

## The 7 Principles of our Judeo-Christian Heritage

The title of today's message is: The 7 Principles of our Judeo-Christian Heritage. Today's message has two parts – the first part contains the 7 principles and the second part contains the formula for revival. How many want to be part of the next Great Awakening? You're going to find out how today.

When our nation's Founding Fathers gave us documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and others, they had to lean upon a common understanding of law, government, social order, and morality. That understanding sprang from the common acceptance of what has come to be known as our Judeo-Christian Heritage.

Our Judeo-Christian Heritage is the system of values that originates in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible – specifically, the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament and The Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament.

Perhaps Harry Truman, our 33<sup>rd</sup> president, summed it up best when he said, **“The fundamental basis of this nation's laws was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings we get from Exodus and Saint Matthew... If we don't have a proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in rights for anybody except the State!”**

While much has been written to try to dismiss the fact that America was founded on biblical principles, all the revisionist history in the world can't change the facts. Anyone who examines the original writings, personal correspondence, biographies, and public statements of the individuals who were instrumental in the founding of America, will find an abundance of quotations showing the profound extent to which their thinking was influenced by a Biblical Worldview. Here are some examples:

John Adams, our 2<sup>nd</sup> president, said, **“The general principles on which the Fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity...I will avow that I believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”**

John Hancock, signer of the Declaration of Independence, said, **“Principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul into the hands of God that gave it; and my body I recommend to the earth...nothing doubting but at the resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mercy and power of God.”**

Patrick Henry, Ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, said, **“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ.”**

Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence, said, **“My only hope of salvation is in the infinite, transcendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the cross. Nothing but His blood will wash away my sins. I rely exclusively upon it.”**

John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, said, **“Providence has given to the people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.”**

Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence, said, **“Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and pure...are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security of the duration of free governments.”**

Perhaps John Adams and John Hancock said it best when they said, **“We recognize no sovereign but God, and no King but Jesus.”**

Based on these quotations (and others we’ll read as we travel through today), we could conclude that the Founders almost all thought from a biblical perspective.

Here’s the first principle of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

### **Principle 1: The Dignity of Human Life**

Most civilized people have an innate respect for human life, but where do we get our notions that murder is wrong? The answer comes from the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.

**Exodus 20:13 (NKJV)**  
**“You shall not murder.”**

**Matthew 5:21-22 (NKJV)**  
**21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’**  
**22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”**

The first principle is based on Exodus 20:13 – the sixth commandment, which states, “You shall not murder.” Jesus introduced the attitudinal aspect of this in the Sermon on the Mount when He said that people murder in their hearts when they harbor anger toward someone, when they demean someone by speaking negatively about them, and when they judge someone as worthless by calling them a belittling name.

In addition to the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, the whole of Scripture emphatically teaches the importance of the respect and preservation of human life.

The Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4, 1776, contains these words: **“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”**

The Declaration of Independence identified the source of our unalienable rights as, “Their Creator,” confirming that individual human rights are God-given, not man-made. In other words, the signers of the Declaration of Independence embraced the biblical concept of creation.

In the Declaration of Independence, our Founding Fathers wrote that everyone has “unalienable rights,” and one of those rights is the right to “life.” If people and nations do not grant respect and protection to both the born and the unborn, all other professed morals and values are meaningless. The dignity of human life is not just a principle of the Bible – it’s the first principle of any civilized society.

## **Principle 2: The Traditional Monogamous Marriage**

The second principle is based on Genesis 2:24, which gives us God’s definition of marriage.

### **Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)**

**Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

Since the joining together of Adam and Eve, marriage has been recognized as a holy union between one man and one woman, and out of that union comes children – born into a home with a father and mother to love them, nurture them, and teach them how to become healthy, productive, and responsible citizens.

Benjamin Harrison, our 23<sup>rd</sup> president, said, **“If you take out of your statutes, your constitution, your family life, all that is taken from the Sacred Book, what would there be left to bind society together?”**

The plan of God, nature, and common sense is a man and a woman producing children within the institution of marriage. World history has proven over and over again that when that plan is lost, marriage and family become meaningless, and a nation and its people eventually follow the road to ruin. Preserving the traditional family is vital to the future of any great nation.

