THE GOOD CITIZEN:
A FOUR-STEP GUIDE TO GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZENSHIP

BIG IDEA: AS CHRISTIANS, WE ARE CALLED TO PROCLAIM AND LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL IN EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES, INCLUDING OUR ROLE AS CITIZEN (MATT. 28:16-20; PHIL. 1:27). BUT HOW EXACTLY ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO THAT IN AN INCREASINGLY POLARIZED AND PLURAL SOCIETY? HERE'S HOW.

OUR PROMISE: BECAUSE THE TOPIC OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP IS COMPLEX AND INCREASINGLY DIVISIVE, WE DO NOT ADDRESS PARTICULAR POLITICIANS OR LEGISLATION UNLESS REQUESTED. RATHER, WE FOCUS ON PROVIDING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AND WISDOM SO THAT CHRISTIANS CAN APPLY THEM IN THEIR CONTEXT AND ACCORDING TO THEIR CONSCIENCE.

TOPICS COVERED:

- **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT**
- **A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP**
- **THE TENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN AN INCREASINGLY DIVIDED AMERICA**
- **PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BECOMING A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN**

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT

RECENT DATA TELLS US THAT MOST CHRISTIANS DO NOT LOOK TO THEIR CHURCH FOR GUIDANCE OR DISCIPLESHIP ON POLITICAL ISSUES. AT FIRST GLANCE, THIS MAY APPEAR TO BE A GOOD THING, BUT IS IT? SCRIPTURE CONTAINS MANY PRINCIPLES ABOUT THE PROPER ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND OUR RELATION TO GOVERNMENT, AND WE SHOULD KNOW THEM SO WE CAN APPLY THEM.

THE GOOD CITIZEN PROJECT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

MOST CHRISTIANS KNOW LITTLE ABOUT CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP OTHER THAN THE RECENT CULTURE WARS AND, PERHAPS, THE AMERICAN FOUNDERS. BUT, THE CHURCH'S HISTORY IS RICH WITH EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIANS THAT NAVIGATED THE TENSIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN HOSTILE AND EVEN PAGAN CULTURES. WE SHOULD KNOW THESE EXAMPLES (FOR EXAMPLE, THE EARLY CHURCH IN ROME, AUGUSTINE, LUTHER, WILBERFORCE, ETC.) AND FOLLOW THEM.

THE TENSIONS OF PUBLIC LIFE

AS DUAL CITIZENS (CITIZENS OF HEAVEN AND CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES), WE WILL ENCOUNTER TENSIONS IN PUBLIC LIFE. WE WILL BE ASKED TO ABANDON PRINCIPLE FOR THE SAKE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY, AND WE WILL BE TEMPTED TO TREAT OUR IDEOLOGICAL OPPONENTS AS ENEMIES TO BE CRUSHED RATHER THAN PEOPLE TO BE REACHED. WE MUST LEARN TO MANAGE THESE TENSIONS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL AND OUR PUBLIC WITNESS.

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR BECOMING A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN

WE ARE WORKING TO RECLAIM THE WORD "CITIZEN." THINK "NEIGHBOR" BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR CITY, STATE AND NATION. MOST CHURCH LEADERS AND COMMITTED CHRISTIANS WE MEET WANT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS, HELP SOLVE THE TOUGH PROBLEMS IN OUR CITIES AND STATES AND IMPACT THE NATION THROUGH THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. IN THIS PART OF THE PRESENTATION, WE SHARE FOUR PROVEN STEPS FOR BECOMING A GOSPEL-CENTERED CITIZEN AND REACHING THOSE GOALS.

MATERIALS PROVIDED

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
HANDOUT FOR NOTE TAKING
PHOTO AND BIO OF SPEAKER