disinclination to treat a person as responsible for his or her actions. When we assert the “fact” that teenagers are to act like irresponsible children rather than like responsi-

ble adults, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. And when school, church, and family treat 16-year-olds like young children, teenagers act in ways that justify that treatment.”

TeenPact believes young people are really young adults, who are capable of enormous impact now and later.

Have you ever heard a parent say something similar to this, “I’ll be happy if my kids stay off drugs, out of jail, and don’t make me a grandparent”? I know young people make mistakes and they do not always live up to our expectations, but maybe we have set our standards too low. I believe we need to instill in our children the need for them to engage the culture, to impact America and the world, and to serve God with their lives. I know we cannot guarantee how they turn out, but I believe we should seek God’s face about their purpose and the role we can play to prepare them for the future.

In TeenPact, we tell students that God wants them—all of them. We challenge students to dream big and believe that God can use them to change the world. We ask students to step out of their comfort zones. For some, that will mean doing a better job in their own family—cooperating with parents or serving brothers and sisters. For others, it may mean changing their ambitions or taking seriously God’s leading in their lives. We have seen students become effective legislative aides in their state Capitols at the age of 15. We have watched tireless campaign workers who are only 14 years old. We have seen eight-year-olds learn how to speak in public. A handful of our TeenPact graduates have been elected to various public office positions, including five who were elected to state legislative positions. We have

seen young people of all ages pour out their hearts to God in prayer. While these are some of the things we teach, students need to be challenged in a variety of areas and on a variety of issues, learning to trust in Christ all along the way. I believe that we must prepare the next generation of political, business, and cultural leaders. Scripture admonishes the older to train the younger (Titus 2:3-5), and our failure to do so will have grave consequences on our country's future. God has important work for the next generation of believers to do—starting today.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Read Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For* (Zondervan Publishing Co., 2002). See also purposedriven.com.
2. Take a spiritual gifts test and ask God to show you more ways to use your gifts. See lifeway.com for a great booklet containing a number of tests like this.
3. Read the stories of Daniel, Esther, and Joseph again, and ask God to speak to you about your future. But be careful—He might do it!

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING YOUR MIND

WORLDVIEW MATTERS

“**F**ind Your Reason.” That’s the slogan for Worldview Academy, a ministry co-founded by my friend, Randy Sims. Randy and his crew believe that students face tremendous challenges in our world today: a popular culture that encourages selfishness and mediocrity; an education system based on atheistic or New Age assumptions; leaders driven by a lust for power and personal gain. Who can stand firm at such a time? I agree with Randy that only the Christian who courageously pursues a deeper relationship with Christ, learning to think His thoughts and follow Him, will be able to make a real impact.

So, how worldly is your thinking? It’s difficult to tell until you compare it to something else. Ask yourself: “How does the way you approach life differ from that of your friends who do not have a relationship with Christ?” What we are talking about is the importance of having a biblical worldview. Organizations and churches are offering intense training, books, and seminars in an effort to help the next generation think and reason from a biblical framework instead of a secular worldview. Often students and adults alike are surprised to see how much the culture, media, and secular educational institutions have inhibited their ability to think and reason from the Bible.

Having a biblical worldview is like looking at issues through a pair of glasses—biblical glasses, so to speak. Let's consider a simple illustration of this principle. You are asked by a sincere friend whether you think abortion is wrong. The popular culture insists that, when it comes to abortion, women should be in control of their bodies and that this principle trumps all others. How should you answer? And more importantly, what biblical principle is operational? The counsel of Scripture—both Old and New Testaments—is that God places the baby in a woman's body and that no government or individual should destroy innocent human life, so the right conclusion is that a Christian cannot support abortion. Having the biblical principle in your warehouse allows you to retrieve it and take the appropriate action. While going back to the Bible for clarity sounds simple, it really is not. The American Christian culture has a blurry biblical vision on many issues and concerns. Many Christians disagree on the proper role of government, when or if abortion should be allowed, what is the acceptable level of taxation, when is civil disobedience appropriate, and a myriad of other issues. While putting forth positions on these issues is beyond the scope of this chapter, every Christian needs to develop the habit of going to the Bible in search of how God addresses the issues of the day.

Eventually, as you spend time in God's Word and become saturated with it, biblical reasoning becomes easier. I tell young people to stock their mental warehouse with the Bible and its principles so that when blurry issues or situations arise, their mind can go to the warehouse and pull the appropriate biblical principle.¹ Let's consider

a simple illustration that Gary Ezzo uses. You are sitting in the back of a crowded room. An elderly person walks in looking for a seat, but no seat is available. What should you do? And more importantly, what biblical principle is operational? Scripture explicitly tells us to honor our mother, father, widows, etc. So the right thinking is that you would offer the elderly person your chair.

The same principle is true on more complicated issues, such as gender issues or the legalization of drugs, although considerably more reasoning may be required. For this reason, I highly recommend that students spend a minimum of a year studying argumentation and debate. If possible, participate in a cross-examination debate league, moot court program, or mock trial club.² Even if the organization is secular, reasoning skills will be taught that will prove helpful.

Stocking your mind's warehouse with biblical principles is something you can start doing right now. Many of our founding fathers were good at reasoning public policy issues from the Bible. For this reason, I suggest a thorough study of certain writings, sermons, and speeches from the founding and colonial periods.³ A more current resource I recommend is listening to some of the classic messages of Billy Graham, the famous evangelist who shared the gospel with more people than probably anyone that has ever live. Developing a reference library of good materials that one can refer to as situations arise is a good idea as well.⁴

¹ See Gary Ezzo's treatment of this in *Growing Kids God's Way* (Micah 6:8 Publishers, 1997).

² Consult the Bar Association of your state for more details about their young lawyers' programs. Most schools have literary programs that include competitive debate. Homeschoolers can get involved through ncfca.org or stoausa.org.

³ See face.net for their famous "red and blue books" that contain copies of originals.

Finally, I recommend participating in an intense training program like Worldview Academy, The Colson Center, Summit Ministries, Patrick Henry College Summer Camps, and, of course, TeenPact.⁵ Parents are permitted to attend some of these programs with their students. These intense programs often are more beneficial than books because they provide an inspirational environment. Participants see their peers getting excited about engaging the culture and that excitement rubs off. Highly-trained speakers challenge students out of their comfort zones. Most importantly, biblical principles are effectively put on the shelves in the warehouses of their minds.

As you seek God's perspective on the issues of the day, I know He will lead you to resources that can help you and your family.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Attend a Christian worldview camp. See worldview.org for more information.
2. If you are in college, join isi.org to start receiving free literature that will help you develop your mind.
3. Begin memorizing Scripture daily.
4. If you are interested in journalism, attend the World Journalism Institute. See world.wng.org.

⁴ I suggest Josh and Sean McDowell's book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Nelson Reference, 1999), and David Noebel's book, *Understanding the Times* (Harvest House, 1994).

⁵ See worldview.org, summit.org, family.org, phc.edu, and teenpact.com, respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNICATING SACRED TRUTHS IN SECULAR SETTINGS

DON'T FORGET THE GREAT COMMISSION

Unfortunately, just thinking biblically is not enough. Christians are ambassadors to a lost and dying world; therefore, we must learn to communicate biblical truth in a relevant, attractive manner. My friend David Barton introduced me to the importance of this concept. The idea is that we should know our audience and adjust our speech accordingly, without compromising our core values. For example, if you have the opportunity to speak to a secular audience for a secular purpose (e.g., a lecture on horseback riding, babysitting, or making a model car), then rid your remarks of religious words. Think through how you might communicate a given biblical principle without citing chapter and verse in the Bible. I am not saying that you should not seek opportunities to share your testimony, the gospel, or even something as direct as “Steps to Peace with God” or “The Four Spiritual Laws.” You should always pray about evangelistic opportunities and be ready to share on a moment’s notice. Rather, I am thinking of opportunities you might have in front of a civic club, a classroom experience, a legislative committee hearing, or even a one-on-one meeting with a person. Regardless, you need to be ready to share your biblical worldview in a secular manner. This is not as easy as it sounds.

