



## When Disappointment Turns to Discouragement

What patriot is not disappointed with the recent election results? The prospect of four more years of the same old, same old is enough to dampen the spirit of even the brightest-eyed optimist. Any constitutionalist has to wonder just how far outside the boundaries of the written law and moral truth we can wander before something finally snaps. Historians tell us no nation has ever slid this deep into collectivism and amorality and pulled out. Prophets of doom are claiming we are already past the point of no return.



But the gravest danger on the horizon is not coming from outside the circle of Americans fighting for less government. The gravest danger is a growing discouragement within our own ranks. Sometimes within one's own self. Many, Christians especially, have just given up. Some believe the battle is lost: Obama and agnostics are successfully implementing laws to eliminate religious freedoms almost at will, and culturally, sex, smut, and immorality rarely ever rate public condemnation. When condemnation does happen, it is often directed at Christians, not at "wrong." Others believe that modern events match well with biblical prophecies that indicate we are at the "end times," the times immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. In either case they have adopted the credo, "Why bother?"

Well, I want to tell why we should bother and tell how to be effective.

### Why Bother

Let me start with two reasons that Christians should get involved. First, absent action, things can always get worse. Isaiah 5:13 teaches that a nation can be taken into captivity because the people, even God's people, lack knowledge and understanding. As government power rises, so inevitably does oppression. Take for example government mass murder in Cambodia, Russia, Germany, China, Guatemala, Uganda, and elsewhere, as well as Europe's increasing use of "hate speech" laws to persecute Christians in those nations.

Assuredly, America's first president would concur. A statement attributed to George Washington that encapsulates his view is: "Government is not reason, it is not eloquence, it is force. Like fire it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." Benjamin Franklin, too: "No man's life, liberty or property is safe as long as the legislature is in session."

Second, since, as it says in Matthew 25:13, "ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh," Christians must not shirk our responsibility to help fulfill God's plans on Earth as long as we are needed. In the manner of our Founding Fathers, let us do our duty to God and trust Him to provide miraculous results.

When Jesus walked the Earth and performed miracles, He required humans to trust Him and do the part they were told to do. Then the miracle came. For instance, at the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus required men to fill pots with water before He would provide more wine for the wedding party. If those



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men had not done their duty, it is unlikely Jesus would have added His part, the miracle.

What about the miracle of feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two fishes? If the little boy had refused to share his lunch with Jesus, there would have been no miracle. There is no doubt that the Son of God could have created the loaves and fishes out of nothing if He wanted. But what He wanted was a person who would make the sacrifice that invites the miracle.

Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He told some men to roll away the huge stone closing the grave. No doubt if He could raise to life someone who had been dead four days, He could move a stone, no matter how large. But Jesus required human agents to be involved. No matter how minute a part a human being plays in God's miracles, God chooses to make us an essential part of His greater plan.

Did you note that in each of these examples, Jesus did not expect people to work miracles? America needs a miracle! God is in the miracle-working business. The first ingredient of miracles is for man to invite the miracle and assist in the receiving of the miracle by hopefully and dutifully doing his part. If America's enemies succeed in discouraging America's patriots, if they can trick us into giving up hope and walking off the battlefield, how can we expect a miracle from God?

James A. Garfield as a young minister had an aversion to politics. But being a truth-seeker, he eventually saw in his Bible God's instructions for civil government. He became convinced that a Christian's duty was to participate in public affairs. Before becoming president in 1881, he wrote on the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence the following insightful and prophetic message: "Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the people tolerated ignorance, recklessness, and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature. If the next centennial [1976] does not find us a great nation ... it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation did not aid in controlling the political forces."

### **Staying Motivated**

But, you say, it's hard to stay involved in a losing effort. True, *if you perceive it* to be a losing effort. But how you perceive events is up to you.

When I was elected in 2010 to be a Texas county judge, I closed a 35-year family counseling practice. As a counselor I served over 10,000 clients. Most of those people had one thing in common: They had allowed life's disappointments to turn into personal discouragement.

It is one thing to experience disappointment. That can be painful enough. But it is a much more serious matter to allow those disappointments to eat away at our resolve. When we allow a dark cloud that is over us to move inside us, we have moved from a manageable problem to a seemingly overwhelming and insurmountable disaster.

Please note that disappointments by themselves cannot overwhelm us. We cannot be overwhelmed until we allow the problems pressing on us to take root in us. Once we have moved from being disappointed to the point of being discouraged, we have started down the path that robs us of our courage to act. That is what the word discourage means: to deprive of courage.

If disappointments automatically caused discouragement, then someone like Mother Teresa should have died the most discouraged person on Earth. Her decades-long battle against poverty and disease ended with a larger portion of the world's population in poverty and disease than when she began. However,



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she did not die discouraged, but joyful. How did she keep so many of life's disappointments from turning into discouragement? Obviously she did not stick her head in the sand or walk through a world of hurt wearing self-deceiving, Pollyannaish blinders. No, Mother Teresa faced the reality of grave disappointments without succumbing to debilitating discouragement for two primary reasons. First, she committed her sacrificial works in order to please God. Second, she took joy in serving each impoverished person that she could.

This leads to the all-important question: How do we keep our disappointments about what is happening in the political arena from turning into a personal discouragement that paralyzes us into inaction and defeat? Are we supposed to go through life with a Pollyannaish denial of the reality surrounding us? No, of course not. Pollyannaish denial also leads to inaction and defeat. This head-in-the-sand approach to politics was one of the main issues causing the disastrous results of the recent election.

