

*God's Servant for Good*

Is it possible to have the kind of government God intends?

# GOD'S SERVANT FOR GOOD



*A ReVision Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

T . M . M O O R E

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

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A *ReVision* Resource from The Fellowship of Ailbe  
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## Welcome to *God's Servant for Good*

Welcome to *God's Servant for Good*, an overview of and introduction to the role of civil government according to the divine mandate and economy. *God's Servant for Good* is part 2 of a 5-part series on the Christian and civil government. Other titles in the series include:

*Two Swords*  
*The Limits of Politics*  
*Christians and Public Service*  
*When Not to Obey*

Civil governments of all kinds are established by God. He intends them to serve His good purposes by bringing peace and justice to human society. God has determined the ways civil government should fulfill this calling, and it is especially incumbent on Christians to help make sure government serves as God intends.

Governments are necessary for human flourishing. But they serve best when they serve according to God's design and Law. This study will help us to discern the broad parameters of civil government's role as a servant of God for good.

Like the other studies in this series, *God's Servant for Good* has been developed for individual or group use.

We are happy to provide this resource for your use at no charge. If you find these, or other resources of The Fellowship of Ailbe, helpful in your walk with and work for the Lord, please consider sending a gift to support this work and help us extend our outreach to others. You can donate at our website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org), or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

May the Lord bless you as you take up this study of the Lordship of Christ, and how He works to express that through the right working of civil government.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Why Government?

*For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* Romans 7.22, 23

### *Asking questions of government*

It's never a good idea to take for granted that, simply because things are a particular way, that's the way they always ought to be. The world would never know scientific breakthroughs, technological innovations, or bursts of creative genius if scientists, inventors, and artists were not always wondering "Why?" and looking for new and better ways to do or make or say things.

The same holds for government. Simply because we have always known a particular form of government, and because that form of government appears to have some fairly glaring limitations and liabilities, doesn't mean that this is all we should ever expect from our government.

Especially in a nation where the government buck stops on the desk of "We the people", we should always be ready to ask fundamental questions concerning the kind of government we seek, and to take up the quest to achieve that government by every available means.

### *Who needs that?*

So, taking nothing for granted, let's begin by asking the question, Why do we need government at all? After all, government as we know it today appears to many people to be inefficient, self-serving, clueless concerning certain fundamental rights and needs, populated with high-paid elites and their adoring bebies of aides and lackeys, and always ready for the next photo-op or political deal. Who needs that?

Unhappily, corruption, foolishness, waste, and inefficiency come with the governmental turf. We will never know a government that is everything we want it to be, and the reason for this is the same reason we need governments in the first place: Human beings are sinners.

At heart, we're all basically self-seeking and ready to take advantage of others for our own benefit. In the depths of our souls we'd like to be free to say and do whatever we want; however, we're not nearly as happy for that to be the privilege of everyone else.

Wherever you find human beings you will find crime, oppression, injustice, betrayal, and a host of other unpleasantnesses. Bless our hearts, it's just the way we are.

And governments exist to restrain our sinfulness so that the "better side" of our humanity can, if not flourish, at least survive.

### *Curtailing sin*

Human beings require some form of civil government, for often it takes the threat of punishment to curtail the human penchant for sinful behavior.

But where human beings are able to do so, if only to a limited extent, they can learn to work together for mutual benefit and in ways that enrich not only each individual but society as a whole. Human beings are not naturally good; however, because we are made in the image of God, there is a *bent* to goodness, or a longing for it, in each of us that can come to light when the conditions are right, reminding us that we are our brother's keeper and that, if we must act in self-interest, then at the very least we must take care not to violate our neighbor's freedom to enjoy his self-interest at the same time.

Governments are created to ensure a social order in which sin is bridled and space exists for goodness, freedom, prosperity, and neighbor-love to bloom.

We may not like the present form or shape of our government, but we must not suppose that we could get along better without it. Instead, accepting the absolute necessity of civil government, we must define the kind of government we seek. Then, as “We the people,” we must devote ourselves untiringly to the pursuit of that government, at every opportunity, and by every means.

Civil government is not only a human necessity, it is a divine ordinance. God intends civil governments to serve people for good, and Christians have an important role in helping make such government a reality.