For example, how could you communicate the devastating impact of an abortion without saying “God hates abortions”? If your goal is to persuade your audience (which it usually should be), then you must ask some questions: Where is most of my audience spiritually? What part of the country am I in? How old is my audience? What organizational affiliation do they have? How familiar are they with medical technology, such as ultrasounds? How am I being introduced? Will I have a chance to respond to questions? Will I have a chance to speak to the group again? How should I dress? You get the idea. Your ability to influence the audience towards one or all of your positions represents a stewardship opportunity. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” If God has given you opportunities to get in front of people, it is incumbent upon you to take the good works opportunity soberly. As the verse above reminds us, God prepares many good works ahead of time specifically for you to do. Have you ever asked yourself, “What if I don’t do these good works?” Maybe if you do not obey, God will have to recruit someone else in your place.

This verse applies to more than just public speaking opportunities or personal appointments, I believe. There are what may seem like tiny things God wants us to do and in which we need to be faithful: maybe that is good works at home that God has uniquely prepared for you; maybe something at church or on a mission trip; possibly something as simple as writing a note or making a phone call, by which God wants to bless others through you. Regardless, the key thing to

remember here is that some of these good works will require you to think strategically and with a goal towards reaching an audience.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Begin by writing an outline of how you would communicate the plan of salvation to a totally secular audience without actually quoting a chapter and verse from the Bible. ***Hint:*** you can use biblical principles or concepts, just put them into a speech format.
2. Now, prepare an evangelistic presentation of only three minutes for a church audience realizing that some in the audience are not Christians. Use only four Bible verses in the presentation. Practice at home.
3. Begin compiling clever and compelling phrases that you hear other speakers use to communicate biblical truth to a secular audience. Remember to give them credit if you use their quotations.
4. Order David Barton's video, "Communicating Biblical Truth to a Secular Audience" at wallbuilders.com.

REVISING AMERICAN HISTORY

THE BATTLE OVER AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

By any objective measure, the United States of America is the freest, most prosperous nation in the history of the world. As a result, our country is deemed a remarkable success even though it has its faults. Accordingly, members of various schools of thought consistently clamor to either claim credit for themselves or deny credit to others for America's success. One outworking of this struggle is the political left's determination to obscure America's religious heritage. Public school textbook authors are removing any references to our Christian heritage. Entire generations of school kids are graduating from high schools ignorant about some of the most important facts in our American experience. Even those attending Christian, private, or homeschools are often given just a minimal dose of information due to academic pressure from competing subjects.

College education in America has deteriorated from the acquisition of a body of knowledge to merely the "cultivation of abstract instrumental rationality—divorced from any content and divorced from any end."⁶ For this reason, I highly recommend that families supplement their student's education with additional historical mate-

⁶ Mark C. Henrie, isi.org.

rial, regardless of what textbook is being used. The entire family can be exposed to this information via books, electronic media, or even family read-aloud times. In any case, they need a steady diet of historically-accurate facts, stories, and inspiring biographies. Where can you find this information? Every home should have a big red and blue book sold by the Foundation of Christian Education.⁷ These reference books contain incredible copies of original letters, manuscripts, sermons, speeches, and other writings that have been all but lost from modern culture. Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) offers any number of books available at isi.org as well. ISI specializes in books that promote order, liberty, and justice.

America's history is being revised by atheists, multiculturalists, and humanists, many posing as nice people. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves on the outside looking in. Translation: the direction of our society is at stake. There are people who want to see America go in a different direction. You can counter this by making it a habit to gain a working knowledge of America's Christian heritage. Be prepared to use that knowledge in conversations, speeches, and even letters to your local paper. We cannot afford to forget all that God has done for us.

Finally, I recommend that older teens take a mission trip out of the country. All of my children have done this. Your student will return with a greater appreciation for America, our systems, our freedom, and the prosperity our country has enjoyed.

⁷ See face.net for how to order. Also, providencefoundation.com and wallbuilders.com supply great historical material.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Purchase a red or blue book from face.net and begin reading portions to your family on a regular basis.
2. View videos produced by David Barton of WallBuilders or Steven McDowell of the Providence Foundation.
3. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about some aspect of America's Christian heritage.
4. If you attend school, use the topic in a speech or paper or find other ways to expose others to the truth.
5. Join Intercollegiate Studies Institute at isi.org to receive free journals and materials.
6. Check out possible mission trip opportunities from your church or another organization you trust.

THE POWER OF ONE

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You probably have heard that one person can make a difference, but maybe you doubt that it could be true of you. My friend Randy Hicks introduced me to the phrase “the power of one.” It refers to the incredible change that can occur when one person becomes obedient to God and His plan for one’s life at that moment. In my chapter on courage, I share several examples of how certain people made incredible impacts from their single jump into the culture war that is raging. But it can happen on a much smaller scale as well.

In the early days of TeenPact, I took a Delta flight to Colorado Springs for a Focus on the Family broadcast taping that I was asked to do. The video feature on the flight was a variety of news, entertainment, and sports. Included in all of this was a Mariah Carey music video that was incredibly lewd. When I got back to Atlanta, I emailed a complaint to Delta via the company’s web site. A generic response came back apologizing for the “impression” I received, with a name at the bottom. I wrote again asking this person to personally view the video and confirm that the video in fact accurately reflected the values of Delta Air Lines. I was concerned because so many of our young people fly Delta around the country as they lead TeenPact classes. A few days passed and this time, an email came back saying that they had forwarded my

comments to their marketing department. Finally, I received another email with the words I had hoped to hear:

“Again, let me restate that it is always a question of judgment on what is considered acceptable content. The video presented did meet broadcast television editing requirements. Traditionally, we follow and in most cases exceed broadcast television standards when displaying content on our aircraft. However, with the above stated, we agree that this does not meet Delta’s standards and have removed the video in question from display onboard and are reviewing the music video policy with our programming service to ensure that this content is not presented in the future.”

Not only did Delta pull the video from all of their airplanes, but they pledged to make sure “this content” was not presented in the future. So, three emails from me resulted in thousands and thousands of people being spared that inappropriate music video. Unfortunately, Delta and all airlines now show dozens of R-rated films with very inappropriate content on just about every plane.

Countless times I have challenged a grocery or convenience store manager to remove or cover inappropriate magazines. Once, I even persuaded a tanning salon (no, I was not a customer) to remove a giant poster of a scantily-clad woman from their front window. This is getting more and more difficult to do with success, but it shouldn’t stop us from letting people know that explicit content offends our

sensibilities and contributes to the exploitation of women.

You can be a catalyst for this kind of change as well. But you have to exercise courage. Learn to challenge evil and speak up for decency. Ask God for the courage, creativity, and influence to make an impact. You never know when He will open the door for you.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Is there evil occurring in your community? Is anyone speaking out against it? Write a letter to the editor of your local paper exposing evil in your community. Call the community to action.
2. Look for opportunities to speak out, and do it often and effectively.
3. Compile a list of people who have demonstrated the “power of one” and interview them to discover why they do what they do.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COURAGE IS CAUGHT

THE SECRET TO BECOMING A PERSON OF COURAGE

There are many characters in the Bible that give me courage, but three of my favorites are Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel. You should read their stories over and over again.

