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Does Real Change Begin with the Left or the Right?



REAL CHANGE DOES NOT BEGIN WITH THE left. Real change does not begin with the right. Real change does not begin from the top down. Real change does not begin from the bottom up. Real change begins from the inside out.

Real change in society is a result of real change in individuals, and real change in individuals occurs when they repent from sin and cry out for the Lord Jesus Christ. That being the case, I invite you to refresh your understanding and conviction about how one most effectively changes a nation. With the increasing focus on the upcoming presidential election, it is all too easy to fall into the trap of thinking that politics are the source of ultimate cultural change. As important as the elections are, the believer should not forget what the Scriptures say about this subject.

What follows are the three most important priorities—per the Bible—for you to practice in order to effectively change a nation.

Read on, my friend!

Ralph Drollinger

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, location undisclosed, refreshments served.
 SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.
 HOUSE: 7:30AM Thursdays, The Capitol Hill Club, hot breakfast served.

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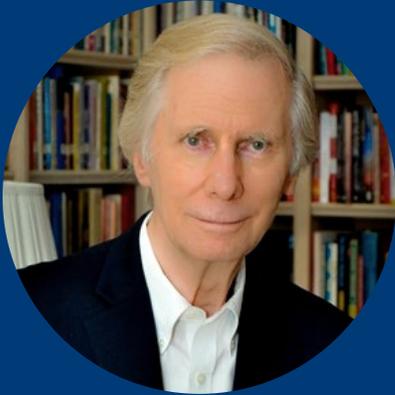
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★ ENDORSEMENT

Paul Cedar

Chair Emeritus of The Table Coalition (formerly Mission America Coalition)



“The Great Commission is all about making disciples in all nations. God has used Ralph Drollinger and Capitol Ministries to provide a strategic initiative to infiltrate all the world capitols with an exciting disciple making ministry. Oaks in Office provides national ministries in these capitols with significant resources to make disciples among the public servants in capitols around the world.”

I. INTRODUCTION

If believers are God’s agents of cultural change, then what must characterize believers—and especially believers holding public office—for God to use them powerfully and demonstrably to transform a nation?

Scripture reveals at least three specific criteria that must be evident in God’s people in order for them to effectuate positive, real change. I think you will be intrigued, and you yourself might be changed by what follows in this study.

II. A NATION IS CHANGED IN PROPORTION TO THE BELIEVER’S FUNCTIONALITY

The Scriptures repeatedly make a connection between the behavior (functionality) of the believer and the conversion of the sinner.

A. ILLUSTRATED BY THE APOSTLE PETER

Notice this in 1 Peter 2:9–14:

“But you are A CHOSEN RACE, a royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are the PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. Beloved, I urge

you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

In this passage there is a direct connection between the behavior of the believer and the conversion of the *Gentiles*. If his or her lifestyle is *excellent*, i.e., commensurate with godliness, the unregenerate will take note and be influenced positively for Christ. This is evidenced by Peter’s use of the term “*day of visitation*” which is a reference or synonym to redemption in the New Testament (NT) (cf. Luke. 1:68; 7:16; 19:44). Contextually, what Peter is stating in this passage is that when the grace of God stirs the heart of an unbeliever, he will respond to His saving faith and *glorify God in the day of visitation* in proportion to the credibility of the testimonies they have observed. Believers need to function like Christ in order to influence unbelievers. If our actions are truly good, they will foster credibility, having created a platform, basis and ethos for changing the world from the inside out.

The words, “*good deeds*” codify Peter’s emphasis regarding the critically important aspect of obtaining and maintaining the credibility of one’s testimony in ancient days. Followers of Christ were often slandered. States



one commentator in this regard:

The early Christians were falsely accused of rebellion against the government with such false accusations as terrorism (burning Rome), atheism (no idols or emperor worship), cannibalism (rumors about the Lord's Supper), immorality (because of their love for one another), damaging trade and social progress, and leading slaves into insurrection.

It is not very different today; believers are routinely maligned by the secular media, tares in the church, and others. That has been my personal experience, and I know it has happened to many of you who are part of the Members Bible Study as well. So, what is Peter's solution per his epistle? What is the biblical remedy to offset routine defamation?

Your genuine good deeds are the overriding measuring factor whereby others ascertain your trustworthiness and credibility.

B. ILLUSTRATED BY JESUS

The relationship between *good deeds* and credibility runs the length of Scripture. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:13–16) Jesus Himself makes this clear association:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the

lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (vs. 14–16)

What Peter has labeled *good deeds* Jesus here labels *good works* in relation to achieving and maintaining personal credibility. In this passage, Jesus states the idea of others' ensuing conversion via the synonym *glorify*[ing] *your Father who is in heaven*. Again, the relationship between the believer's *good deeds* or *good works* and the sinner's conversion is on display.

Functioning in holiness either buoys or breaks believability.

As one who desires real change on the Hill and in the nation, the function of *good works* in your life is critically important and necessary in order to achieve and maintain effective outreach in the tightly knit capitol community. What are you doing in this regard? What follows are some additional illustrations of the correlation between good works and credibility.

C. ILLUSTRATED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL

Instructing Timothy (1 Timothy 5:14) in what he ought to teach widows in the church, Paul says, *“Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach.”*

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

Matthew 5:16

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

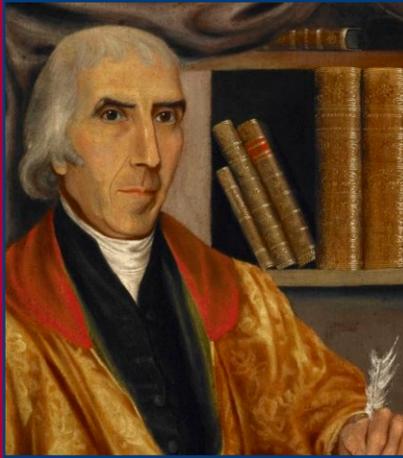


Be diligent to accomplish with excellence what God has assigned you to do.





Jedidiah Morse



To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. All efforts made to destroy the foundations of our Holy Religion ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness. In proportion as the genuine effects of Christianity are diminished in any nation... in the same proportion will the people of that nation recede from the blessings of genuine freedom... Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government—and all the blessings which flow from them—must fall with them.

— Jedidiah Morse, historian of the American Revolution; educator; “Father of American Geography;” appointed by secretary of state to document condition of Indian affairs.

Jedidiah Morse, *A Sermon, Exhibiting the Present Dangers and Consequent Duties of the Citizens of the United States of America, Delivered at Charlestown, April 25, 1799, The Day of the National Fast* (MA: Printed by Samuel Etheridge, 1799), p. 9.

Here seen again is this correlation. Later in the same letter, (6:1) he informs Timothy as to how he should instruct those who were converted slaves in Roman culture.

“All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.”

In Titus 2:5 the theme surfaces regarding how Titus should pastor women. Paul tells Titus to instruct older women to set good examples in their behavior so they in turn can urge younger women, *“to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”* How believers function in various settings determines the credibility of their witness.

D. ILLUSTRATED BY THE APOSTLE JAMES

James underscores this same correlation and adds a vital additional element to the discussion: that *good deeds* or accompanying *good works* are always normative of true saving faith. He states in James 2:17, my paraphrase, that faith, without accompanying good works, is illegitimate faith.

If a believer habitually exhibits a lack of *good deeds*, or lacks a desire to do well to his or her fellow man, then he should question if he is truly saved, because the genuinely saved individu-

al will always desire to do *good works* or *good deeds*. They are the standard operating procedure of those who are genuinely saved.

E. THE OPPOSITE ILLUSTRATED

In the Old Testament (OT), the converse of this principle is illustrated in real-life examples.

1. David

The prophet Nathan rebuked King David in 2 Samuel 12:14 concerning his sin of adultery (behavior). *“However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme...”* King David’s bad deeds were cause for blasphemous behavior in unbelievers. “Blasphemy” (*blasphemia*) means “railing.” In the Scriptures, the word is confined to speech defamatory of the Divine Majesty. It is evil speaking, calumniating, and contumelious rhetoric toward God. It’s characterized by contempt for God or of sacred things.