Daniel Webster, Secretary of State under three Presidents, said, **“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our nation will go on prospering.”**

Here’s how we could sum up the first two principles as they relate to the success of a nation: When the family unit breaks down, society breaks down, and when society breaks down, a nation collapses. Simply put, nations collapse when families collapse.

## **Principle 3: A National Work Ethic**

The third principle is based on 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NKJV)**

**For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.**

Ingrained deep within the American spirit is the willingness to give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. This independent spirit refuses to simply exist on government handouts or to depend on the generosity of others. It's this same work ethic that has allowed America to create the strongest economy in the history of the world.

Immigrants throughout history from around the world have come to America, worked hard, and became successful because of their work ethic. The generations who lived before us were raised to believe that hard work equates to success, and this principle is certainly found throughout the Bible. Here are a few examples:

**Proverbs 10:4 (NLT)**

**Lazy people are soon poor; hard workers get rich.**

**Proverbs 12:24 (NLT)**

**Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave.**

**Proverbs 13:4 (NLT)**

**Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.**

**Proverbs 21:5 (NLT)**

**Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.**

**Ephesians 4:28 (NLT)**

**If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.**

**Titus 3:14 (AMP)**

**And let our own [people really] learn to apply themselves to good deeds (to honest labor and honorable employment), so that they may be able to meet necessary demands whenever the occasion may require and not be living idle and uncultivated and unfruitful lives.**

As you can see, a positive work ethic isn't just a feel-good platitude, it's a biblical truth. The resurgence of a national work ethic in the United States is the cure for the entitlement mindset that fosters a welfare spirit.

#### **Principle 4: The Right to a God-Centered Education**

The fourth principle is based on Ephesians 6:4 and Proverbs 1:7.

**Ephesians 6:4 (NKJV)**

**And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

**Proverbs 1:7 (NKJV)**

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.**

By combining these two verses, we could conclude that parents are to teach their children about God, Jesus, and the Bible. Our forefathers certainly understood this. For example, did you know that most of America's oldest universities were founded by Christian preachers and churches?

Harvard University, founded in 1636, adopted rules and precepts which stated: **“Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, and therefore lay Christ at the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.”**

Harvard's original seal has upon it the words: “Truth for Christ and the Church.”

Yale University was established in 1701 with a stated goal that “every student shall consider the main end of his study to know God in Jesus Christ and answerably to lead a godly, sober life.”

The College of William and Mary was founded in 1693 to supply the church of Virginia “with a seminary of ministers that the Christian faith may be propagated.”

King's College, known today as Columbia University, proposed to “inculcate upon student's tender minds the great principles of Christianity and morality.” Princeton had as one of its founding statements, “Cursed is all learning that is contrary to the Cross of Christ.”

In 1836, Noah Webster, often called “The Father of American Education,” expressed that the purpose of schools was meant for the advancement of the Christian faith. Noah Webster stated: **“In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government ought to be instructed... no truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.”**

American history is vividly clear that faith in God and a reverence for the Bible as God's Word provided the basis for the founding of our nation. One fact is undeniable: the Bible has been one of the greatest influences on America's presidents. Here are some examples:

John Quincy Adams, our 6<sup>th</sup> President, said, **“The first and almost the only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible.”**

Andrew Jackson, our 7<sup>th</sup> President, said, **“That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests.”**

Calvin Coolidge, our 13<sup>th</sup> President, said, **“The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.”**

Abraham Lincoln, our 16<sup>th</sup> President, said, **“In regard for the Great Book, I have this to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book.”**

Ulysses S. Grant, our 18<sup>th</sup> president, said, **“Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties. Write its precepts in your hearts, and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this book are we indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future.”**

Woodrow Wilson, our 28<sup>th</sup> President, said, **“The Bible is the one supreme source of revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God, and spiritual nature and needs of men. It is the only guide of life, which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation. America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture.”**

Franklin D. Roosevelt, our 32<sup>nd</sup> President, said, **“We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. Where we have been the truest and most consistent in obeying its precepts, we have attained the greatest measure of contentment and prosperity.”**

George Washington, our first President, is attributed as saying, **“Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail to the exclusion of religious principle...it is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”**

From these numerous quotes, we could conclude that those we’ve quoted understood the relationship between a sound education based on the Bible and the future success of a nation.