Nehemiah, a Jew in exile, served as cupbearer to a pagan king. He was compassionate and prayerful and obviously good at his job because the king and queen listened to him, granted his requests, and released him from his responsibilities so he could go back to Jerusalem and help rebuild the city. That successful effort helped lead to a spiritual revival in Jerusalem led by a priest named Ezra. Nehemiah grew in courage all along the way. You'll have to read the rest for yourself.

Esther, also a Jew in exile, won a beauty contest and became the queen of a pagan king. Through her loving uncle, she discovered a diabolical plot to exterminate the Jewish people and, through her courage and God's favor, she was able to stop that plot and save her people.

Daniel of lions' den fame is probably the most well-known of these three biblical characters. Daniel and his three friends stood strong under pressure as young men risking their lives for their convictions. God continued to bless Daniel and he became an advisor to a pagan king. He continued to demonstrate courage over and over again.

We can read about it, and we should, but we recognize that courage is something that is hard to teach. You can read stories on it, write papers about it, and even aspire to have it. But more often than not, you attain a courageous spirit by being around people who already have it. For me, it was caught from people mentoring me in my early 30s: a pastor named John, who alerted me to the plight of the unborn; a congressional candidate named Dan, who ran for office and showed aborted babies in his campaign commercials, which incited the entire city of Atlanta; a woman named Nancy, who ran for mayor of Atlanta and was unafraid to tackle a corrupt system of politics.

I cannot overstate the importance of seeing courage firsthand. Why is courage so important? As courage takes root in your life, you are not afraid to take a stand for your convictions or even risk losing important positions.

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned a congressional candidate named Dan who ran controversial ads on television in the 1992 elections. He was a man called by God to use a position—this time as a candidate for U. S. Congress—to bring God’s truth to the forefront of the culture. Dan Becker learned that federal election law required owners of television stations to air commercials unedited, regardless of their content. So, Dan decided to run for office, make commercials that depicted the truth about abortion, and show them on television. Dan used the campaign as a way to disseminate the truth about the devastation of abortion. And the TV stations were not happy. Under normal circumstances, they had been able to discriminate, edit, and even refuse to run pro-life commercials. Now, however, this federal

campaign law did not allow them to edit even one second. Dan Becker (and I, serving as his campaign manager) ran graphic pictures of the horrific consequences of abortion to the disbelief of a previously indifferent city.

People were stunned that someone would do this. Well-wishers told Dan that he was throwing away a great opportunity to be elected. Even certain pro-life groups thought we had gone too far. However, when God burdens men like Dan Becker with a mission, they are compelled to carry it out.

Dan's campaign efforts were an anomaly, and not something I would recommend except under rare circumstances. We need strong Christians to run for open seats and win campaigns, and that usually means raising money, deploying technology, and engaging in old-fashioned door-to-door work meeting voters. Winning elections means having a place at the table and wielding influence. For me, politics started when I was young: helping my grandad run for office; running several city and county campaigns for friends; and then eventually running my own campaign for the Public Service Commission.

Your high school and college years provide great opportunities to identify and learn from courageous people. As you become a job seeker, my friend Jimmy Collins in his book *Creative Followership* suggests that you find a boss to work for whom you admire and respect. He likens it to "hiring a boss", and says that his experience working for Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-A, brought him a lifetime of fulfillment. His book is well worth the read.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Ask God to build courage into your life by giving you the opportunity to work closely with a person of great courage.
2. Read and/or have your children read books from the G. A. Henty series.
3. Make a list of the three things you most fear doing in your life. Pray about the list and call on God for the courage you might need to accomplish these items.
4. Order *Creative Followership* by Jimmy Collins and start looking for a great boss.

CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU

LEARNING THE ART OF SERVING

Winning the culture war is a mammoth task which will require strategic partnerships, shared resources, and a servant spirit. Unfortunately, Christians have had a hard time with these. For most of my adult life, I have had a hard time with these. But in my late thirties, I began to form partnerships and develop alliances. I tried to serve other ministry leaders as often as possible. Today, in my role as an elected official, it is more important than ever.

The older I get, the more convinced I am that we need to make serving and blessing others a top priority in our lives. After all, Jesus Christ came to serve, right? If He did, certainly we should.

Regardless of your age, there are those in your life you can serve, even beyond the obvious (e.g., spouse, parents, and children). When I was 16 years old, Truett Cathy presented me with a “Student of the Year” award at his Rotary Club meeting. After the meeting was over, he asked me to come by his office just down the street. There, he presented me with a tape recorder, a set of Zig Ziglar’s “See You At The Top” tapes, a set of Charles Stanley’s “Supernatural Success” tapes, and a check for \$50. He asked me to listen to the tapes and promised

they would help make me a successful person. I did. I still remember hearing Zig Ziglar say, “You can get everything you want in life if you will just help enough other people get what they want.” While that is not biblical advice per se, it is generally true. Unfortunately, I waited a long time before I actually began to apply Zig’s advice—a very long time. Too bad for me, because once I adopted this as a life principle, I saw a drastic change in my relationships. Let me explain.

I am talking about pro-actively looking for ways to bless others, serve others, and make their projects and activities successful. If it is within your power to help them, you probably should. I am not talking about losing your focus, getting distracted, or meddling. You must be able to genuinely help, not just get in the way. Sometimes unwanted advice is actually hidden criticism.

In 2001, my family experienced a crisis with a health problem my wife had. The crisis resulted in Windy’s needing a year of semi-bed-rest and extraordinary care from our family. Needless to say, this had the potential to have a negative impact on my ministry. Fortunately for me, four young employees surfaced to give me aid: Curtis Whatley, his sister Jenny, Cindy Cha, and my personal assistant for that year, Gabe Bratcher. Even though these young men and women were on the payroll, they served tirelessly beyond the call of duty. I could not ask too much of them, it seemed. Nothing prompted a complaint or grumble. They anticipated my needs and those of the ministry. We had a record year, despite my family’s difficulty. This effort on their part demonstrated their character. Their confidence grew, and together we moved our ministry forward in a year that it could have suf-

ferred. I will always be grateful for their help during that difficult time.

Likewise, I try to work towards the success of others. Sharing my mailing list, my money, my advice, and even my employees proves to people that I care about them, their organization, and their mission.

When I can, I actually promote others in public or on the air through my talks, in print, and in radio appearances. People often find out that I have mentioned them or their ministry, and they really appreciate it.

If I have an opportunity to host or serve someone, I strive to do an excellent job with an aim toward making them more successful. Maybe they need an introduction to someone, a referral, a meal, or just being walked to their car. Whenever possible, I look for ways to make their life work easier, more successful, and reflective of Christ.

For many reading this book, this can start at home with your family. Ask yourself, “How can I make my siblings more successful? How can I make my parents’ lives easier? How can I build my family’s name and reputation?” Proverbs 22:1 says, “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches...”

You may feel inadequate right now to do some of the things I have suggested. But over time, your relational assets will grow. Develop a list of key contacts. Get in the habit of asking people how you can help them or even how you can pray for them. Begin to anticipate the needs of those around you and do things without being asked. Start giving your money (regardless of the amount) to the legitimate needs you see around you. Help whomever you can.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Make a list of needs of the people closest to you. Think through the things you can do for them that might be helpful. Pay close attention to any feedback they give. Adjust your help accordingly.
2. Ask your parents or your children for a list of three things you could do to make their lives easier. (Be careful to prevent unmet expectations; it is better to under promise and over deliver.)
3. Begin to notice small things you can do quickly that make the lives of others easier: returning a shopping cart that has been left in a parking lot; giving an apple or bottle of water to a homeless person you might pass on the street or at the end of an exit ramp; picking up after yourself or others at home without being asked; publicly praising other people, etc. There are thousands of these things you can do without spending any money or more than a minimal amount of time. It is a mindset and lifestyle.
4. **Hint:** Be careful. Avoid flattery! Learn the difference between meaningful praise and deceitful flattery. This merits further study. See Gary Smalley's book, *The Five Love Languages* (Moody Publishers, 1996), concerning meaningful praise.

