Citizenship as Christians
1 Peter 2:13-17

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

When it’s time to _______ government officials, should Christians get involved? Does the Bible have anything to say to the Christian ___________? God reveals Himself and His will for our _______ through His written Word. The Bible tells us of God’s _______ and His _______ for redeeming man. It reveals what’s _______ and what’s _______. God’s Word reveals what will _______ us and what will _______ us. The Bible teaches us the truth, and that truth gives us _______ and purpose. The Bible is more than an ancient book; it lives and it ________ to every aspect of our lives. We need the Bible, because we need God’s ___________ and His guidance. That’s why we study.

The founding fathers of the United States recognized God’s _______ in establishing and providing for the prosperity of this country, America. George Washington, said, “No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible ________ which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the ___________ of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of Providential agency.”

Can we suppose this nation with all its struggles has outgrown the _______ for God’s help? Can we have peace and security while we reject the _________ of the Lord? Do we imagine that we can prosper while we ignore the Source of all blessings? Can we assume that we have justice while we reject the ___________ of the God of all righteousness? When nations _________ the Lord and live by human standards, they deprive themselves of the blessing and the righteousness that the Lord’s way provides. Pushing God out of our lives is a disastrous decision. William Penn wrote in 1681, “If you are not governed by God, you will be _________ by tyrants.”

**Our reading today comes from 1 Peter 2:13-17.**

Proverbs 29:2 says, “When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked _______, the people groan.” We shouldn’t imagine that all people are _________. There’s an important difference between one who sets his heart to live ________ but sometimes does evil and one who sets his heart on _______ but sometimes does what is right. Wicked rulers _________ cities and nations, while righteous rulers _______ them. Wicked people are not content simply to be wicked; they want everyone else to _______ them in their wickedness. Psalm 125:3 says, “For the wicked shall not rule the godly, lest the godly be ___________ to do wrong.”

When wicked people rule, they open the _______ for all kinds of evil. Corrupt rulers abuse their ________ by making laws that oppress the righteous and use public funds to do things that no righteous person could approve. How can anyone who loves what is good _________ rulers who make laws promoting evil? If I believe a practice is morally wrong, I will not ________ legalizing that practice. If I believe a practice is morally wrong, I won’t _______ for or use my influence to support a candidate that will do what God says is evil. If I support an ungodly candidate, I’m giving my ___________ to his ungodly ways. How can I _______ God and support what is sinful? How can I ________ for righteousness and then support wickedness?
True Christians ________ to the Lord. They belong to Him in ______ aspect of their lives. It’s inconceivable that a Christian citizen could vote for someone who supports a platform that contradicts the moral ______ that they hold. If we elect people who have no regard for God, we’ll have to live with their ungodly decisions and ways. Tertullian encouraged the Christian minority in the pagan Roman Empire of the second century to be the “soul” of their culture. God _____ Christians today to be the soul and conscience of our culture. We can bring about moral ______ if we’re willing to speak out against evil. The best way to defeat the devil is to expose his wickedness. Christians have too often retreated into silence and let evil go unchallenged.

Edmund Burke, the 18th century politician said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do ______.” Many Christians have so silenced their voices that all one can _____ is the ungodly calling for more ungodliness. We are fast destroying ourselves by letting the ungodly go unchallenged. We don’t speak this way out of hate for anyone but out of love for God, love for our children, and love for our neighbors. It’s not bigoted to _________ for righteousness; it’s not bigoted to love the truth. It’s __________ to want what is right and good.

Have we forgotten God is the _________ of all nations? Every nation is accountable to Him. Read what the Lord said in Jeremiah 18:6-10.

The Lord has witnessed our country’s ungodly disrespect for the sanctity of ________, for the sanctity of ____________, and the sanctity of moral _________. Our language has become profane, and our nation is _________ with the children of unmarried parents. The more we push God and His way ________, the more empty, and hopeless, and depraved we become. God’s Word still says, “Righteousness _________ a nation, but sin is a _________ to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). Our national sins are disgraceful, and we have no ________. We’ve forgotten how to blush, and our consciences have become __________.

God’s grace should ____________ us to live godly and righteous lives, not remove all standards of Christian morality. Titus 2:11-12 says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” Should we not be so ___________ for what Jesus did on the cross for us that we would turn from sin?

Today, our laws _________ some evil practices to fill this land. We no longer _________ the sanctity of life or the sanctity of marriage, as defined in God’s Holy Word. We’ve replaced these with ________ values that are destined to corrupt the morality of our homes. We’ve made being tolerant of everything, whether it’s good or evil, into some form of _________. In tolerating evil, our society has simply become more evil, and it’s become more intolerant of God and what He teaches. Many have become intolerant of God’s values found in the Word of God. They won’t tolerate God’s regard for the unborn as viable persons. God speaks of the unborn as people in Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1; and Galatians 1. Nor will they tolerate 1 Corinthians 7:2 that says every man should have his own female wife, and every woman should have her own male husband.

Many live today as they did in the days of the Judges of Israel. Judges 21:25 says, “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own _____.” Today, people have pushed God out of their thinking and ________ by their own standards. Believing we can live by our own rules is __________, but it’s also destructive morally and spiritually. If what people think determines
right and wrong, then truth, peace, and morality are _____ in confusion.