*For reflection*

1. What are some of the common concerns you hear about government today?
2. Do you agree that governments are necessary? How would societies survive without some form of government? So if “government” in and of itself is not the problem, what is?
3. What are your goals for this study? What do you hope to learn?

*Next steps: How does your church prepare its members to participate responsibly in the government of our nation?*

*Prayer:*

## 2 Lawful Government

*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Romans 13.1*

### *Authority of government*

In *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter XXIII, we read, “It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.”

This paragraph was composed under the watchful eye and with the help of Samuel Rutherford, Scottish commissioner to the Westminster Assembly of 1643-48.

Do not fail to hear the repeated emphasis: “lawful,” “wholesome laws,” “lawfully.” Samuel Rutherford understood that the authority of government does not derive from hereditary descent, as in a monarchy. Nor does the authority of government derive from the will of the people, as in a democracy, as in America today.

As Rutherford argued in his classic work on civil government, *Lex Rex*, the authority of government derives from God and His Law. Where civil government functions best, where it fulfills its appointed role as a servant of God for good, it functions in line with the being and character of God, as expressed in His revealed Law and Word.

Rutherford’s views and insights were radical and dangerous in his day, and they landed him in prison for fomenting rebellion against the English monarch. They probably seem radical and dangerous to some of us even today.

But the principles of *Lex Rex* were instrumental in forming the framework for a constitutional government founded on law – fixed, unchanging, revealed Law – as was the case with the American Constitution, as the Framers conceived it.

### *God, Law, and society*

Governments are ordained by God, and one thing that is undeniably clear from Scripture is that God relates to human beings and societies on the basis of revealed Law.

God prescribes what is good, upright, just, and loving. Then He holds individuals and nations accountable for living according to what He has revealed. The prophets of the Old Testament railed against Israel and all the nations because of their rebellion against God and His Law. When Paul wrote to the Romans, explaining that governments are ordained by God, implicit in that declaration was the idea of *Lex Rex* – Law, and in particular, God’s Law, being the last word on all matters relating to a flourishing and secure society, not government, and not the people.

In America we have come to a misunderstanding of what is intended by “We the people.” We the people are not empowered to make the laws by which we are governed. Nor should we elect people to office who promise to make laws agreeable to our wants and whims. Human beings, being inherently evil (though longing for good) cannot be trusted to make laws that are sufficiently good to allow for the safety and flourishing of all citizens.

In a good government, citizens and magistrates together seek the best ways of understanding *God’s Law*, and of putting that Law into practice for the wellbeing of society.

Good government – government that secures liberty and makes space for every responsible citizen to flourish – good government recognizes its obligation to God and His Law, to exercise oversight and rule in a way that can expect the approval and help of God, which each holder of public office invokes at his or her swearing-in.

*Rebellion?*

The government we seek must be a government of Law, not merely according to the need of the moment, nor of what may be the opinion of some Americans, as if law is what *we* say it is.

Such a view of government cannot please God and cannot expect to realize His good purposes in creating government in the first place.

The government we seek must seek to learn from God, and it must adopt policies and enact legislation that conform to the pleasure and purposes of our Divine Lawgiver. Anything other than that is rebellion, pure and simple.

*For reflection*

1. What's the difference between saying that lawmakers make law and law comes from God? What's the role of lawmakers in a society where law is acknowledged as coming from God?
2. Do your Christian friends believe that God's Law should have a formative role in the laws of our society? Why or why not?
3. What role does the Law of God have in your own life at this time? Meditate on Psalm 1: Does this picture your relationship to the Law of God?

*Next steps: Can we expect to have a government that honors God's Law if we don't honor God's Law in the Church? Talk with a Christian friend about this question.*

*Prayer:*



### 3 Good Government

*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.* Romans 13.3, 4

*"Good" government?*

Politicians talk a great deal about "good government." They extol the virtues of "good government" and promise that, on their watch, "good government" will once again return to the land.

But "good government" is a most plastic idea, and that, at least in the political arena, is strictly by design. "Good government" these days can mean whatever people want it to mean, until we the people begin pressing our politicians and public servants for more concrete details concerning just what they mean by "good government."