CHAPTER NINE

WHAT IS “MENTORING” ANYWAY?

THE IMPORTANCE OF “TAKING PEOPLE WITH YOU”

My convictions about the importance of mentoring really began to develop during my freshman year of college when the president of the Baptist Student Union offered to disciple me, along with another friend. I knew there were 12 disciples who followed Jesus, and I could sing the little song about it, but that was the extent of my knowledge. Foolishly, I turned down the offer, and it was not until years later that my good friend Dave Hill, of the Christian Business Men’s Committee (CBMC) of Atlanta, took me through some excellent material. Through our weekly meetings, Scripture memory, and prayer times, God prepared me to lead a national ministry. Dave Hill and the men of the Atlanta CBMC chapter took me with them on evangelistic appointments, prayer breakfast meetings, and even retreats in order to build into me certain character qualities, and I am forever grateful. After I went into full-time Christian ministry, others did more of the same. Martin Morgan, Mark McGoldrick, and Kevin Young of Cru’s high school ministry, Student Venture, spent countless hours training me by example and formal instruction. Upon the creation of my own ministry, my dear friends John F. Rowell and

Dr. Ron Crews did even more of the same. Tagging along with these men, watching them work, and having them speak into my life has had more impact on me than anything else in my life (other than receiving Christ as my personal Savior).

So, I have adopted this same commitment to II Timothy 2:2 with my own children, employees, and staffers. Our ministry is built on this apprenticeship, disciple-making model. We try to bring people along, giving them greater and greater opportunities as faithfulness is demonstrated. We stress humility, teachability, and respect.

This idea of being mentored is not a new one. Jesus selected a small group of disciples and spent untold hours with them. Assuming a mentor is trustworthy and worthy of emulation, this type of training is unquestionably superior to book knowledge. Along those lines, I highly recommend that, before a young person is released into the custody of an adult mentor, due diligence is performed on the adult’s character and background. We live in a perverted world.

Other apprenticeship opportunities are available that might not require a high level of commitment. For example, most state legislators hire students to serve as their aides or assistants. This seasonal position usually lasts only as long as the legislature is in session; nevertheless, such experiences give the student extensive interaction with elected and non-elected officials. Similarly, congressional campaigns usually have the money to hire students during the last 90-120 days of an election. These positions also put the student in regular contact with the candidate.

Your church might be a good place to look as well. Internships

with a youth or college pastor are usually available in the summer. There are sometimes even opportunities for extended mission trips that put you under the direction of a missionary.

Probably the easiest and most important mentorship opportunity is with one's own parents. When my children were growing up, I would frequently take them with me on ministry trips or even just running errands. Conversations during these times can be fruitful and life-changing. But more importantly, these times allowed me to teach and train, informally and formally, about a biblical worldview and their need to develop it.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Pray about asking someone in your area—or maybe even one of your parents or grandparents—to mentor you. (Going through a chapter of a book together each week can be fun and challenging).
2. Maybe you need to be someone else's mentor. Consider challenging a younger person in the faith to meet with you on a weekly basis.

YOU CAN BE AN EXPERT

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

My family loves the G.A. Henty adventure books. We practically own the whole set. One common trait of almost every Henty lead character is expertise in some area. Maybe it is a language skill, superb ability with a weapon, great speaking ability, or a keen intellect. In addition, all of them are faithful, even in the little things. There is a lesson to be learned here for all of us. We need to become really good at one or two areas, not to mention being faithful in small things. Developing this niche can make you extremely valuable to employers, potential campaigns, your church, and even your own family.

The ability to speak in public is first on my list of must-have skills. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning to communicate your faith, beliefs, and values in a one-on-one or group setting. Peter says in I Peter 3:15 to “...always [be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...” There are some great ways to develop this skill: joining a cross-examination debate team, participating in a Toastmasters group, or competing in a moot court program like the TeenPact Judicial Alumni Event. Programs like this force you to practice, which is the only way to get better. I have seen literally hundreds of students improve their speaking abilities through participating in these types of programs.

After public speaking, pick something that really interests you and try to master it. That might be raising horses, breeding dogs, mastering a language, waxing cars, studying stars, teaching swimming, playing an instrument, drawing cartoons, painting pictures, photographing weddings, arranging flowers, aiding a legislator, mowing lawns, editing books, building furniture, and the list goes on. Become highly skilled at something. This attention to excellence will pay great dividends for you down the road. I remember a friend of mine who started collecting half-dollar coins that were dated 1964 or before. He would take his skateboard from bank to bank, buying all their half-dollar coins each morning. He would keep the ones with high silver content and sell the others back at face value. He had to rent a safe deposit box to hold them eventually, and his interest in coins led to an interest in rare coins. Now, he is so good that people pay him to appraise their rare coin collections for insurance purposes.

I frequently counsel students to seek God's will about His calling for their lives. Specifically, I suggest that they ask God to direct them in the preparation that they need. By doing this, they will be ready for those good works that God has prepared ahead of time for them to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). So if God is leading a person to the mission field, they should be busy mastering language and culture skills. Maybe they should consider intentionally doing without luxuries and other American things. Learning to share the gospel with foreigners who are in America would be a good idea as well. On the other hand, God might be calling another student into law. They might consider serving as a legislative aide or working in a law office during the

summer. Regardless, I highly recommend that students pursue an apprenticeship opportunity in a field of interest. Being mentored, seeing their area of interest firsthand, and moving beyond book knowledge will accelerate the acquisition of expertise.

TeenPact's programs are built upon this apprenticeship model. Our Office Staff mentor our Interns who then mentor our Student Staff. The entire experience for our students puts them in the middle of the action at a Capitol during the legislative session. What they see, the people they meet, and the spontaneous opportunities that occur on Capitol grounds bring to life the lawmaking process more than any textbook ever could.

For me, inspiring students to be involved for a lifetime is my ultimate goal. That involvement is made even more effective by having your skills honed, so that you bring a degree of excellence to every project you are involved in.

I cannot close this chapter without emphasizing the importance of growing in your faith. Too many of us are still infants in the faith. Relying simply on Sunday school lessons to prepare you for the spiritual battles that loom ahead will leave you too vulnerable and unprepared. You must discipline yourself to do more. Let me suggest a few things:

1. Ask someone—maybe your pastor, youth pastor, or parent—to disciple you spiritually by taking you through a Bible study or Christian biography.
2. Learn how to inductively study the Bible. It would be especially helpful to use a Bible study computer tool like Online Bible or BibleSoft®. With this type of program, you can dou-

ble-click on a word and it pulls up the Greek or Hebrew equivalent with the original definitions. Learn to study entire books of the Bible and not just small portions, so you can get the full context.

3. Consider going to a Bible college for a year before you attend a secular college (if that is your intent). Getting “grounded” in God’s Word should be a priority for all Christians, especially in your teens.
4. Learn to share your faith. Completing a course like Evangelism Explosion, MasterLife, or a similar training program will equip you for a lifetime.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Master a computer Bible study program, or use tools like crosswalk.com.
2. Read a G.A. Henty book and note the expertise developed by the hero.
3. Pray about having someone meet with you on a weekly basis to help you develop your skills further.
4. Begin an inductive verse-by-verse study of Acts.
5. I recommend the ministry of International Students, Inc. in order to learn to share with international students who are visiting America. See isionline.org for more info.

