

Worldview And Government

What Controls Our Character

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We certainly got a wake up call this morning. We might say, "Well, how was that loving?" after hearing that sermonette ["Omni Agape"]. Well, to me it was very loving in that it happened so deep in the earth, but yet the power that was unleashed in that—8.8, which was one thousand times greater than the power unleashed in Haiti—but because it was so deep, it did not really affect Chile and the people there as much as it could have.

Some might say, "Well, what we saw there was actually unleashed resident forces." Well, maybe that's true. Maybe it was resident forces, but God is omnipresent. He is everywhere, all at once, and He knew that thing was going to occur. He had the choice of even allowing it to occur right there, or maybe having it occur ten, fifteen, twenty miles closer to the surface. Just a little reminder of the power that is inherent there. Chile has already experienced—in the 1960s—a 9.5 earthquake, the greatest tremor ever recorded on Earth. Just a little tweaking of the mind of what lies ahead. And to us, it's enough to note and make sure that we get ourselves close to God because that's where safety is.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "If you want to see a man's true character, give him the power to govern." What he said did not solve anything, but it did suggest a test by which a person's—any person; male or female—inner drives might be and how they can be seen. The English word *govern* is derived from a Greek root that passed through Latin before it got into English, and that Greek root transliterates into *kuberna*. In Latin, it becomes *gubernare*, with a G sound before becoming *govern* in English. Now, interestingly, that same Greek word is also the parent word of *cybernetics*, except that the path into English made an additional step through the French language first.

Kuberna appears in the very well-known honor fraternity Phi Beta Kappa. Those Greek letters stand for *philosophia niou kubernetes*, and that translates into this phrase: "The love of wisdom is the pilot of life." That leads us to what *govern* means. *Govern* in its simplest form, means, "to guide, to pilot to steer." Here are some more synonyms that will help you to understand the way it is used in English. It means, "to rule, to control, to direct, to manage, to run, to lead, to captain, to command, to head up, to look after, to be in charge, to hold sway over, to run the show, be the whip hand," and there are more yet.

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As you can see, *govern* also implies—it's right inherent within the word—the power that is needed to guide, tow pilot, or to steer, and therefore *governs* usage tends to expand into stronger terminology like "rule, command, show, direct by right or authority given." It also means, "to control the course of action." So, *govern* is the verbal root, suggesting action, like guiding, managing or controlling in any given direction or manner.

Now *government* is the noun form of that word, and it implies administration that runs all the way from the affairs of a single person up to and including the body of people guiding the affairs of an entire nation. To *administer* means, "to manage, have charge or the direction of."

It's right here that we get back to Abraham Lincoln's statement, because it's right here that character becomes all important because administration reveals the means, the manner, and the way the guidance and control and piloting are accomplished. What becomes all important at this point is, what is it that determines character? Because this determines the manner in which—at any level, high or low—the bearing of authority and responsibility to guide or steer or pilot is administered.

The answer is actually something quite simple, and yet it is complex at one and the same time. It is a broad principle containing quite a number of facets that work to form it, but I believe that it is essential that we understand what it is that forms character in its simplest form. It is a person's world view. It is a person's point of view. It is the way a person looks at things. It is a person's perspective or attitude.

Proverbs 16:25 says it this way:

Proverbs 16:25 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

I recently read a book I previously read about ten or fifteen years ago. It was titled, *How Should We Then Live?* It was written by Francis A. Schaeffer, and he is one of modern Evangelical Christianity's more respected authors, but he is now deceased. In his book, he analyzed the general perspective or spirit of the times, the *zeitgeist* of the so-called Christian cultures, beginning about 1000 AAD. It is interesting the way he did this. He did it through the medium of the art that artists in those periods of time—that is, paintings and sculpture left behind for our viewing and understanding—because he felt that they reflected what was going on at that time.

Francis Schaeffer's broad answer to the question, "How should we then live?" is drawn

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from Ezekiel 33, where God says—and do not forget this—"as I live," says the Lord." Now, we cannot do this to God's level. But now that God has opened up our minds, we can make strong efforts to follow the pattern as it was expressed in Jesus' life. As a man, Jesus lived God's way.

It's right here that we face a major, everyday problem. Are we making life's choices through the eyes of God, using the perspective—the point of view—of God's outgoing love toward Him, His kingdom, fellow man, ourselves, and our decisions' possible consequences? It's very important to character.

Which way are we going to go? Or, are we motivated by human nature's perspective, its world view (or point of view), which is self centered? It is this decision that will determine how we manage—that is, govern—the affairs of our life. Life's choices teeter between these two contrasting perspectives.

God is not expecting us in any way, shape, or form to manage this world's governance, or even the community we live in, or the company that we work for. But He is expecting us to use His worldview—His perspective; His point of view—to govern our life within the framework of what is going on around us, and that, by itself, is plenty hard enough for anybody.

This world is in a chaotic mess because each person is essentially doing what is right in his own eyes. That "right" is a bad mixture of good and evil. Now, with what God is doing in our lives—the lives of those that he is creating in His image, I want you to understand—is solving this world's problems. As Mr. Armstrong said so many times, "Whatever God does through man always begins at its smallest point, and it grows and grows until it is the biggest thing going."

In one sense, this is creative solution by God to man's problems all began with one man. His name is Abraham, the father of the faithful. But it is growing, albeit by extremely small steps, seemingly one person at a time, and it becomes the responsibility of each person called to turn his life around by managing his *own* life, from God's point of view—not over other people; himself. Not even somebody as close as your spouse. Yourself. In one sense, that is the objective each person must aim for in his life after being called.

This is what Adam and Eve failed to do. But God is solving this chaotic, earthly mess by motivating His children to govern their own lives rightly. Right governance, regardless of the size of the family, community, state, nation, or world, is accomplished through each part, voluntarily of his own will, by faith managing himself rightly—from God's point of

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view. That brethren, is the point of our calling.