But let us not miss the point that everyone wants "good government." No candidate would be elected to office by running on a platform of "bad government" or "wasteful government" or "corrupt government." We all know that "good" government is what we require and deserve.

We just can't seem to agree on what we mean by that concept.

*The meaning of "good"*

When Paul wrote that government is God's minister, or servant, for your good, what did he have in mind? The Biblical word, "good," is a most important word, which makes it all the more tragic that it has been fairly emptied of all real meaning in our day.

For most of us, "good" means simply, "good for me." We define "good" in terms of what satisfies our tastes, fulfills our needs, and agrees with our agenda. Politicians can campaign boldly and outspokenly on the idea of "good government", but they need to be very careful to define their meaning in terms of the electorate, rather than any enduring value or ideal.

When Paul wrote about "good government" he meant something radically different, something that did not even exist in his own day. He meant that government should be committed to establishing and overseeing society in a way that reflects the pleasure and purposes of God.

In Genesis 1, as God is working His way through the creation week, we see Him pausing every so often to inspect the work He has created. At such points God examined His creation and pronounced His satisfaction with His work by saying that it was "good." God's work expressed God's desire. God's desire derives from His character, and God, we know, is good.

*Good government*

Government is good, therefore, when it is pleasing to God, when it reflects His design and intention for human beings. And what God desires of governments and the people they govern can be summarized in the words, "justice" and "love."

Governments serve the good purposes of God when they sustain a social order where justice is maintained and love is allowed to flourish.

But these terms – "justice" and "love" – must not be left to the vain imaginations of sinful, self-serving human beings. Justice and love are not what *we* say they are, but what *God* says. If we want to see what justice

and love look like we must turn to the Word of God, to study and contemplate His revelation and the ways it guides us in thinking about right social order.

But we must also consider the life and work of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, for in Him we find the purest manifestation of divine justice and love that we can expect to know.

Government is good and serves God when it governs in and for justice and love, reflecting the self-denying, others-serving, truth-directed ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What kind of government do we seek? Good government, government God's way. Tell your public officials.

*For reflection*

1. Why is it not a "good" idea simply to assume that "everyone knows" what we mean by "good"?
2. How would you explain the idea of "good" to a friend?
3. Can government be good by divorcing itself from any meaningful relationship with God? Explain:

*Next steps: How do your unbelieving friends understand what is meant by "good government"? Ask a few of them.*

*Prayer:*

## 4 Selfless Government

*"...you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself." Deuteronomy 17.15-17*

### *An old story*

Governments haven't changed much throughout the course of human history, at least, in some very fundamental ways, one of which is the tendency of government officials to use their office for personal aggrandizement.

Even as far back as the days of Moses, rulers seem to have understood that public service could be very lucrative work for themselves and their friends. The law of sin is just as active now as it was then, so we shouldn't be surprised when public officials today use their office for personal benefit.

It shouldn't surprise us, I say, but that doesn't mean we have to put up with it.

We've seen our share of this lately, no? Sex scandals, tax evasion scandals, favoritism and bribes, trading government jobs and contracts for campaign contributions, manipulating the media for personal gain – it's all very familiar stuff.

And that's a large part of the problem. The more we see this kind of self-serving behavior, the more we become accustomed to it, so that we begin to think it's inevitable.

To some extent it is, of course: human beings never cease being sinful. On the other hand, the public officials we seek should be those whose only interest in serving is the public weal. Personal interests and prosperity must be put on hold for the sake of the common good.

### *Holding officials accountable*

The temptations of office are great, as we know. All that attention. All that power. All that money. All those connections and possible deals. Our public officials do deserve the salaries we pay them, as well as the thanks we render for a job well done. But beyond that, public office should not be a place where men and women jockey and vie for the most visibility, media time, political power, wealth, or worse.

Can voters do anything to help ensure that those who enter public service understand from the beginning that we expect selflessness in our public officials and will hold them accountable accordingly?

I have to believe we can.

For example, we can insist on regular reviews and reports on the practices of our public officials. We want to make sure our governing bodies – such as Congress – enact and enforce rules designed to curtail, expose, and condemn all merely self-serving activities by their own members. Most bodies have such bylaws and regulations, but they aren't always enforced in a manner that seems to fit the offense.