HOW TO KNOW AND BE KNOWN BY ELECTED OFFICIALS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

If you ran into your state representative on the street, would you know them? More importantly, would he or she know you? We conduct our TeenPact Four Day State Classes in Capitols throughout America because we want our young people to see that legislators are just regular folks. We want them to meet and converse with their elected officials. Ideally, we want an ongoing relationship to begin.

To begin with, all legislators deserve some degree of respect and honor because of the position they hold. Even if you totally disagree with their political views, you can build a relationship with them, pray for them, and speak kindly to them. Why? First, the Bible commands us to pray for those in authority (I Timothy 2:1-2). Lifting up in prayer those who are in positions of authority, even our political enemies, shows our Christ-like love for them. Indeed, speaking kindly and treating all people with respect is not only a TeenPact distinctive, but it is what the Bible teaches us to do. Though it might please our flesh or seem right to treat certain politicians with disdain because of their personal or political faults, our hope must be in God and in the truth of His word. And practically speaking, angry Christians at the Capitol usually do not accomplish much (though anger and passion

has its proper and biblical role).

Second, building a relationship with even your most bitter legislative enemy might pay off some day. Let me explain. A former governor of Georgia was fairly hostile to traditional family values. However, I built a relationship with him when he was a State House member. He was a great speaker, very funny and generally a likeable guy. He was elected governor of Georgia, and we continued to talk with him, honor him, and introduce our students to him. He even dropped in one night and spoke at a TeenPact banquet. During his administration, the Georgia Board of Regents had developed a hostile policy to homeschool students seeking admission to state colleges: specifically, they required that each homeschool applicant take seven—yes, seven—SAT2 subject tests and score at an “Ivy-League” level. This hurdle was unfair and discriminating, but homeschoolers did not have the political muscle in the Democratically-controlled House and Senate to change it via legislation. So, I and others asked the Governor to use his political influence to correct the inequity. He did! Even up until his defeat in the next election, he continued to be our friend. Many Christians have a hard time working with people on any issue if the person is not in lock-step with them on everything. This probably hurts us more than we know. We need to learn to build relationships with people, and it may surprise us how often they are willing to help.

As Scripture explains in I Chronicles 29:11-12, “...Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all,” and Proverbs 21:1 says that God can turn the heart of the king (or the president or governor or even the legislator) “wherever He wills.” In 1994, the

U.S. Congress was considering House Resolution 6, an omnibus education bill. Unfortunately, there was an amendment passed in committee that required anyone teaching their own child to be certified in every subject they taught. This bill as amended would have placed an enormous and unnecessary burden on families who chose to homeschool their children, with possible ramifications for private schools. I quickly organized a lobbying trip of 45 parents and students. One of the Congressional offices we visited was that of notoriously liberal Representative Cynthia McKinney, an African-American Democrat from metro Atlanta. Representative McKinney was hostile to conservative public policy positions. I will never forget going into her office accompanied by two students from her district who were armed with a scrapbook, of all things. This scrapbook contained photos, mementoes, and sample schoolwork. I decided to let the two young women do all the talking. After a five-minute appointment turned to a 30-minute meeting, the encounter ended with tears coming down the Congresswoman's face. She hugged the students, said goodbye, and promised to vote against the anti-homeschooling amendment. And she did. Amazing! This Congresswoman had never met a black homeschooler. So with gentle persuasion, a friend was made on that issue.

The big idea of this chapter is to realize that these elected officials are just people like you and me. They have a life back home, problems they face, and usually a family to raise. If you will treat them the way you want to be treated, take time to get to know them and their staff, and maybe volunteer in some capacity in their district office, you might be surprised at what you can accomplish. And as I tell our

students, it is hard to win people to Christ if you cannot even carry on a conversation with them.

Regardless of their party affiliation or stance on issues, elected officials are entitled to our respect by virtue of their position. Most legislators serve for little pay and at some sacrifice financially. These part-time servants usually have full-time jobs back home in the district. Some live so far away from the Capitol that they either stay in a hotel or rent a home close to the Capitol, since commuting is burdensome. Granted, legislative sessions in most states are short (usually 30-60 days), but if you have ever had to travel away from your family, you can imagine the toll such a lifestyle has on everyone.

I have to give you fair warning, though. Some Christian activists in your state have more of an attack-dog mentality and will dismiss this approach as too diplomatic or soft. Hopefully, they can learn from your example and eventual success. May God bless you as you honor Him in your future relationships.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Do a survey of a few Christian activists you know, asking them for the top five potential enemies of Christian causes in your State House or State Senate delegation. Then, start praying for these officials and look for ways to cultivate relationships with them.
2. Order an “adopt-a-leader” kit from the National Day of Prayer task force. Begin praying for those in authority on your list.
3. Invite your State Representative or State Senator to your home to meet your family. ***Hint:*** this works better during an election cycle.

4. Bonus—do #1 again and include potential political enemies who are not elected. Begin praying for them as well.

PROXIMITY TO POWER IS POWER

LEARNING TO SERVE

One of the best ways to learn about leadership is to be near real leaders. “Near” in this case means close enough to have regular interaction with them. This may surprise you, but in our culture, those closest to power actually wield almost as much power as the person whom they serve. Consequently, one of the things we try to teach young people is that proximity to power provides you with a level of influence. Christians need more influence, not less. Thus, in the sense that proximity to power is power, we need right-thinking people, both young and old, near lawmakers, policymakers, and staff to ensure that our priorities are addressed and our ideas are considered.

David, Joseph, and Nehemiah had some measure of success with this principle. By occupying a position of service to those in authority, they exerted considerable influence that subsequently impacted families of their day. Too often, those in the Christian community are on the outside looking in. Not only do they have no place at the table, but they are not even in the house, so to speak.

If you ever go to Washington and walk through the House Office Buildings, you will see twenty-year-old staffers running Congressional offices. These aides, staffers, and interns make up the layers that

separate members of Congress from those seeking to influence them. These young people are the gatekeepers.

We encourage graduates of our State Capitol program to consider becoming a staffer for a State Representative or State Senator in their home state. I have walked in offices at some state Capitols and seen one of my former students sitting at a Representative's desk, answering his phone, responding to his constituents and deciding who gets an appointment and who does not. I have seen TeenPact graduates have the opportunity to research and draft amendments to bills that subsequently get voted into law. TeenPact students in Arizona, Hawaii, Illinois, and Missouri have had their mock bills taken up by State legislators and passed into law. I have witnessed hundreds of students work hard for a candidate, get him elected to office, and receive national attention for the impact they made. As students get close to those in power, they gain influence. If the influence is used properly, the task of implementing biblical principles can advance.

One bit of caution is in order, however. Lord Acton, a British historian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wrote, "Power tends to corrupt; and absolute power corrupts absolutely." As a person begins to lust for power and influence, he or she will be tempted to make detrimental compromises. Washington is full of interns who sacrificed their integrity to climb the ladder. There are those in authority who have and will take advantage of young people and their desire to gain influence. One should exercise extreme caution the closer you get to power. Research the person or persons you plan to work for carefully to make sure they have a good name and

reputation. Have accountability partners who can keep an eye on you and ask tough questions. Find a like-minded Christian near your job location and encourage each other when possible. The tide of moral compromise begins to pull some out to sea. Be willing to walk away if inappropriate situations arise.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Read the stories of Nehemiah, Daniel, and Joseph again—taking note of their influence.
2. Ask about Christian legislators at your State Capitol who might allow you to be an intern (pay is usually limited to a small stipend).
3. Become a volunteer at your local Congressional district office.
4. Select a candidate with character and volunteer regularly with their campaign.
5. For more on Lord Acton and his writings, visit acton.org.