## **Principle 5: The Abrahamic Covenant**

The fifth principle is based on Genesis 12 and Genesis 15.

### **Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV)**

- 1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.**
- 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.**
- 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

The Book of Genesis records the story of God making a covenant with Abraham. The basis of that covenant was that if Abraham would believe God, God would bless him with many descendents, a nation of people now known as Israel. Throughout the Bible, when ancient Israel had a king who revered God and held God’s Word in high esteem, the nation prospered. When they had a bad king, life within the nation was full of misery.

Now let’s read:

### **Genesis 15:5-6 (NKJV)**

- 5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”**
- 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.**

The application for us today is that during this dispensation (at this point in history), God is relating to the human race in light of the new covenant and according to who we are in Christ. This is the Gospel, which was preached to Abraham and is confirmed in the NT book of Galatians.

### **Galatians 3:7-9 (NKJV)**

**7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.**

**8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”**

**9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.**

The Abrahamic Covenant connects the Ten Commandments of the OT with the Sermon on the Mount in the NT, resulting in the new covenant God made with Jesus Himself. This is important because it clarifies the way God is relating to the human race today – in light of the new covenant and according to who we are in Christ.

### **Principle 6: Common Decency**

The sixth principle is based on Matthew 7:12, which Jesus declared in the Sermon on the Mount.

### **Matthew 7:12 (NIV)**

**“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.”**

Many know this saying as the Golden Rule, but here’s the challenge: No amount of legislation can enforce the Golden Rule – it has to come from the hearts of people. In other words, our form of government was never intended to change society because government is incapable of producing morality. Government can attempt to restrain immorality, but only the power of the Gospel can change people’s hearts. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has more power to change the hearts of people than all the military might and legislative powers of any government.

William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, said, **“Government seems to me to be a part of religion itself...let men be good, and the government cannot be bad.”**

Ilias Boudinot, President of the Continental Congress in 1783, said, **“If the moral character of a people once degenerate, their political character must soon follow.”**

Thomas Jefferson, our 3<sup>rd</sup> President, said, **“I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus Christ. I have little doubt that our whole country will soon be rallied to the unity of our Creator.”**

These quotes reveal that the founders weren’t looking to government to change their society, but to safeguard the values that already existed. The way to save the political character of a nation is to change the moral character of its people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The reason our society seems to be morally decaying isn’t because of the government; it’s because the church hasn’t instilled faith in the teachings of the Bible into the hearts of people.

When we cease to win the hearts of people, it's inevitable that these ungodly people will make their way into leadership roles and take the direction of the country with them. However, if we change people's hearts with the Gospel, the people will change the government with their votes.

Part of common decency includes the attitude that you're part of something bigger than yourself; namely, you're part of the Body of Christ. This leads us to principle 7.

### **Principle 7: Personal Accountability to God**

The seventh principle is based on Hebrews 9:27.

#### **Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV)**

**And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**

Perhaps the greatest restraint against acts of evil toward others is the knowledge that every person will one day give an account for their attitudes and actions to Almighty God. Unbelievers will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment (in Revelation 20). They'll be judged based on whether their works measured up to God's standard of righteousness.

Believers (who are already righteous because of the new covenant) will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (in 2 Corinthians 5). Every believer will stand before Christ to receive rewards based on their faithfulness during their lifetimes here on the earth. This will include what they did with their time, talent, and treasure to further the Kingdom of God and to encourage the Body of Christ.

The great American statesman Daniel Webster was once asked, "What's the most sobering thought that ever entered your mind?" He quickly responded, "My personal accountability to God." Webster knew that he would one day stand before God and give an account for his attitudes and actions. The same applies to every man and woman.

As we finish up, let's see how we can cooperate with the original intent of our Founding Fathers; namely, to establish one nation under God. If we believe that the founders were correct in asserting that America would fail if it lost its religious foundation, it is primarily incumbent upon Christian believers to reaffirm and reclaim our Christian heritage with the same passion and commitment of the founders.

