



Citizenship

Adapted from "Demands of Discipleship" series by Dennis Marquardt.

In a small college town, a tavern frequented by students ran the following ad in the campus paper during the days before parents' weekend: "Bring your parents for lunch Saturday. We'll pretend we don't know you!" The ad was soon challenged by the college chaplain who posted a revised version on the campus bulletin board. It read, "Bring your parents to chapel Sunday. We'll pretend we know you!" ¹

All human beings live under some form of government; we are all citizens of some country. When we come to Christ we discover an unusual situation. In Christ, we become a citizen of a heavenly kingdom also! This reality of dual citizenship creates pressure points in our lives, and we will discover there are dangers that we must guard our hearts and minds against. We must guard against compromising our greater citizenship at the expense of the temporal. It is imperative that we are good citizens of both, but not at the expense of the greater one.

¹ James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), 435.

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COURAGE

C1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 22:15–22 (ESV) Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

- Why do you think the Pharisees and the Herodians were trying to trap Jesus?
- When Jesus gave the answer to render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s, why do you think they marveled at His answer?
- In looking at the coin, Jesus does not put the Romans down but identifies them. What lessons can you learn about politics from Jesus?

C2: The Bible calls Christians to dual citizenship. Answer the following.

- Once you come to know Christ as Lord and Savior, you become citizens of a heavenly kingdom, does that mean you no longer should follow the laws of our country?
- How can you honor God in how you live as citizens of our country?

- Should you compromise our Godly principles in living under governmental rule? Why or why not?
- Have you ever felt trapped between doing what God says is right verses what the political system says is right? Describe the situation.
- In living for Christ, are there times when you must say no to what our political system is trying to do? Give some examples.
- If you would have to choose between compromising your position as a Christian verses your position in a political party, which would you chose and why?

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 22:15–22 (ESV)

- Why did Jesus say render to Caesar the things of Caesar and the things of God to God?
- Understanding that the Pharisees and Herodians were on different political sides, why do you think they came together to test Jesus?
- In living for Christ, what is your understanding that you are citizens of God's Kingdom?

S2: The dual citizenship can be difficult in today's society. Answer the following.

- How does being citizens of God's Kingdom and citizens of your country's political system relate to each other?
- Many times, our system of government will ask us to compromise our citizenship in God's Kingdom, how can we hold tight to the things of God and not compromise?
- Have you ever felt trapped by the agenda of our earthly citizenship verses your citizenship in God's Kingdom? Why do you feel you were trapped?

- If we were called to stand up for what we know is right according to God's Rule verses what our society is doing, where do we find the strength to do so?
- How important is the power of the Holy Spirit in guiding us to not compromise the things of God despite what the government around us is saying?
- When you hear the term "Christian Standards," what does that mean and look like today?

ENDURANCE

E-1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 22:15–22 (ESV)

- When called by the Pharisees and Herodians, Jesus gave the answer “render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”, what does that mean to you today?
- When facing persecution for taking a stand against a political view because it goes against God’s principles, how best can you stand firm?
- As citizens of God’s Kingdom, do you have an obligation to not compromise on the things of God?
- How far are you willing to go to make sure you do not compromise to the worlds standards in our life choices?
- If you had to explain to a stranger what being a citizen of God’s Kingdom means, what and how would you describe it?

E2: Discuss or write out your thoughts on the following topics based upon our citizenship of God’s Kingdom.

- Paying taxes
- Running for political office

- Tax free church property
- Prayer in schools
- “In God We Trust” on currency
- Transgender bathrooms
- Gay/Lesbian marriage
- Abortion