The media are supposed to help keep government officials honest and selfless, but the same temptations of power and access, combined with political agendas and the desire for big ratings, can prevent the media from serving as an effective watchdog.

Private oversight groups – such as [Public Citizen's Congress Watch](#) – provide a useful service as well, but their information only gets to a small number of the public.

Public officials require oversight, and it is part of our duty as “we the people” to discover the best ways of making such oversight a reality.

*Electing selfless officials*

Second, we can refuse to put in office any men or women who have demonstrated that the appeal of public service for them is largely that of self-interest.

This can be hard to judge, of course, but it should not be difficult to devise questions for use, say, at a town hall meeting or campaign rally, which might surface a candidate's or official's deeper motives in seeking to win or remain in public office. Do they answer our questions in ways that indicate they are truly informed about the needs of their constituents and willing to work hard and make sacrifices to see that good government is available for all?

Government serves best which serves in a disinterested, selfless manner. We don't have to put up with public officials who work for government in order to enrich themselves and their cronies. But we'll have to pay more specific attention to this area of political life if we're going to get the kind of selfless government we seek.

*For reflection*

1. Can you cite some examples of self-aggrandizement or self-serving on the part of government officials? How do such things happen?
2. “Watchdogs” exist to keep an eye on self-serving tendencies in government. What can “we the people” do to help ensure these agencies do their job? What should we do when they aren't?
3. How can “we the people” discern when our own actions in the political arena are merely self-serving? How can we resist this tendency?

*Next steps: Would you consider prayer to be a useful place for keeping watch over public officials? Talk with another believer about this question.*

*Prayer:*

## 5 Wise Government

*“Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?”* 2 Chronicles 1.9, 10

*Wise officials?*

“Wisdom” is not a word often heard in association with those who hold public office in America.

“Wasteful”, “wishy-washy”, “waffling”, and “weasely” are a few “w” words that do come to mind. But wisdom seems to be a rare commodity in the public square.

Solomon was a great king throughout the early years of his reign because he sought and received wisdom to rule the nation of Israel well. Only when Solomon’s selflessness gave way to self-interest did his wisdom begin to decline and, finally, evaporate altogether.

*What is wisdom?*

But who would not like to have wise public officials? What do we mean by “wisdom” anyway?

Wisdom is that virtue which is able to put knowledge into practice in ways that honor God and benefit other human beings. Making decisions about public policy is what public officials do, and, since public policy unfolds in the sight of God and, at least ostensibly, for the sake of the public weal, we should hope and work to make sure, as far as possible, that our public servants are wise.

How do we do this?

First, we should look for people who are seeking wisdom. Wisdom is coupled with knowledge in our text, so it stands to reason that one who is expected to act wisely will have a rich store of relevant information, and a few trusted advisors, to help him in formulating policy.

But wisdom is also linked with prayer in our text. We are not likely to find a wise person to rule over us who does not actively seek the Lord for wisdom in knowing how to govern well. We should not hesitate to ask our public officials and candidates for office about their practice of prayer – and to recommend they make good use of it.

We should also make sure that our public servants understand the limits of politics and government (we’ll have more to say about this later in this series). A wise person will not try to make something do more than it can. Government can’t do everything. It can’t meet every need, change human hearts, or do a lot of things that are best left to institutions like the family, the market, and the Church. Wise politicians know to get out of the way in areas where government is inefficient and wasteful, so that those who know better can do the job properly.

Wisdom can also be found by maintaining contact with great figures and periods from the past. Taking potshots at America’s history has become a kind of national pastime with the politically-correct crowd, and it’s easy for politicians and public servants to conclude that reading, studying, or citing America’s, and the world’s, past leaders or times of greatness can sound hollow and might even rile certain supporters to indignation.

Nevertheless, America did not become a great nation without a good deal of wisdom from past leaders. They are fools, not wise, who ignore the lessons of history.

*Political skill*

Truly wise public servants also understand that they work for the public, not their particular political party. Developing skills in bipartisan policy-making, being willing to criticize and correct members of one's own party, and resisting the temptation to denounce and decry every achievement of or proposal made by the other side are also marks of wisdom.