Sweeping statement now: The next Great Awakening is poised to begin and you can be part of it. Here's how: Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom just like Jesus said in Matthew 24.

#### **Matthew 24:14 (NKJV)**

**"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."**

Jesus is intimating that what will expedite His second coming is the same thing that will prosper a nation – preaching the gospel of peace and righteousness with the love of God as a foundation. This is the reason the hearts of the people are so important – only when the hearts of people are



changed will a nation ultimately change. The solution for any nation is also what will expedite the second coming of Jesus – preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

The Apostle Paul echoed these sentiments to his protégé Timothy.

**2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NLT)**

**1 I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom:**

**2 Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.**

The original settlers and the early Pilgrims put Paul’s sentiments in writing when they first arrived near Plymouth, Massachusetts. The purpose of the Pilgrims was to establish a political commonwealth governed by biblical standards. The Mayflower Compact, their initial governing document, clearly stated that what they had undertaken was for “the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.” William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth stated their purpose: **“We want to lay a foundation for the propagation and advance of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world.”**

The original intent of the early settlers was to establish a Christian nation to be governed by people who were guided by the precepts of the Holy Bible. Now, it’s our responsibility to carry on that mandate.

When Jonathan Edwards began preaching in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734, the moral conditions were at an extreme low, as was prevalent throughout most of the American colonies. His preaching stressed the importance of an immediate, personal spiritual rebirth (being born again), and as a result, a revival began in his church among the youth and then spread to the adults. Edwards wrote that “in the spring and summer following 1735, the town seemed to be so full of the presence of God; it never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress.” In two years, 300 converts were added to the church, and news of the revival spread throughout New England.

The British Methodist preacher George Whitfield continued the movement, making seven separate trips to America and spending nine years preaching across the colonies. He preached to 5,000 on the Boston Commons and 8,000 at once in the open fields. Between 1740 and 1742, an estimated 25-50,000 people were added to New England churches, changing the region’s moral tone and gaining the name of a “Great Awakening.”

By the year 1800, nearly a million people had made their way west, settling in the area west of the Blue Ridge in Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and in the Indian Territory. Most did not have access to a church, and moral conditions once again went into decline. However, a second great spiritual revival began in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801, and drew as many as 15,000 to 20,000 people. More than 10,000 people were swept into the Kentucky churches between 1800 and 1803.

Charles Finney was one of the greatest American preachers in the 1800’s. During revivals Finney held in Boston, 50,000 put their faith in Christ in just one week. Finney always

demanded a verdict from his question: “What will you do with Jesus Christ?” Perhaps that was a fitting description of what happened across America through the Second Great Awakening. Hundreds of thousands put their faith in Christ and went on to exert a profound spiritual and social impact in their day.

Fast forward to today. Many people today know about Jesus, but they don’t know Him personally.

As we close, I want you to think about a question, and that question is: Do you know Jesus? Many times we ask people, “Are you a Christian?” when perhaps a better question would be: “Do you know Jesus?” According to statistics, between 75 and 85 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christian. Many times a person will readily say, “Yes, I’m a Christian,” but when asked if they know Jesus, they may hesitate. The reason they hesitate is because they may know *about* Jesus, but they don’t necessarily know Him personally. I may be a Christian, but that doesn’t mean I know Jesus personally.

Question: How many of you have ever gotten into a personal or business relationship with someone because they said they were a Christian, and then that relationship didn’t work out? The reason for that is because being a Christian won’t necessarily guarantee success in a personal or business relationship, but knowing Jesus always will.

Perhaps the next Great Awakening will begin with the question, “**Do you know Jesus?**” The next time you’re talking to someone about the things of God, simply ask, “Do you know Jesus?” and then let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

Closing comments now:

The way revival and the next Great Awakening is going to happen in the United States is one person at a time. Here’s why:

Thirty-four percent of Americans say they’re born again. If each born again Christian would just lead one person to faith in Christ and then disciple them during the next year, 68 percent of the total population would be born again, and that would probably lead to a change in the spiritual, social, and political climates in America.

We must get back to the basics of changing the hearts of people, one person at a time, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen? Let’s pray: