

Steer Clear of This Kind of Dangerously Misplaced Trust

The well-meaning dad was fairly certain his plan would work. He would buy a car for his cherished yet prodigal daughter. She would realize how much her dad loved her and be so appreciative she would forsake her immoral lifestyle and return home. His daughter, however, had no such intentions. She used the car as yet another means to pursue her friends' godless and tumultuous lifestyles that she so craved. Not surprisingly, Dad soon sold the car.

In a similar manner, God had given His cherished people, the Israelites, amazing gifts. He delivered them from slavery in Egypt. He miraculously provided for their every need and led them triumphantly into battle where they gained possession of the Promised Land. He sent various judges to settle their disputes. He loved being their King. Yet it didn't take long for them to take note of the nations around them. Like a middle schooler desiring to fit in at all costs, they wanted to be like the other nations—nations that could see their kings as they marched off to war. The Israelites had put their trust in what they could feel, see, touch and hoped they could control.

The people said, "Surely a king will be over us! So that we also will be like all the nations! And so that our king will govern us, and will go out before us, and will fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:19-20).

It must have hurt God's heart to hear the people request a king to judge them and fight their battles. Those were His roles. He was being replaced.

The prophet Samuel tried to warn the people of the consequences of having a king, but their minds were made up.

God, knowing their hearts, told Samuel, “It is not you they have rejected, but Me they have rejected from reigning over them” (1 Sam. 8:7).

It is interesting to watch the drama unfolding in today’s political climate. Even Christians are distraught, thinking doomsday is around the corner because of this world leader or that world leader. It seems that we, like the Israelites, are putting our trust in human leaders, as if they are the only entities that can effect change. If the right person is elected, we believe everything will be fine. We act as if we didn’t know that it is God who “removes kings and sets up kings” (Dan. 2:21). In actuality, it is our actions, more than our votes and protests, that help determine the kind of world leaders we have.

Yes we should take advantage of our opportunity to vote. We do even better when we pray for those God has allowed into office and when we live our own lives in a godly manner (1 Tim. 2:2). God tells us—not just the government or the nonprofits—to do our own part to care for the orphans and the widows (James 1:27) and the strangers in our midst (Deut. 10:19). Did you realize our actions can determine the spirituality of our leader? Listen to Samuel tell the Israelites how they can actually influence the mindset of their king:

“If you will fear the Lord, and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then both you and the king that reigns over you will continue following the Lord your God” (1 Sam. 12:14).

Could it be that our leaders are actually a reflection of who we are? Could it be that if we, God’s people—not the politicians nor the nation’s superstars nor any of our other idols—would humble ourselves and pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways, that God would hear from heaven, forgive our sin and heal our land? (2 Chron. 7:14).

As Christians, we say we want godly leaders (or at least moral ones), and yet we can't even agree amongst ourselves on what that looks like. Could that be because the only godly king is God Himself? We can't "see" Him. We don't always understand Him, and we certainly cannot control Him. He doesn't do things our way and doesn't ask our opinion. Yet I have a feeling that if we humbled ourselves and served Him as our King, our leaders would follow suit. Wouldn't that be something? {eoa}

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