Voters can easily enough let candidates and office-holders know that they value wisdom beyond mere self-interest, and they expect their officials to work hard at becoming wise so that they can govern in a way that pleases God and benefits all.

Wisdom doesn't come easily. We must work hard to attain it. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111.10), so we should be especially vigilant to encourage our public officials not to neglect their duty in seeking the Lord, in Whose Name they take their oath of office.

The government we seek must be a wise government, and wisdom is a gift from God to all who seek it.

*For reflection*

1. Define "wisdom" and give some examples of everyday expressions of wisdom:
2. Is it wrong to insist that government be wise? Can you think of some examples of government acting wisely? What are some things you can do to insist on wisdom in government?
3. The opposite of wisdom is folly, or, foolishness. When do governments begin to act in foolish rather than wise ways?

*Next steps: What would you describe as some examples of wise government in our country at this time? What makes these wise? Talk with a Christian friend about these questions.*

*Prayer:*

## 6 Strong Government

*Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. 1 Samuel 13.8, 9*

### *A strong leader?*

By some accounts Saul was a strong king over Israel. He united a nation that had been riven by civil war. He was able to defeat the Ammonites, a persistent nemesis of Israel, and thereby to renew the nation's sense of identity and hope. And he routed the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and the kings of Zobah.

To his contemporaries, Saul must have seemed very much the right choice for king. He was a strong leader whom none of Israel's enemies could overcome.

But it's one thing to be strong against the foes of a nation, and quite another to be a strong king, or a strong government. In Saul's case, as it turned out, he was not able to provide a strong government for Israel because he was not himself a strong person.

### *Characteristics of strong government*

Nations need strong governments, but strength is not determined by military prowess alone. Saul provides us with several good lessons on what it means to be a strong government.

Strong governments understand the limits of civil government, and they don't try to do more than what government should do in being a servant of God for the good of the nation. Saul was fearful of losing the devotion of the people, so he overstepped the limits of his role as king and offered sacrifices which only the priest, specifically Samuel, should have offered.

No government is strong which, seeking to retain the devotion of the people, exceeds the limits of its rightful authority. Governments weaken themselves and their nation when they usurp the responsibilities or duties of individuals, families, local communities, or private institutions. Matters such as the education of our children, vocational training, health care, and the regulation of markets and prices have fared as well, if not better, without government intervention and regulation. The state of America's schools today provides a case study in how government usurpation of parental rights weakens everyone involved.

Government can't do everything, and most of what a nation requires in order to flourish is the responsibility of agencies other than government. Governments, like Saul, may appear to be bold and helpful when they transgress the limits of their power, but they actually weaken themselves and the nation they serve when they do so.

Weak governments also demand more of their people than is reasonable. The strictures against eating which Saul imposed on his army, as well as his irrational and paranoid demands of those in his inner circle, weakened his ability to rule and drove his nation toward civil war.

Governments which promulgate unjust structures of taxation, make political loyalty the test of public service, and impose increasing regulatory burdens on the population may appear to be strong and controlling, but they are actually weak and unstable, and they weaken the intermediating structures and institutions of society, as well as the civic and political morale of the populace.

### *A just and loving social order*

Strong governments commit to doing only what is required to secure a just and loving social order. They

resist the temptation to expand into areas reserved for individuals and social institutions, and they concentrate on enforcing just laws and protecting the liberties of those they serve.

It is ironic that governments which seem to be strong and well-nigh invincible can actually be fragile and ready suddenly to dissolve when the right pressures are brought to bear against their weaknesses.

The government we seek will be strong by resisting the temptation to be or do more than what is required of it, thus curbing political self-interest and allowing other agencies and institutions of society to remain strong and viable themselves.

*For reflection*

1. What are some things that can tend to make a government weak, in spite of outward appearances?
2. Give some examples of what you consider to be government overstepping its lawful bounds in our society. How do such situations come about?
3. Would you say our own government is tending toward greater strength or more weakness? Why? What do you think might be some "right pressures" that could cause our own government to succumb to its weaknesses? Can anything be done about this?