Unconcerned people don't investigate the truth of things and don't view events historically. They do not know what happens to a people when their government is allowed to exceed its boundaries. Indifferent people do not take the time to stay informed. That is why they are not motivated to take action.

Not only must we avoid "denial," but we must develop a capacity for seeing the big picture, in order to be able to offer solutions to problems and generate hope in others.

Have you ever heard the old saying, "He can't see the forest for the trees?" The obvious point is that a person can be so close to a small clump of trees that he can no longer see the larger forest.

When applied to counseling, this describes nearly everyone I have ever counseled. In effect each one had put his nose up against an ugly, rotten tree in the forest of his life (a happening in his life). Losing the larger view of life led to an inability to think of a workable solution. Often they had become depressed and lost hope that there was even a solution.

When applied to patriotism, this describes the average American today. Most have never been given the larger picture. I sometimes refer to this bigger picture as the "hillside view." Having had public education, most Americans have never received the sweeping historical picture of mankind's struggle to find a governmental system that allowed the most personal liberty while protecting them from tyranny. In their religious training, most never received the Judeo/Christian view of the unprecedented God-given blessings received when the free-market economic system is practiced.

### **Winning Strategy**

The aforementioned counseling principle also suggests the obvious first step to winning the battle to restore Americanism: Before we can expect consistent wins at the ballot box, we must win the battle in the minds of our friends and neighbors. Before we can win elections, we must win the electorate. We win the electorate by educating them about both what built up America and what is tearing down America, not by giving up or ignoring the problem.

The essential foundational victory will not be won in Washington or in our state capitals. It must be won first among our friends and neighbors in our houses, schools, churches, and towns. And remember, what we are "for" always has to be more important than what we are "against." Our approach must always include the hillside view.

If I approach my neighbor with a serious problem but I don't tie my concerns to the freedom principle being violated, then I may have helped America's enemies by inviting my neighbor to stick his nose against one ugly, rotten tree in a beautiful forest. If I don't keep the big picture in mind, if I don't



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express opposition from the perspective that this is a bad idea because it violates a good principle, I could find myself squarely in the middle of a big dose of discouragement. When working to reach a neighbor who has had his head in the sand, there has to be a balance between focusing on what is destroying America and what made her great.

This is why I have been such an ardent reader of The New American magazine from its very first issue: In the framework of what is right about America, I get the unvarnished truth about the destructive actions our current leaders are taking. While the magazine educates me about the ugly, rotten trees, I am constantly reminded of the beautiful forest planted by America's Founding Fathers.

Moreover, it must be made clear that in politics all outcomes are planned: Stalin and his henchmen planned to take over Russia, Hitler and his helpers planned to rule Germany, President Wilson and his mentor Edward Mandell House planned to bring about socialism in this country, FDR worked to discard the Constitution and embroil us in a world governing body, the European Common Market was meant to become a regional Europe-wide government (something nearly everyone admits nowadays, but for decades denied), and Goldman Sachs works to place its executives in important positions throughout government to influence financial laws and government spending. If people think that the repercussions of political events are merely unintended consequences or naively conceived plans, they will feel helpless to change things. If they feel that a plan can be laid and followed to unmake mistakes, they will likely feel empowered.

There are two basic views of world history: the accidental view of history and the conspiratorial view of history. And actual political history, as has been made clear, has been the result of groups of individuals working secretly toward a common, illicit goal — such as enveloping all nations in a world government.

A good example of this comes from Arnold J. Toynbee, historian, Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA). The RIIA is the British sister organization to America's Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). Writing in 1931, Toynbee stated, "I will merely repeat that we are at present working, discreetly but with all our might, to wrest this mysterious political force called sovereignty out of the clutches of the local national states of our world. And all the time we are denying with our lips what we are doing with our hands."

David Rockefeller, chairman emeritus of the CFR, wrote in his autobiography *Memoirs* about his family's political agenda, saying, "Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the best interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as 'internationalists' and of conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure — one world, if you will. If that's the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it."

Of course, plans that would be unpopular with the masses when they are initiated are often hidden in plain sight merely through denying the obvious. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* on August 25, 1980, 22 years before his admission in his autobiography, David Rockefeller scoffed at the idea that he and other powerful Americans were working in concert to establish a one-world political and economic structure. He began the letter, "I never cease to be amazed at those few among us who spot a conspiracy under every rock, a cabal in every corner."

Knowing that people are instigating strife to benefit their own ends allows patriots to create effective countermeasures; we can stop villains' destructive behavior. If we fail to see determined, organized efforts at work, over time patriots will be discouraged, lose hope, and retreat from the fight.

Keeping a good balance in our lives is another essential to fighting off discouragement and winning the



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battle for freedom. The most effective warrior will treat our struggle to restore and preserve freedom as if it is a marathon, not a sprint.

The person who wages the battle for freedom while nurturing his marriage and family, while being a good worker on his job or in his business and being a great neighbor, over time makes the best patriot.

The most effective talk I ever heard on balancing one's life so that no major God-given responsibility is allowed to fall through the cracks was given in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1967 by Ezra Taft Benson, former secretary of agriculture during the Eisenhower administration. Two key points helped prepare me to ward off discouragement: "Don't neglect your family while striving to increase your income," and "Be willing to make sacrifices to preserve the freedom principles that allow you to have a family and have a means to personally provide for them."

Following in Benson's footsteps, turn your disappointment into a renewed determination to sustain your hope, do your duty, and hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

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