SO YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED NOW: START LOCALLY

YOUR HELP MAY BE NEEDED
RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

It has been said that all politics are local. For that reason, we start training students at their own State Capitol instead of the incredibly intimidating city of Washington, D.C. When students go to their State Capitol and meet their state legislators, government becomes more personal and less intimidating. The same thing may be said, perhaps to a greater extent, about involvement with a city council or county commission.

In the early days at TeenPact, I wanted our students to leave a Capitol Class saying something like, “My dad or mom could be a State Representative!” I want students to see that such positions are attainable. I want them to leave the Capitol at the end of the week believing that Christians not only need to be in many of these positions, but can reasonably aspire, plan, and work to attain them in God’s time.

The problem with starting your civics education in Washington, D.C. is that Capitol Hill is very complex (I still get lost in the basements of those buildings myself.) You rarely see your own member of Congress, and you leave the city feeling like you have to be a millionaire to get elected to the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S.

Senate. On the other hand, going to their State Capitol for four to five days leaves students feeling like they own the place. And the reality is, we do kind of own it, don't we?

Students who get involved with campaigns for local offices can play an important role. I have seen many young people run a State House representative's race or even a mayor's race. The experience they acquire gives them a lifetime of ambition to influence the government. One of the first interns for TeenPact, Stacie Stone, actually ran for the State House in Georgia at only twenty-one years of age.

Influence is what Christians seem to be lacking these days. We are frustrated that morality and laws are moving away from biblical standards. We go to the polls to vote and have to choose between the lesser of two evils. This should not be so.

To see more immediate impact, get involved on a local level. I remember when I moved to Norcross, Georgia, just after leaving the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ. Our little town of 5,000 persons had a \$10-million budget, five city councilmen, and one mayor. A seat came open, and we talked a friend into running; he had not previously been involved in politics.

I offered to be his campaign manager and so the fun began. We bought the voting list from our county registrar, analyzed it, and then mailed personal, hand-written notes to everyone who had voted in the last three elections. Surprisingly, that turned out to be only around 700 people! I discovered that most people were apathetic, uninvolved, and uninformed. We won that election with just over 250 votes, defeating a six-term former councilmember. My friend served

two terms, and God used the experience to show us a lot. My family and friends learned about tax rates, zoning laws, mosquito eradication, and constituent services as we rallied around our councilman. And particularly relevant to this discussion, God gave me the vision for launching TeenPact.

Getting involved in campaigns and politics on a local level is the best way to begin to make an impact on your culture. I hope you will begin today!

Chapter Challenge:

1. Go to your city council or county commission meeting. Afterwards, go up and introduce yourself to each of the elected officials.
2. Participate in a program like TeenPact, Patriot Academy, or other local Christian programs on politics.
3. Sign up to help a good candidate for a local, state, or federal race.

DON'T BE THREATENED BY A LITTLE COMPETITION

LEARNING THE ART OF BLESSING OTHERS

As you are developing into a leader and fine-tuning your own ministry, you may be discouraged by competing projects or even individuals who seem threatened by your success. I am constantly amazed at how territorial we are as Christians. The idea of a little competition scares some people to the point where they can become downright ugly.

Being a fan of free-market economics theory, I am convinced that more is better in the face of an immense challenge. We need more churches, more ministries, more people sharing the Gospel, and more like-minded people running for elected office. Competition often causes people to work harder, more effectively, and more efficiently. Though our flesh wants to have a monopoly on whatever we are doing, practically speaking that inclination is usually counterproductive.

From a spiritual perspective, we are called to regard others as more important than ourselves (Phil. 2:3-5), and to concern ourselves more with God's glory and purposes than with our own. Therefore, we may not need to be convinced, but we often need to be reminded that we should do things God's way even if we fear it will not work.

In TeenPact, we actually had a ministry in a particular state that

would contact us once a year and ask us NOT to bring our program to their state. "You are not needed," they would say, "You might jeopardize our legislative agenda by bringing those kids into the Capitol." For years, we kept asking God to provide clear leadership and favor for us and to open all doors necessary for expansion into that state. Greed and pride can get the best of any of us as we seek to do God's will, but we must realize that God is strong and able to overcome any obstacle. In 2019, TeenPact finally started a class in the aforementioned state. We waited on God's timing. That is always the best plan.

Why am I writing about turf wars in the body of Christ? Because I believe that each of us can play a peacemaking role and take the lead in creating more of a team environment. Learning to compete in a friendly manner is a crucial character issue and is not just limited to Little League sports. When we see other Christians as a threat, it often brings out an ugly side of us that results in disunity and fighting within the body. Obviously, this is not attractive to those outside the church.

I highly recommend the Peacemaker series by Ken Sandee at Peacemakers Ministries. One high-ranking Washington, D.C. official appointed by President George W. Bush employed the principles put forth by Mr. Sandee. This official has told me, on more than one occasion, that much of his work in the Bush administration involved helping people work out their differences. If our students learn these principles and begin to apply them, God will use the principles in their life for a long time. At first it may only be within families and peers, but as they (and we) are faithful, God will expand their influence and

ability to bring peace amidst conflict. After all, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Chapter Challenge:

1. Examine your life for broken or damaged relationships and ask God for any action steps you should take.
2. Read Ken Sande’s book, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Baker Books, 2004). Also see peacemaker.training.com

INVOLVING YOUR CHURCH

A GREAT PLACE TO START YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

If you are like me, you have some really nice people with whom you attend church. That is why it may surprise you that the church is a modern-day sleeping giant. I think it would really surprise you how many people in your church do not even vote. Even worse, you might be stunned to see who isn't even registered to vote. Apathy has crept into the pews today, and many Christians have succumbed to the lie that they are not needed in the culture war. And that is one reason we are losing.

Aside from your immediate family, your local church is the first community you should begin to influence toward real citizenship. Generally, all that is needed is a little initiative and a servant's heart. My good friend Nancy Schaefer began what was called a "Family Concerns Committee" in her own church because she was concerned about what was happening in the culture war and its impact on the family. Through that vehicle, she kept church members and staff informed of important legislation both in her state, the U.S. Capitol, and even the United Nations. Nancy's committee idea grew, and other churches wanted something similar. Through her encouragement, many churches have mobilized their members. Maybe you could use

your leadership in something like a Family Concerns Committee in your church. These committees usually meet once a month, have a short program, and cost very little to operate.

Another great idea is to conduct a voter registration drive in your church. Young people can help staff a table and amazingly you will have 10% to 20% of your congregation register. By doing so, you make it easy for them to become better citizens.

Some have had success by asking their pastors to place special emphasis on issues at various times throughout the year. For example, observe a “Sanctity of Life” week in January around the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.⁸ Feature something special around the primary election or general election in November. The Fourth of July is always a great opportunity for a Christian action message, too.

I am always on the lookout for potential political candidates in my church as well. Maybe you know someone who would make a good mayor or city councilman or even hold a state office. Challenge them to run and offer to be on their team.

Sometimes, a pastor will be hesitant to get involved in political things, especially during the Sunday morning service. That is okay. You can offer to play a role in keeping members informed about important issues affecting the body of Christ at large. Maybe you can make announcements in Sunday School classes, set up an information table, or even produce a church-wide newsletter. My church owns a radio station, so I volunteer to do daily reports on the station’s lo-

⁸ *Roe v. Wade* was the infamous 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that effectively legalized abortion in all 50 states. The decision was announced by the Supreme Court on January 22, 1973.

cal newscast during the legislative session. It is only 45 seconds of air time, but it is a simple way I can keep believers informed about issues before the State and Federal Legislatures.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Start a Family Concerns, Right-to-Life, or similar group at your church after conferring with your church staff.
2. Call your county registrar and ask for details about setting up a voter registration drive at your church.
3. Scan your church directory for potential people you could encourage to be involved in your efforts or to run for office.