2. The Nation Israel

In Ezekiel 20:39–41 the prophet says in abandoning tones, *“As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord God, ‘Go, serve everyone his idols; but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols...and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations.’”*



Israel's idolatry had made her a poor witness. But in the eschatological future sense of this passage, God will re-gather Israel in the end times and she will be an effective holy witness of Him and for Him to the remainder of the world. Whereas good deeds lead to conversion, bad deeds lead to blasphemy.

Does your behavior evoke belief or blasphemy in the heart of the unbeliever?

F. SUMMARY

To the degree the believer concerns himself with the determinate program of God as revealed in the Scriptures, the person of Jesus Christ, and the indwelling Holy Spirit is the degree by which God will use that believer for His purposes. Changing a nation has less to do with political involvement than it does with living a life in day to day functional obedience to Christ. Whereas politics reflects a culture, obedience to Jesus revolutionizes a nation. The bedrock of real change is the transformation of hearts from the inside out.

III. A NATION IS CHANGED IN PROPORTION TO THE BELIEVER'S FAITHFULNESS

Matthew 25:14-30 records Jesus' Parable of the Talents. In this analogy there is a master who gives each of his three servants a sum of money (talents) to invest. To the two who were faithful, who made a return on

their master's investment, the master exclaimed in verse 21:

"Well done good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things."

This parable provides a keen insight into how we can expand our influence, or better, what criteria God uses in deciding whether to expand our influence.

Note that the two servants who were diligent to make the most out of their opportunities were deemed faithful in comparison to the one who did nothing with the gifts God had given him. The principle of the parable is that all who are faithful with what God assigns to them—even the smallest of things—will be rewarded with greater, increasingly influential opportunities and assignments.

If you are faithful with what God initially gives you to accomplish, He will add responsibilities to your job description, just like a good boss does in the business world. If you want to change a nation, begin by being faithful to your present calling: Remember this biblical principle, "if you are faithful with a few things, He will put you in charge of many." In contrast, many are those who are looking for the once-in-a-lifetime home run at the expense of doing things God's way: hitting singles every day. Work daily on your discipline of personal diligence.

James Otis



"Has [government] any solid foundation? Any chief cornerstone?... I think it has an everlasting foundation in the unchangeable will of God... The sum of my argument is that civil government is of God."

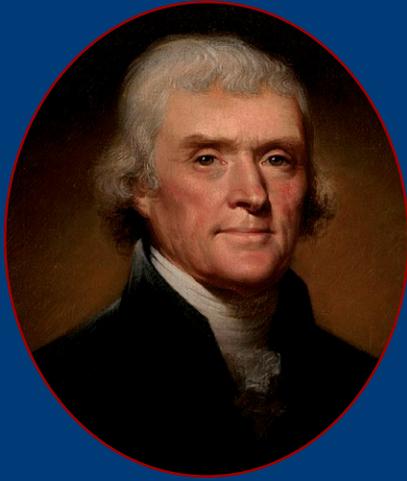
— James Otis, leader of the Sons of Liberty; attorney and jurist; mentor of John Hancock and Samuel Adams.

James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved* (London: J. Williams and J. Almon, 1766), pp. 11, 98.





Thomas Jefferson



“The practice of morality being necessary for the well being of society, He [God] has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. We all agree in the obligation of the moral principles of Jesus and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in His discourses.”

— Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; diplomat; governor of Virginia; secretary of state.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Albert Ellery Bergh, editor (Washington D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XII, p. 315, to James Fishback, September 27, 1809.

To change a nation, you must be faithful to do your part. Be diligent to accomplish with excellence what God has assigned you to do.

As a result, over time He promises to expand your horizons and eternally change lives via yours. If every believer made it a priority to be faithful with the small things, their increased influence would begin to change the culture in short order.