Human ________, left to follow its own path, leads society to do unspeakably horrible things. Wicked men will find ways to ________ and justify themselves with every evil desire and every sin. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?” Some people demand the ________ to do as they please, and they don’t care who they ________. When evil men with no conscience or fear of God _______ in society, they will lead people away from hope and from righteousness.

Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way that seems ________ to a man, but its end is the way to ________.” God’s prophet Jeremiah wrote, “I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it’s not in man who walks to ________ his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). We need God’s wisdom and guidance. People may think they’re ________ enough to choose their own way; but any path without God will inevitably end in ________. People who ________ God’s wisdom hurt themselves and they hurt their children.

God said through the prophet Hosea, “My people are destroyed for _______ of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). When we turn against God, we _______ our children of the opportunity to know God, to know His holiness, and His righteousness. We leave them in spiritual ________.

The books of Kings and Chronicles in the Old Testament provide a commentary on the spiritual lives of the kings of Israel and Judah for hundreds of years. God tied the prosperity of that nation directly to the ________ of the king and the people. When the king and the people ________ God, God prospered them. When the king and the people ________ God, they brought hardships and captivity upon themselves. If we, today, push God out of our lives, how can we think God will _______ us? How can we imagine that God will ________ us?

Character and devotion to God matter in our ________. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, and priest of Midian, gave Moses some valuable ________. Moses was wearing himself out with his duties and needed _______ to govern the people. Jethro instructed him to “look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens” (Exodus 18:21). Jethro knew that Moses would need men of good ________ to govern the people. These men had to be people that ________ would respect and follow. They must “fear God.” Fearing God meant that they took God and His laws _________. They drew their ________ of right and wrong from God, not from opinion polls. These men of integrity refused to be bought with bribes. Moses needed such men to help him ________ the people justly and honestly. We still need capable officials today who _______ God and have integrity.

Proverbs 25:19 says, “Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot is confidence in a faithless man in time of ________.” We’ve all been disappointed by ________ officials who’ve brought shame to our cities, states, and nation. You can’t count on a man of ______ character. A man who shows low character in ________ will have low character in _________. The Lord Jesus said, “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much” (Luke 16:10).

Some say a godly man or a Christian should never serve in the government. Joseph served as second
to Pharaoh, and David served as King of Israel. God used Moses to lead His people out of bondage and to build a new nation. The Ten Commandments are both religious and social laws on which the nation of Israel was founded. Ezra was a Jew in the Persian government and Nehemiah served as an authority for the king to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel as a ruler over the whole province of Babylon and a chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel also served as a commissioner to King Darius for all of Persia. Both Nebuchadnezzar and Darius were pagan kings, but Daniel lived a righteous life and was respected for his faith. Queen Esther laid her life on the line to influence King Ahasuerus of Persia, who reigned from India to Ethiopia. Paul mentions Erastus, the city treasurer of Corinth, in Romans 16:23. Godly people through the years have served as public officials.

The Old Testament prophets called nations and cities to ________ of their wickedness. When people refused God and abused their fellow-citizens, God noticed and He _________ the wicked. God said through Amos, “But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). Oh, we need to turn away from evil and turn to righteousness!

Why does all this matter? When people _____ and support the wicked, they’re actually taking a stand against God. Second Chronicles 18 tells how a good king, Jehoshaphat, made an alliance with a wicked king, Ahab, in fighting an enemy. God sent a prophet who said, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD?” (2 Chronicles 19:2).

If I vote and support an evil person who won’t stand against sin, haven’t I also said by my _______ that I won’t stand against sin? If I don’t cast my ______ for god-fearing people, wicked ones will take office. My failure to vote for what is right may ______ a wicked person to rule. “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do __________.”

Some Christians don’t vote because they believe their vote won’t make any __________. But, in 1839, one vote elected Marcus Morton governor of Massachusetts. In 1868, one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment. In 1876, one vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency of the United States. In 1923, one vote gave Adolph Hitler the leadership of the Nazi party. I tell you, one vote ______ matter greatly. We must exercise our privileges wisely to _______ what is right and good. We must let our lights shine through wise and godly _______. We have the privilege to choose godly leaders. Let’s use that privilege.

Christians are first and foremost __________ of heaven. We owe our allegiance to the Lord Jesus. Philippians 3:20-21 says, “But our citizenship is in __________, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” Citizenship in heaven is a privilege and a blessing; we must not take it __________. The best decision that you’ll ever make is to follow Jesus Christ. Do it today!

To become a citizen of heaven, ________ in Jesus Christ with all your heart. Repent of your sins; you can’t ______ with God and the devil at the same time. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Confession is a public declaration of your decision to ________ Jesus. Be baptized for the forgiveness of your ______. Baptism into Christ is an immersion in _______. It’s the time that we have our sins ______ away and become a Christian. When we’re baptized, the Lord adds us to His _______; He makes us His child. Everyone needs to be a citizen of heaven. Don’t wait another day! Come to the Lord!