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LIFE, LIBERTY, AND ?

Five days until Election 2018. Consider - your ballot will reflect how you actually vote every day, by the choices you make. The idea of self-government intersects with your daily life. Things you truly value as supremely important will direct your voting decisions the same way they do your everyday decisions.

You are individually accountable to your Creator for all personal choices. And He endows all your rights, found in Scripture and reflected in our Declaration of Independence. You are responsible for them, and for the government you consent to secure your rights. And they are at stake with every vote you cast.

1- LIFE - This priority number one underlines all other issues. If someone can't understand when human life begins and ends, and that all lives equally matter, how can they responsibly enact policies to guide your life? And God designed marriage as one man and one woman for life, to create strong families. You represent the Creator in all things, and He expects you to follow His moral justification. If His spiritual life lives through you, then you will shine His light - to stop today's dark culture of death and moral decay.

2- LIBERTY - Your religious beliefs cannot be separated from your personal liberty, nor from politics. The freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution include religion, speech, press, assembly, to bear arms, equal justice, private property, etc. In your lifetime these liberties have been endangered and distorted by evil political forces intent on enslaving you to selfish definitions which empower them, not you. Your votes become responsible for Supreme Court appointments and executive orders, as well as representatives. Vote wisely - to keep our constitutional republic form of government "of, by, and for, the people."

3- PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS - Our Constitution upholds your right to pursue the fullest potential of all that you are and can become, for yourself, your family, and their future. Issues include maintaining fair trade economy, sensible immigration policies, strong national security, and declining national debt. Don't be trapped into selling your vote for empty promises of more stuff. As in the Bible, welfare is a safety net only for those unable to work - so why would you allow it to buy votes from freeloaders? All of our rights and sound policies find expression in the Scriptures, which should guide our political analysis.

Scripture shows how God's blessings of providential grace come to His obedient people and overflow to all nations. God blesses His people to bless others. As previous columns noted, the Creator's authority extends to a) self-government as people live in right relationship with God, b) family government as godly families multiply His image-bearers to live out His will, c) church government as commissioned churches proclaim His principles, fulfill His purposes by ministering in a needy world, and inform d) limited civil government, including officials at all levels who will not pervert justice, accept bribes, or show partiality.

"Everyone professing Christian teaching and observing its precepts will, out of love of God, perform whatever the welfare of the country demands out of self-interest and on its own behalf," said Augustine, so *"take to yourselves good Christians and you will be given good citizens."* Are you proving this true?

4- CHRISTIAN CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY - includes a) Pray, to know God's Word and do His will; b) Inform, seek facts about issues and compare solutions to God's truth; c) Vote, to put people who will do God's will into positions of authority and influence; d) Serve, to live out the gospel in word and deed, shining God's light all around you; e) Repent, because obviously God's people do too little of all this.

In contrast, a man coveting power said *"what luck for leaders that the people do not think"* -Adolph Hitler. Are YOU thinking, getting informed, and voting - according to God's timeless principles? Mainstream media does not inform - it programs, with tabloid entertainment, subliminal messages, and prearranged content relayed by political operatives. Less than half of evangelical Christians are registered to vote. Of those only half do vote. Many elections are decided by less than 5%. Discern. Don't fall for polls designed to discourage you from voting. Your ballot could decide a race. Lesser of two evils? A third and greater evil is not voting. As Billy Graham said, *"bad politicians are elected by good people who don't vote."*

Proverbs 29.2 *"When the righteous increase, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan."* It's up to you, your vote and your life. Know platforms and priorities of all candidates. Christians must not allow corruptocrats to continue tyranny and increase terror. We must vote against evil. And we must keep working hard to help set people free - for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness! ☐