SLOW JUDICIAL ACTIVISM

THE BATTLEGROUND OF THE FUTURE

Most people agree that the courts are the battleground when it comes to moral issues. Because its members are appointed for life, literally, the Federal Judiciary is the least-responsive and least-accountable sector of government. Of course, these non-democratic (note the small “d”) characteristics would be less significant if more judges acknowledged that their constitutionally-prescribed role is to interpret legislative intent rather than to write their own law. Unfortunately, in the absence of ethical restraint on the part of judges, and without impeachment as a viable option, the best plan to make sure that good people end up on the federal bench is to make sure there is a pool of qualified prospects from which a presidential administration can choose judicial nominations.⁹

More than any of the three branches of our government—judicial, executive, and legislative—the judicial branch is least amenable to a meteoric rise to the top. Why? Probably because there are certain professional prerequisites to being a judge, though any person may conceivably be elected to serve in the other branches as long as they meet basic age and residence requirements. As a result, it is crucial to

⁹ Incidentally, there must be enough U.S. Senators who are willing to confirm those nominees, and that is one reason you often see so much energy, time, and money invested in those elections.

have a figurative farm team of judicial prospects and to make a strong judiciary a long-term priority. This is one of the reasons I started the TeenPact Judicial Alumni Event. I wanted our high school TeenPact students to have a chance to get a taste of law school and to see if they really wanted to pursue such a rigorous educational track.

The vast majority of judges are elected; this includes trial court judges and appellate court judges. These judicial candidates are attorneys, most of whom have never run for elected office before. And while judicial elections are characteristically non-partisan, the candidates most definitely approach the role with political views, philosophical convictions, and character strengths or weaknesses. You might not think the office of local trial judge is that important, but such an office provides important experience, experience that might put a person in better standing for advancement within your state or for an appointment to the federal bench. In addition, such positions can help them acquire name recognition for future political races.¹⁰

Aside from the professional rites of passage mentioned above, judicial politics is similar to legislative politics in that both usually are stair-step in progression. A simple formula for judicial politics is as follows: good lawyering + politics = judgeships. Maybe you know of a good attorney who might make a good judge. Such a person must usually have practiced law for a minimum of seven years, must pay a qualifying fee, and then, of course, must be willing to campaign for the seat. The same principles that apply to other campaigns apply here:

¹⁰ For a scholarly treatment of the judicial process, see David Barton's, *Original Intent: The Courts, The Constitution and Religion* (Wallbuilder Press, 3rd ed., 2004), available at wallbuilders.com.

develop your message, identify your voters, and get them out to vote on election day.¹¹ And these people need help to get elected; maybe you can participate as a campaign manager, as one of many committed volunteers, or as a financial supporter. Most adults who go into the voting booth wind up flipping a coin to decide which judges to vote for because the information on judicial candidates is so sparse. Christian conservatives need to be proactive in our efforts to move good lawyers into judicial politics.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Think of five Christian attorneys you know and ask them for their opinion of the current state of the judiciary. If you don't know any Christian attorneys, ask your pastor for some names.
2. Go to American Center for Law and Justice at aclj.org and look at several of the cases Jay Sekulow has worked on.
3. Call your local county voter registration office and ask when the next judicial elections will take place.
4. Go to teenpact.com and find out about TeenPact's Judicial Alumni Event.

¹¹ The Leadership Institute in Arlington, Virginia, offers some of the best campaign schools I know of. Find out more about them at leadershipinstitute.org.

HELP! MORE CHRISTIAN JOURNALISTS NEEDED

JUST ANOTHER OCCUPATION

I used to complain and criticize the media relentlessly. That is, until I started my own tiny semi-weekly Capitol newspaper (I also served as a Capitol reporter for two different Christian radio stations). And while we only produced that paper during one legislative session, I began to appreciate the challenges of producing a publication of any size: keeping good help, meeting deadlines, and managing the ongoing costs, to name a few. While I agree that journalists have an ethical obligation to be honest in their reporting, I have concluded that if you are hiring the reporters, paying the rent and buying the ink, then you have the right to determine the slant your paper will take.

Another turning point in my attitude in journalism was brought about by a talk given by Mike Farris, PhD, to a TeenPact National Convention. Farris described the importance of viewing writers, reporters, and editors as individuals. While campaigning to become Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, Mike reaped the benefits of fair and balanced reporting of his campaign, but it wasn't because the media covering his campaign was ideologically different from the media anywhere else in the country. Rather, it was primarily because Dr. Farris took the time to extend common courtesy to journalists. Even when

dealing with the media, we are not exempted from demonstrating a Christ-like attitude and proper respect.

In light of these conclusions, I believe we need to complain less and concentrate more on getting additional Christian conservatives to become reporters, photographers, and owners of media outlets. And what concerns me the most is the lack of Christian young people even aspiring to enter the field of journalism. How can we really expect to see the media become more Christian-friendly when we have no pipeline for talented young people heading that way? A pro-traditional-values media will not just happen. We must encourage more of our young people to pursue journalism as a career. And if we are constantly criticizing or complaining about the media, our children and others around us are likely to perceive the field of journalism as dirty or unworthy of a Christian's pursuit. Incidentally, this is exactly what has happened regarding politics in general. Believers view politics as dirty, full of compromise, and incompatible with the Christian life. In actuality, journalism is a much safer field in that regard. How often do you see a reporter attacked for his personal views? How many times have you seen a media personality dragged through the mud? Not often. It happens all the time in politics, though. Media professionals like Cal Thomas, Pat Robertson, and Janet Parshall are rare. And publications like *World* magazine are even rarer. If we are going to change mainstream media, we must send some of our best and brightest into newspaper rooms, radio booths, and TV stations around the country.

Not unlike the field of academia, the dominant media are largely hostile territories for Christian conservatives. So we must make sure

young journalists are ready for the opposition they will face. I highly recommend that students with a journalistic interest attend the World Journalism Institute or TeenPact Media, a new Alumni Event. These programs are two of only a handful of conservative training programs for budding Christian journalists.

I pursued and attained a graduate degree from the Grady College of Journalism at the University of Georgia. I have used that degree to write dozens of opinion-editorials for magazines, newspapers, and even the Wall Street Journal. Journalists with a Christian worldview are desperately needed—even in secular publications.

Later in my career, I started my own radio show called “Energy Matters”. The weekly radio show allows me to educate listeners, make friends, and promote a biblical worldview on energy and environmental matters.

Chapter Challenge

1. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about an issue that concerns you. Keep it short and to the point.
2. Call your local Christian radio station and ask to volunteer in some capacity so that you can learn more about broadcasting.
3. Subscribe to *World* magazine at world.wng.org to learn more about a Christian perspective in the news. Additionally, See world.wng.org for the latest schedule of classes. This program was founded by our friends at World magazine.
4. Consider attending the World Journalism Institute, TeenPact Media Training, or the Focus on the Family Institute (family.org)

5. Read ex-journalist, now Focus on the Family Vice-President of Public Policy, Tom Minnery's book, *Why You Can't Stay Silent* (Tyndale House Publishers, 2002). Pray about letting your voice be known in some capacity.

THE PREMINENCE OF CHRIST

OUR ULTIMATE DUTY

As Christians, our loyalty to Christ should trump everything, including loyalty to our country and even loyalty to our family. Therefore, knowing and honoring Christ should go to the top of our priority list as Christians and that should permeate every decision. This is the concept of Lordship. Jesus is not our genie or cosmic Santa. We serve Him, not the other way around, and we too often selectively apply this principle. But guess what? Jesus wants all of us. If you are uncomfortable with this concept, you might want to look at another religion. Biblically, there is no other option.