*Next steps: What is your responsibility as a Christian to help ours be a good, selfless, wise, and strong government? Ask a few Christian friends about this. What practical steps might you take together?*

*Prayer:*



## 7 Gospel-friendly Government

*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior... 1 Timothy 2.1-3*

### *A time to oppose*

A cursory reading of Paul's teaching about government from Romans 13 might leave the impression that whatever government demands of its people, they must be ready to perform. Some might believe Paul to be saying that we must obey whatever government tells us to do, and not resist its authority.

But that would be to misunderstand Paul's view of government as a servant of God for good. As Paul himself demonstrated, and as Scripture teaches throughout, any government that goes beyond what God authorizes, or which ignores His good and perfect will, is susceptible to falling into corruption and decay. And at times it may be necessary to oppose such governments, even to disobey the demands they make of us (more on this in a later installment in this series).

This is especially the case where the promulgation of the Gospel is concerned.

### *Government and the divine economy*

Whenever in Scripture governments positioned themselves in the way of God's plan for His people and His economy for the world, those governments ended up with the short end of the stick. Pharaoh, the enemies of Israel, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod – all learned the hard way that you cannot flout the eternal purposes of God and expect to remain long in power.

Paul understood this well, and this is why he taught that civil governments should make it possible for people, and for Christians, to live peaceful and quiet lives, godly and dignified in every way.

The government we seek will be a Gospel-friendly government. It will understand that the Christian religion, contrary to the claims of some of its detractors, has been the greatest force for beauty, goodness, and truth in the history of the world.

It will understand that the wisdom and spiritual insight of the Scriptures far surpass all the noblest and best teachings of philosophers and religious thinkers from every age.

And it will not impose burdens on the Church that prevent her from seeking and advancing the Kingdom of God and the benefits of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit that Kingdom brings to all men (Rom. 14.17, 18).

### *Creating good government*

But the government we seek – government which serves God and people according to His good purposes and plan – is not out there waiting for us to find it. The government we seek – lawful, good, selfless, wise, strong, and Gospel-friendly – will have to be created; and in this country that must be done by “we the people” who represent the bottom line of the civil order.

We are naïve and foolish to think that our existing government will “reform” itself to become the kind of government we seek. This government, like many governments, has strayed too far into the mode of self-perpetuation, self-aggrandizement, and self-indulgence to be willing to rein itself in in any kind of meaningful way.

“We the people” must work to secure the government we seek. That work begins in prayer, prayer for our existing government and political leaders, prayer for the kind of government we understand to be pleasing to God and beneficial to men, and prayer for our nation and its people, that we may wake up to the demands of good government before our weak and growing weaker government drags us over the brink of national disaster.

We must pray, and we must educate ourselves in a Biblical view of government, talk with one another and with our neighbors, become more involved in the process of creating the government we seek – and pray, pray, pray.

This country does not need to end up in the dust bin of history. It's not too late to see God-honoring government at all levels in our society. But to gain that high objective we shall have to bend low on our knees, seeking the Lord daily for the kind of government we seek.

*For reflection*

1. What would be some indicators of a “Gospel-friendly” government?
2. What would be some signs suggesting that a government was turning away from “Gospel-friendliness”?
3. What are the most important things you’ve learned from this series of studies? How do you plan to take a more active role in helping to make sure that “we the people” have the kind of government outlined in this series?

*Next steps: For you, what next steps do you need to take in order to help our government become God's servant for good? And if you do nothing, what can you expect? Share your thoughts and plans with a Christian friend.*

*Prayer:*

*Questions for discussion*

1. Do you agree that Christians should look to Scripture to guide them in thinking about such matters as politics and government? Why or why not?
2. What should be the role of a local church in wielding the Sword of the Spirit to help its members work for a proper wielding of the political sword?
3. What does it mean for government to be:
  - Lawful?
  - selfless?
  - good?
  - wise?
  - strong?
  - Gospel-friendly?
4. How can we tell when civil government is overstepping the bounds of its divinely-given mandate and stretching past the limits of political power and authority?
5. How will you begin to become more actively involved in working to help civil government become more the servant of good God intends?

*Prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship to help us extend our ministry and resources to others. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.