A nation is changed in proportion to the behavior and faithfulness of believers. There is one more aspect of the biblical formula for real change:

IV. A NATION IS CHANGED IN PROPORTION TO THE BELIEVER’S FOCUS

A believer who manifests actions commensurate with his testimony in Christ, who is also faithful and blessed with increasing influence as a result, needs to be intently focused on God’s specific purpose(s) for their specific life in order to effectuate real change. Ephesians 5:15-17 states:

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

“*The will of the Lord*” for our lives is already revealed in Scripture. For instance, Scripture tells us that God wants everyone to repent and trust in

Christ for their salvation; God’s will is that everyone follows His precepts; God’s revealed will is that everyone glorifies Him; it is **foolish** to live not understanding “*what the will of the Lord is.*”

In addition, knowing God’s specific, personalized will for your life is in view here. *Foolishness* is also identified in this passage with the misuse of one’s *time* as a result of not knowing specifically what God wants you to accomplish. I can only *make the most of* [my] *time* by understanding what the personal *will of the Lord is* for my life. What then is God’s specific purpose or calling for your life as a public servant? You best figure it out!

Common congressional wisdom suggests that every member who ends up making a mark on America has focused specifically on one or two areas of policy related to their personal passions. What is the passion of your heart as you walk in close proximity to Christ? What specifically is He calling you to focus on while in office?

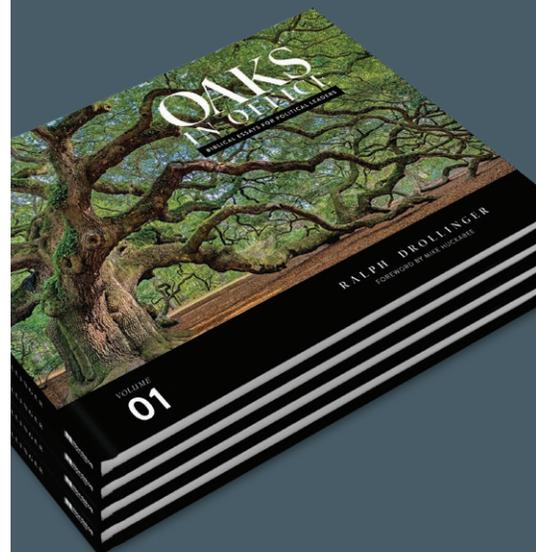
Starting with seemingly nothing, a magnifying glass can light a fire! But such requires a steady hand.

What is your specific area of policy, concern, discipline, or task that God wants you to nurture and conform to His ways in the days and years ahead? How long did it take for William Wilberforce to overturn slavery in the British Empire? How steady is your hand?



V. SUMMARY

The believer who would really change the world must be **functional** in good deeds, **faithful** with the small things and **focused** on the use of their time with a view toward God's purposes and priorities. Can that be said of you? **cm**



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Elias Boudinot, in a letter to his daughter:

“You have been instructed from your childhood in the knowledge of your lost state by nature—the absolute necessity of a change of heart and an entire renovation of soul to the image of Jesus Christ—of salvation through His meritorious righteousness only—and the indispensable necessity of personal holiness without which no man shall see the Lord [Hebrews 12:14]. You are well acquainted that the most perfect and consummate doctrinal knowledge is of no avail without it operates on and sincerely affects the heart, changes the practice, and totally influences the will—and that without the almighty power of the Spirit of God enlightening your mind, subduing your will, and continually drawing you to Himself, you can do nothing.”

— Elias Boudinot, president of Congress; signed the Peace Treaty to end the American Revolution; first attorney admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar; framer of the Bill of Rights; director of the U.S. Mint.

Elias Boudinot, The Age of Revelation (Philadelphia: Asbury Dickins, 1801), pp. xii–xiv, from the prefatory remarks to his daughter, Susan, on October 30, 1782; see also Letters of the Delegates to Congress: 1774–1789, Paul H. Smith, editor (Washington, D. C.: Library of Congress, 1992), Vol. XIX, p. 325, from a letter of Elias Boudinot to his daughter, Susan Boudinot, on October 30, 1782; see also, Elias Boudinot, The Life Public Services, Addresses, and Letters of Elias Boudinot (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1896), Vol. I, p. 260–262.

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