

7 Biblical Principles for World Changers

The Bible is not only the world's most widely distributed book (by the billions), it is also the world's most widely banned book. That's because it is not just an eclectic assortment of ancient religious traditions. Rather, it is the ultimate threat to the status quo of prideful, human kingdom-building, the ultimate collection of divinely inspired revolutionary writings.

With that in mind, here are seven biblical principles for world changers:

1) "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet" (Matt. 5:13, ESV). In the ancient world, salt had a number of different functions, including serving as a preservative. When applied to the followers of Jesus, this speaks of our calling to be the moral conscience of society. But this high calling comes with a serious warning. As New Testament scholar R.V. Tasker explained, if the Lord's followers are "called to be a moral disinfectant in a world where moral standards are low, constantly changing, or non-existent ... they can discharge this function only if they themselves retain their virtue." We cannot change the world if we ourselves are not changed.

2) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ... [So] let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 5:14, 16). The greatest problem in America today is not so much the presence of darkness as it is the absence of light. Put another way, it is no surprise that sinful people do sinful things. (Do we really

expect carnally minded Hollywood producers to put out God-glorifying, biblically based, family-friendly flicks?) And so we can't be shocked when the darkness is dark. Instead, we who claim to be devoted to God must shine the light brightly, and we must do it in deed and not only in word. This begins with compassionate ministry to the hurting and the poor.

3) "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31) It's so easy to put our trust in numbers, as if revolutionary change can only happen when our side is in the majority. But even the secular world knows this is not true. As Fidel Castro remarked, "I began revolution with 82 men. If I had to do it again, I'd do it with 10 or 15 and absolute faith. It does not matter how small you are if you have faith and plan of action." If that's what Castro could do with a handful of dedicated men, what could God do with them?

4) "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). If we become as mean-spirited and hateful as those who oppose us, we have already lost the battle. As Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." We must set our goals higher, by exposing what is wrong and modeling what is right, not by getting dragged down into the dirt.

5) "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). As the old saying goes, you can win the argument but lose the point (or the person!). Don't let pride or a quick temper dictate your speech (or your online communication). Step back, get control of your emotions, and reach out rather than attack. You'll be amazed with the results that you get. (Yes, this is easier said than done, but the rewards are well worth the effort.)

6) "All the nations are as nothing before [God], they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness" (Is. 40:17). Remember to keep your perspective.

Some of the most ferocious, intimidating leaders of history are nothing more than dust and ashes today, and the Iron Curtain, the Bamboo Curtain and the Berlin Wall all came down in the last generation. As a historian once observed, 2,000 years ago, Nero was considered to be the divine emperor while the apostle Paul was a little known Roman prisoner, soon to be beheaded. Who knew that centuries later, people would call their dogs Nero and their sons Paul?

7) “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). These words were spoken by Jesus to his disciples shortly before He was betrayed and crucified, and they are as relevant today as ever. Jesus wanted them (and us) to know that no one will be totally exempt from pain or suffering or hardship. But, Jesus added, take heart and be at peace. Just as He overcame every obstacle (including death itself!), we His followers can overcome too. In other words, “We shall overcome” was not just the song of the Civil Rights movement. It is our song too. “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

There are many more principles like these in the Scriptures, but let’s get started by implementing these seven. It will revolutionize our world.

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