

## Week 1 and 2

We will be watching and discussing a teaching from Secret Church 20, "God, Government and the Gospel" by Pastor David Platt. There is a 33 page hand out that goes along with his teaching which we will be using to take notes and guide our discussion. Below is our guide through session 1 of the series. If you are interested in watching the rest, it is available at the Equipping Center or you can search and find it online.

### Session 1:

Part 1 - 4:40 start, stop at 12:40

1. Do you feel he missed any questions?
2. Which question would you really want answered?
3. Many of these if not all of these questions necessitate wisdom from God's word. Agree/Disagree? Do you ever go to God's word to find answers to questions like this?

Part 2 - Stop at 23:50

1. Words make Worlds - How much effort do you put into making sure you are being clear when you communicate? Thoughts? Questions?
2. Do you agree with David Platt when he says, "When we are attaching the name of God to someone or something we need to be really careful"?
3. Have you ever heard the phrase, "Our God given rights as Americans". Discuss what you think about this phrase, specifically in relation to attaching the name of God to something.

Part 3 - Stop at 37:21

1. Discuss what you just heard.
2. Are any of the Biblical covenants applicable to The United States of America? If so, which ones and why? If not, why not?
3. Thoughts on the phrase, "For God and country"?

Part 4 - Stop at 53:36

1. What are some primary political issues that are clear in Scripture? What are some secondary issues we often hold at a primary level?
2. Have you ever used too strong of language when talking about politics? Do you understand the importance of using correct language?
3. Are you able to remain in Christian unity with someone who has a difference of opinion around a secondary political issue?

Part 5 - Stop at 59:29

1. Upon reflection of the 13 questions given on page 27, Is there any idolatry of politics in your heart and or mind?
2. How are you feeling after thinking about all those questions?
3. David says, "We need to guard our love for Christ and unity in the church." Agree? How should this statement help guide our conversations around politics and other hot topics within our culture?

Part 6 - Stop at 1:01:55

1. Read through Philippians 2:1-11. What are the theme(s) you see within this text? How can we apply this text to the conversation concerning politics?
2. Where are you struggling on that list? This can easily go beyond the political realm.
3. In reference to Jeremiah 7:23, what is our purpose?

Part 7 - Stop at 1:10:54

1. Pray for unity as the church.
2. Do you live zealously for the spread of God's love and the glory of God's name among all nations? If so, how? If not, what can you change/do differently?
3. We are to have a fervent unshakable unity in God alone. What are some things/issues that have or are seeming to shake up our unity as believers? What can we do to guard against it?

# WHY WE GATHER

Multitudes of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are at this very moment identifying with Christ at the risk of their lives. This is why Secret Church began—to gather and pray for them and to learn from their hunger for God’s Word by spending concentrated time studying this Word for ourselves. Like them, we want to give our lives to making this Word known in the world around us.

## STUDY

We dive deep into Scripture in order to understand and respond to what God says to us in His Word.

## PRAY

We pray for persecuted believers across the globe and for the spread of the gospel to the unreached—people groups and places where there is little or no access to the gospel.

## ACT

We respond to what we’ve heard by giving for the sake of persecuted believers and the unreached.

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# GOD, GOVERNMENT, AND THE GOSPEL

## So Many Questions . . .

- How does God relate to government?
- How should Christians relate to government?
- Should we gladly submit to government, work to change government, or both, or neither?
- What if we don't agree with who the governing authorities are?
- What if we don't agree with how those authorities are governing?
- How does this apply to different types of governments in different parts of the world?
- How does this apply to Christians who are being persecuted under their government?
- Should Christians stay amidst persecution or flee from persecution?
- Is it ever right to disobey the government? If so, when?
- Should Christians work in government?
- What is justice, and how does it relate to government?
- How should a Christian in government decide what is a crime and what the punishment should be?
- Should all sin be a crime?
- If not, then what sin should (or should not) be a crime?
- Should Christians vote?
- If so, who should Christians vote for?
- What about situations where one candidate represents injustice X and the other candidate represents injustice Y?
- Should Christians align with political parties, positions, or personalities?
- If so, which party, position, or personality?
- What should Christians do when they disagree about political parties, positions, or candidates?
- Should churches exert any influence in politics?
- What does the separation of church and state mean?
- Is the United States a Christian nation?
- Is any country a Christian nation?
- Is there only one "Christian" position on political issues?

- Are some political issues more important than others?
- If so, is the level of political importance a matter of personal opinion?
- Should pastors preach about political issues?
- Should pastors endorse political candidates or parties?
- Should a Christian be for or against gun control, abortion, environmental protection, graduated or progressive tax rates based on income, same-sex marriage, capital punishment, immigration restrictions, nuclear weapons, tariffs, military spending, or universal health care?

## So Many Considerations . . .

- The breadth of issues.
  - In any country.
  - Across every country.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of issues.
  - Moral variables.
  - Economic variables.
  - Physical variables.
  - Social variables.
  - Spiritual variables.
  - Competing goods.
  - Lesser \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Inevitable trade-offs.
  - Debatable co-belligerence.
- The meaning of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Liberal, Conservative, Progressive, Right Wing, Left Wing, Alt-Right, Alt-Left, Capitalism, Socialism, Marxism, Nationalism, Zionism, Ethnocentrism, Feminism, Judicial Activism, Systemic Racism, Social Justice, Identity Politics, Privilege, Amnesty, Illegal, Undocumented, Marriage, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Family Planning, Global Warming.
  - Government:
    - The organization through which a political unit exercises \_\_\_\_\_ and performs functions.

- Politics:
  - The process of \_\_\_\_\_ people, resources, power, decision-making, and decision-implementing in a political unit.
  
- Christian:
  - Bible-believing, gospel-embracing follower of Jesus.
  
- Church (Universal):
  - The body of Christ which includes Christians from every tribe, tongue, people, nation across time.
  
- Church (Local):
  - A group of baptized Christians who are \_\_\_\_\_ to being the body of Christ to one another by coming together regularly and carrying out the functions of a biblical church.
    - Biblical Preaching and Teaching, Biblical Prayer, Biblical Evangelism, Biblical Discipleship, Biblical Membership, Biblical Leadership, Biblical Fellowship, Biblical Accountability and Discipline, Biblical Worship, Biblical Ordinances, Biblical Giving, Biblical Mission.
  
- The flexibility of language.
  - For example, “Is the United States a Christian nation?”
    - Did many of the founders of the United States “generally” believe the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Did Christian beliefs provide the foundation for many of the cultural values still held by many citizens of the United States today? \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Is Christianity of various sorts (broadly defined) the largest religion in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Does the United States government promote Christianity as the national religion? Does a person have to profess Christian faith in order to become a citizen or have the rights of a citizen of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Are a majority of people in the United States Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus (i.e., Christians)? \_\_\_\_\_.

- Is belief in Christian values the dominant perspective promoted by the government, the media, and universities in the United States today? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - For example, “Did God call {INSERT NAME} to be President/ Prime Minister/Leader of {INSERT NATION}?”
    - Is God ultimately sovereign over any leader who governs any nation? \_\_\_\_\_.
    - Does God personally endorse every leader who governs every nation? \_\_\_\_\_.
- The challenges of communication.
  - When we need sustained dialogue, we have sound bites.
  - When we need thoughtful reasoning, we have emotional rants.
  - When we need to listen first, we try to speak \_\_\_\_\_.
- The importance of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Context: The parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning.
  - Physical.
  - Cultural.
  - Social.
  - Temporal.
  - Spiritual.
- The understanding of covenants.
  - Biblical covenant: A binding \_\_\_\_\_ between two or more parties, with God as the guarantor and enforcer of the agreement.
  - Genesis 1–11: God’s covenants with all humanity.
    - The Adamic covenant.

*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill*

*the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Genesis 1:26–30)*

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:15–17)*

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)*

- A covenant of \_\_\_\_\_ grace.
  - Obey and walk with God.
  - Enjoy and work the ground.
  - Multiply through \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Noahic covenant.

*And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply,*

*increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.” Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.” (Genesis 9:1–17)*

- A covenant of common grace.
  - Expectation of \_\_\_\_\_ governance.
- Genesis 12 through Malachi 4: God’s covenants with His people.
- The Abrahamic covenant.

*Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*  
(Genesis 12:1–3)

*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give*

me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gishgashites and the Jebusites." (Genesis 15:1–21)

- A covenant of \_\_\_\_\_ grace with the nation of Israel.
- Faith in promises of blessings, land, descendants, and influence.

▪ The Mosaic covenant.

*“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. (Exodus 19:5–6)*

*And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You*



*Speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:1–17)*

*Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.” (Exodus 24:3–8)*

*And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:27–28)*

- A covenant of special grace with the nation of Israel.
  - Obedience amidst promises of God’s presence, protection, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Davidic covenant.

*Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of*

*God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.” But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’” In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David. (2 Samuel 7:1–17)*

*You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’” (Psalm 89:3–4)*

*I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him, so that my hand shall be established with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him; the wicked shall not humble him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him. I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens. If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules, if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes, but I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies.*  
(Psalm 89:20–37)

- A covenant of special grace with the nation of Israel.
  - A promise of a \_\_\_\_\_ line that will last forever.
- Matthew through Revelation: God's covenant with the church.
- The new covenant.

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall*

*each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31–34)*

*. . . for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)*

*In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:25)*

*But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . .” (Hebrews 8:6–8)*

*In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13)*

*Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. (Hebrews 9:15)*

- A covenant of saving grace for the church in all \_\_\_\_\_.
- Salvation through Jesus: the new Adam, the righteous Judge, the seed of Abraham, the fulfillment of the law, and the King from David’s line.

*For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of*

*grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)*

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. (Jeremiah 23:5)*

*Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)*

*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matthew 5:17)*

*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:32–33)*

o Understanding covenants today . . .

- God's covenants with all humanity still apply to all people in all nations.
- God's covenants with Israel do \_\_\_\_\_ still apply in the same way to all people or to any nation.
  - Laws and structures of governance were given to the specific nation of Israel in the Old Testament.

*When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it. (Deuteronomy 22:8)*

- Laws and structures of governance are not given to any specific nation in the New Testament.

*When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my*

*people, 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 heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:13–14)*

- God's covenant with the church applies to \_\_\_\_\_ Christians in every nation.
  - God calls the church in the New Testament to obey everything Christ has commanded us.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)*

- Unless an Old Testament commandment is somehow restated or reinforced in the New Testament, it is no longer \_\_\_\_\_ for Christians.

*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:18)*

- The abuse of Scripture.

*And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:1–2)*

- We must reject \_\_\_\_\_ distortions of Scripture.

*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to*

*suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:3–4)*

- We must be able to discern theological liberalism: when people call themselves Christians yet deny Scripture and orthodox teaching on the primary doctrines of Christianity.

*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:6–10)*

“Despite the liberal use of traditional phraseology modern liberalism not only is a different religion from Christianity but belongs in a totally different class of religions.”

– J. Gresham Machen

- Oftentimes in an attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ to a changing culture or appeal to an increasingly non-Christian culture.
- Oftentimes with language that appears to be biblical (though it undercuts Scripture) and claims to be \_\_\_\_\_ and contemporary (though it rehashes old heresies).
- Theological liberalism denies . . .
  - The final \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s Word.
  - God’s supernatural work in history.
  - The seriousness of sin before a holy God.
  - Biblical teaching on the person and work of Christ.
  - Biblical teaching on judgment and eternity.
  - Biblical teachings that become unpopular or ridiculed.
  - Consistent teachings throughout church history.

- We must remember the primary \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture.

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3–4)*

- The Bible was not written to answer every specific political question we have.
- The Bible was not written to address every specific political situation we face.
- The Bible was written to \_\_\_\_\_ who God is, who we are, and how we can be redeemed by God’s grace through God’s Son for God’s glory.

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17)*

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)*

*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26–27)*

*Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the*



*man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22–24)*

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (Revelation 21:1)*

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:1–5)*

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

*. . . and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (Colossians 3:10)*

*Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)*

- We must prioritize accurate \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture.

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)*

- Ask, “What does it say?”
    - Not, “What do I want it to say?”
  - Ask, “What does it mean?”
  - Not, “What does it mean to me?”
- We must recognize varied \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture.

*Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:21–25)*

- The differences among Christians.

*For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts 15:28–29)*

*Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:37–41)*

- Political.
- Social.
- Generational.

- Racial.
- Experiential.
- The disunity of the church.
  - The need for theological triage.
    - Primary: That which is essential for \_\_\_\_\_ .
      - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) \_\_\_\_\_ from non-Christians over **primary doctrines** that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and Christians are willing to **die** for these doctrines.
    - Secondary: That which is essential for \_\_\_\_\_ but non-essential for Christianity.
      - Christians \_\_\_\_\_ themselves from one another over **secondary doctrines** that are **less clear** in Scripture and **non-essential** to Christianity, and while these distinctions may mean **less fellowship** with one another in their churches, these Christians are glad to still **partner together around primary doctrines**.
    - Tertiary: That which is non-essential for Christianity and for church.
      - Christians \_\_\_\_\_ among themselves over **tertiary doctrines** that are **even less clear** in Scripture and also **non-essential** to Christianity, yet Christians experience **close fellowship** with one another in the church despite their disagreement.
  - The need for political triage.
    - Primary: That which is \_\_\_\_\_ to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
      - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) \_\_\_\_\_ over political positions of **primary** magnitude that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and for those who don't share these political positions, it is **questionable** if they are Christians and is likely cause for church **excommunication**.

- Secondary: That which is \_\_\_\_\_ **essential** to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
  - Christians \_\_\_\_\_ over political positions of **secondary** magnitude that are **less clear** in Scripture and **not essential** to Christianity, and while these Christians **may remain together in the same church**, these differences may mean **less partnership** with one another in the political arena, even as these Christians are glad to still **stand together around political issues of primary magnitude**.

- A serious caution in our speech . . .
  - “You can’t be a Christian and vote for . . . ”
  - “You can’t be a Christian and support . . . ”
  - “You can’t be a Christian and think . . . ”
- A guiding principle for partnership . . .
  - In essentials, unity.
  - In non-essentials, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - In all things, charity.

- The avoidance of politics.

“In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, “Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Avoiding politics is \_\_\_\_\_ toward God.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)*

- Avoiding politics is unloving toward others.

*And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)*

- Avoiding politics is impossible in this world.

*Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians 4:5–6)*

- The \_\_\_\_\_ of politics.
  - Do you ever find your hope tied to the success of a particular politician or political party?
  - Do you ever see a politician or political party you support as practically perfect?
  - Do you ever struggle to stop, hear, and understand why your political opponent holds his or her position?
  - Do you ever struggle to admit when your political opponent is right?
  - Do you ever side with your political party without thinking through that issue from a biblical perspective?
  - Do politics capture an irresponsible amount of your thoughts or emotions?
  - Do politics ever steal your joy?
  - Is your political speech more kind and honorable, or more harsh and hostile?
  - Are your hidden political thoughts more kind and honorable, or more harsh and hostile?
  - Do you ever hate sin in those you oppose politically but excuse sin in those you support politically?
  - Do you ever hate sin in those you oppose politically but excuse sin in yourself?
  - Do you ever forget that those you oppose (and support) politically are sinners in need of a Savior? Do you ever neglect to pray for them and share the gospel with them accordingly?
  - Do you ever experience disunity with Christian brothers and sisters over secondary political issues?
- The polarization of positions.
  - Among parties.
  - Across countries.
  - Divisive leaders.
  - Ideological silos.

- \_\_\_\_\_ generalizations.
  - Broad condemnation.
  - Politics is a game to be won.
  - Contempt is the strategy to pursue.
  - Compromise is the weakness to avoid.
  - Opponents are \_\_\_\_\_ to be defeated.
- The demonization of opponents.
    - Turns thoughtful discussions into critical accusations.
    - Turns political dialogue into personal ridicule.
    - Turns healthy disagreement into hostile (even hateful) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The danger of pride.

*So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1–11)*

- Thinking that we have it all \_\_\_\_\_.
- Thinking that others have it all wrong.
- Being quick to accuse others (even if only in our minds).
- Being quick to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves (even if only in our minds).
- Valuing our rights over what's right.
- Valuing acceptance in government over obedience to God.

- Fearing what people think.
- Ignoring what people need.
- Failing to love our neighbor.
- Failing to love our enemy.
- Refusing to hear and \_\_\_\_\_ from others.
- Refusing to hear and obey God.

*But this command I gave them: “Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.” (Jeremiah 7:23)*

## Our Purpose . . .

- To hear \_\_\_\_\_ what God has said in His Word about government.

*See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? (Deuteronomy 4:5–8)*

*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)*

- To understand how the gospel relates to government.

*Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel . . . (Philippians 1:27)*

- To understand how the gospel is \_\_\_\_\_ for government.

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14–16)*

- To distinguish \_\_\_\_\_ between God's Word and our wisdom regarding government.

*I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1–4)*

*The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:1–7)*



## God's Word <-----> Our Wisdom

"Rules of the Game"

Biblically \_\_\_\_\_

Direct, straight line to positions and policies

Binding on a Christian's conscience—  
"must do"

Clear and unchanging across cultures and times

Firm Grip / \_\_\_\_\_ Hand

"Strategy for the game"

Biblically \_\_\_\_\_

Indirect, jagged line to positions and policies

Freedom in a Christian's conscience—  
"can do"

Complex calculations in various cultures at various times

Loose Grip / \_\_\_\_\_ Hand

The diagrams and images used in this Study Guide are adapted from Jonathan Leeman's course titled "Christians and Government" at 9marks.org.

- To unite joyfully around God's Word in the church as we work \_\_\_\_\_ according to our wisdom in the world.

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore. (Psalm 133:1–3)*

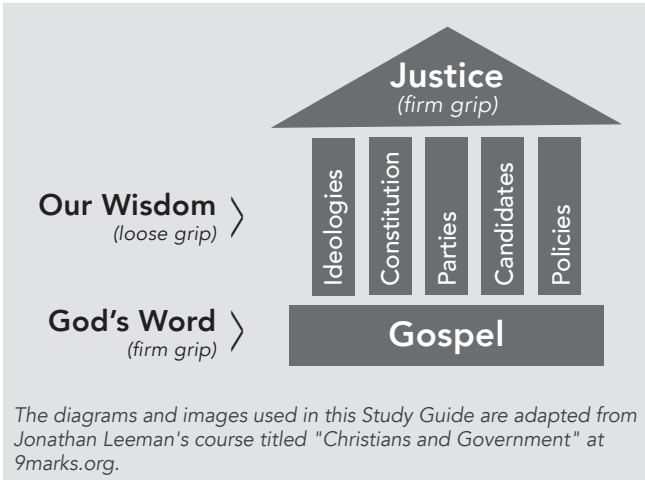
*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)*

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1–6)*

*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. (1 Peter 3:8)*

- To live justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in \_\_\_\_\_ nation.

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*



- To live zealously for the spread of God's love and the glory of God's name among \_\_\_\_\_ nations.

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)*

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18–20)*

*And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,*

| *and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.*” (Revelation 5:9–10)

## **Our Plan . . .**

- Gospel Foundations
- Biblical Truths
- Gospel Conclusions
- Practical Takeaways

# SC 20 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Introduction

1. Do you typically think of your government positively or negatively? Why do you think that is?
2. How would you characterize your discussions about government and politics with other Christians and with non-Christians? (heated, frustrating, fruitful, constructive, etc.?)
3. Why is patient dialogue so important when discussing politics and government? What are some of the dangers of only discussing these topics with sound bites and slogans?
4. How would you respond if a citizen of Iran if he or she asked you the following question: "Is the United States a Christian nation?" Explain your answer.
5. Why is it important to understand the biblical covenants as we think about applying the Bible's teaching to the government we live under?
6. Respond to the following statement: "God gave Israel specific laws and regulations through Moses, so all nations need to follow those same laws today."
7. If the Bible does not answer all of our specific questions about politics, does that mean it is irrelevant to political discussions? Explain your answer.
8. Why is it important that we make a distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary theological issues within the church? Why is this also important for political issues?
9. Make a list of theological issues that fit under the following categories: (1) primary, (2) secondary, (3) tertiary. Make a similar list for primary and secondary political issues.
10. Explain the following statement: "In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity." Does this statement mean that all non-essential issues are unimportant? Explain your answer.
11. Given how divisive politics can be, why don't Christians have the option of avoiding this topic?
12. Why is the distinction between "God's Word" and "our wisdom" so important when we discuss government?
13. What does it say about us if we identify ourselves more closely with a political party than with our brothers and sisters in Christ?
14. How can we cultivate a healthier approach to discussing government and politics with both Christians and non-Christians?
15. How do our conversations within the church about politics affect our witness to a watching world?