One of the snares awaiting politically-active Christians is the temptation to assign more loyalty to a political party than to Jesus and His precepts. Party politics can become a religion unto itself. Indeed, political parties want your time, talents, and treasures. That said, I should tell you that at press time I am very involved in the Republican Party. And there are areas where my faith and party loyalty come into conflict. The bottom line is that my political activism exists to promote a biblical worldview in political campaigns, legislative chambers, and the battleground of the culture war. Any party involvement or other affiliation that I have must help to further that agenda in the long term.

Note that I said “long term.” There are instances where I support a measure that is at least arguably neutral. That support, however, usually procures for me greater leverage in lobbying on behalf of issues that I have strong convictions about. Therefore, strategically supporting certain neutral issues can benefit your core objectives. For example, maybe you decide to support bike paths in your community. In most instances, this is not a biblical issue. However, your support of this amoral issue might allow you to build a coalition with certain individuals (e.g., environmentalists) with whom you may disagree on other issues. That collaboration on bike paths, however, can give you influence and relationships which will come into play later on other issues of deeper concern (e.g., homeschool issues or private education issues). This kind of strategic thinking is too rare in the Christian political community. Sometimes we are just too focused on our own stuff. Our people are so passionate, so convinced that their way is right, that they are unable to see the value in building coalitions. As a result, we often lose important legislative battles, leaving the biblical perspective on the outside instead of the inside.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Think of an issue that might be considered biblically neutral in your state and ponder what coalitions might be built by your involvement.
2. Check out the party platforms of the Republican, Democratic,

and Constitution Parties at their respective national websites. See which of the parties best reflects your biblical convictions.

3. Consider making a contribution to a political party or candidate to show your support.

DEVELOPING YOUR FAMILY NAME

A LEGACY OF REAL CITIZENSHIP

My purpose in writing this book is to inspire others, particularly young people, to aspire to real citizenship. One byproduct of such a pursuit is that you, and perhaps your family, will be a pillar in your city or community. But how can you help ensure that this pursuit doesn't begin and end with you? I believe it is by seeking to cultivate a good family name.

My long-time mentor, the late Truett Cathy, signed his books with Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches..." Mr. Cathy invented (as he liked to say) the Chick-fil-A sandwich and was probably the most generous person I have ever known. As a result of years of Truett Cathy's faithfulness to Christ and stellar success in the business world, the Cathy name is now synonymous with generosity, integrity, and quality in Georgia and beyond. Have you thought about your family name and what it means to others? Maybe it is tainted by the actions of a relative up the family tree. Regardless, you have an opportunity to change that. You can prayerfully seek wisdom from God on what you want your name to stand for.

Joseph Kennedy developed his family name as well as anyone in America. Granted, his family name is now synonymous with liber-

alism and personal tragedy; however, Joe Kennedy imparted to his nine children, his grandchildren, and even his great-grandchildren a vision for their family. They ascended to the heights in American government propelled by Joe Kennedy's vision and built his name into a dynasty of sorts. It wasn't always that way. The Kennedy family stuck together when it was unpopular to be Catholic in Boston; they encouraged each other and were committed to see those with the Kennedy name be successful. They worked to establish a legacy for their name, and now they guard it tenaciously.

I challenge you to do the same. Talk to your parents, grandparents, and other relatives on both sides of your family to find out the great qualities in some of your ancestors. Look for patterns, traits, achievements, and blessings from God. Maybe God will continue and even initiate some of that through you and your offspring.

I am grateful for the heritage passed to me on both sides of my family. My dad, granddad, and great-granddad were all entrepreneurs. Their encouragement and mentoring of me throughout my childhood and teen years produced in me a propensity to try new things, overcome obstacles, and compete tirelessly. On my mom's side, I gained the Tumlin fun-loving attitude that is so prominent at family gatherings. My grandpa Tumlin is a man of great integrity and character, and he always encouraged me to take the moral high ground in word and deed.

My challenge to you is to discover or develop a family mission statement. Seek God for the purpose He has for your family. Then, set your sights to accomplish that. It will mean planning, preparing, and

continuing to ask God for refinement, insight, and help.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Look around your church and community and note families of great integrity. Set up a meeting with a member of the family and inquire about their family name and any influence they have had to make their name what it is today. I think you'll be surprised that it is no accident.
2. Interview your own relatives to discover the same about your family.
3. Read a book on dynastical families like the Bush family, Kennedy family, or Adams family. Note things they did to develop their name.
4. Seek God on how He wants you to develop your name. Maybe there are things or cycles in your family's past that you want to break. Record all this in a journal.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS RUN FOR OFFICE?

GETTING INVOLVED

Christians should, and must, run for public office at all levels. The bigger questions are who, what, when, and how. Too often we encourage well-meaning believers to become sacrificial political lambs when they have no business running for a particular office. Maybe they are too ambitious for the office they choose to run for or perhaps the timing is bad. Many factors should be evaluated before launching out into the waters of running for office.

When I was only 21 years old, I turned down a Chick-fil-A operator position because I believed that one day God would have me run for statewide office. Yet it was not until I was 50 years old that I ran and won a political contest. God's timing is perfect, and it is worth waiting and preparing for.

I mention preparation because I so believe in what was demonstrated by Nehemiah, an unlikely governor appointed by a pagan leader. Nehemiah was the wine taster to a Babylonian king, and when he heard about the desperate condition of his fellow Jews living back in Jerusalem, he asked God what he might do. That plan, revealed to Nehemiah in prayer, involved a series of faith steps and bold confrontations on his part. This principle of obeying God in small things, cou-

pled with bold faith, put Nehemiah in a position to be used by God in a great way. In fact, Nehemiah's obedience and subsequent cooperation with Ezra in Jerusalem led to a great revival in that city.

In the same way, I believe our focus as Christians needs to be on obeying God now, even in the small things. That obedience allows us to providentially prepare for whatever role God may want us to play in the future. In my case, God wanted me to create and develop TeenPact before ever running for office. Preparing and training tens of thousands of young people and their families in 38 states was the specific task God had for me, and that assignment was critical to my gaining the skills and confidence to run for political office myself.

Being elected to public service is about serving the public. Granted, it often becomes just a popularity contest, but therein exists one of the biggest challenges of getting elected. Getting a district, city, or state population to entrust you with the duty of representing them is no easy task, and it should not be entered into without counting the cost, much prayer, and a multitude of counselors. Add to that the knowledge of political science and the use of technology in campaigns, and it all adds up to a lot of hard and smart work.

I often see well-meaning candidates aspire for too great an office. Running for governor, or even for Congress, the first time out is probably not a good idea unless you are somewhat famous already. Serving as a city council member or county commissioner may be the best way to get started in politics. Working on campaigns for others and attending campaign schools can help ensure that you win the seat that you stand for, and winning is very important.

The reason you want to win is that losing can dampen future opportunities. Losing a campaign, especially if in a landslide, can reflect poorly on your judgment and reputation, so you should win if you can and that requires great preparation and thought.

Christians getting involved in running for political office, winning, and then governing is important to bringing a biblical worldview to bear on public policy. That is why we must get involved at all levels—as candidates, campaign workers, and activists. As we reflect Christ and serve as salt and light in all these circumstances, we can impact our culture.

Chapter Challenge:

1. Find a good candidate and help them run for office.
2. Research all the available offices in your county and find out their duties, terms, and pay.
3. Read the first two chapters of Nehemiah, noting his availability and faithfulness.
4. If you are interested in running for office one day, attend a Leadership Institute Campaign School in Washington, D.C.

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