

Life Group Notes 11/23/2025 Mark Warren Sacred Order Week 5

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Leaders: *please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group. Scan the detailed questions that follow the AI-generated study questions, to see if you want to add any more detailed questions.*

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/5. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another**

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

Footnotes are added to supply detail, and to enhance the study. Use at your discretion, and know any questions are welcomed. This week's footnotes cover:

1. [On the difference between the USA's inalienable rights and the French Revolution's rights of man and of the citizen.](#)

The new format begins with a summary of the notes, followed by study questions. This week, notes in full detail can be found beginning on page 3:

Section I: Summary

Here's "co-pilot's" AI summary of the Sermon Lifegroup Notes:

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- Gratitude and Faith in Politics: Participants are encouraged to share what they are grateful for and to wrestle with the question of how followers of Jesus should engage with politics, including the limitations and responsibilities of Christians in government roles. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
 - Biblical Foundation: The section references Philippians 3:20-21, emphasizing that Christians' true citizenship is in heaven. It contrasts Paul's example with those who focus on earthly things, challenging readers to consider whether they can say, "Follow my example," and how Paul demonstrates his heavenly citizenship. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)

- Challenges and Stress involved with discussing religion and politics: The topics are acknowledged as difficult and potentially stressful, likened to “stepping on Legos in your bare feet.” Readers are invited to share personal testimonies about why faith and politics can feel uncomfortable. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
- Lessons from Biblical Government Workers: The notes explore the stories of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, Mordecai, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Paul, highlighting how these figures served in government without compromising their faith. Questions prompt reflection on how believers can honor leaders while maintaining integrity. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
- Spiritual Renewal and Civic Responsibility: Ezra and Nehemiah are presented as examples of how worship and government can work together for the flourishing of people. Proverbs passages are used to discuss the impact of the righteous and the wicked in society. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
- Christian Engagement: The section asks how Christians can engage in public life in a way that honors God, including practical steps such as praying for leaders, staying informed, voting biblically, and engaging locally. The importance of keeping one’s focus on Jesus and stewarding freedoms is emphasized. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
- Christian Nationalism vs. Christian Influence: There is a discussion on the difference between “Christian nationalism” (nation as God’s Kingdom) and “Christian influence” (nation under God’s Kingdom), stressing that identity should be rooted in Christ, not nationality. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
- Constitutional Rights and Stewardship: The notes reflect on the biblical perspective of protecting constitutional rights, the importance of the US Constitution, and the responsibility to preserve freedoms for future generations. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)
- Reflection and Application: Readers are encouraged to reflect on new insights, next steps, obstacles, and to pray for the preservation of rights. The SOAP method is suggested for deeper personal study of scripture. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)

This section is designed to prompt thoughtful discussion, personal reflection, and practical application of faith in the realm of politics and civic life, always with an emphasis on honoring God and serving others. [\[11-23-2025...der Week 5 | Word\]](#)

Section II: Study questions

- What are you most grateful for?
- How should followers of Jesus view and live out faith in the world of politics?
- Should a Christian run for office? Explain.
- Are there limitations to a Christian’s place in government?
- Are there limits to what a Christian in office should say or do?
- Is there a limit to when and where one can mention Jesus? Explain.
- What does it mean that “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20-21)?
- How does Paul’s example in Philippians 3:17-19 challenge you?
- Can you say, “Follow my example,” yet? Why or why not?
- How does Paul prove his “citizenship is in heaven”?

- Why can discussing faith and politics feel uncomfortable or stressful?
- What lessons can we learn from biblical government workers (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, Mordecai, Ezra, Nehemiah, Paul)?
- How did Daniel serve in government without defiling himself?
- How can believers honor leaders without compromising their faith?
- How do spiritual renewal and civic responsibility work together?
- What do Proverbs 11:10, 29:16, and 28:28 teach about the impact of the righteous and the wicked in society?
- How can Christians engage in public life in a way that honors God?
- What is the difference between Christian nationalism and Christian influence?
- Why is it important to protect freedoms and constitutional rights from a biblical perspective?
- What practical steps can Christians take to engage in politics and public life faithfully?

Section III: Complete study notes

Take the time to share what you are most grateful for.

Today we struggled with this question: **How should followers of Jesus view and live out faith in the world of politics?**

1. What do you think?
2. Are there limitations to a Christian's place in government?
3. Are there limits to what a Christian in office should say or do?
4. Is there a limit to when and where one can mention Jesus? Explain.

Pastor began in Philippians 3:²⁰*But our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who, by the power that enables Him to subject all things to Himself, will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body.*

1. What do you see?
2. In context, compare yourself with those Paul presented in contrast in the previous verses: ¹⁷*Join one another in following my example, brothers, and carefully observe those who walk according to the pattern we set for you. ¹⁸For as I have often told you before, and now say again even with tears: Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and their glory is in their shame. Their minds are set on earthly things.* Discuss Paul's example.
3. How are you doing? Can you say, "Follow my example," yet?
4. How does Paul set out to prove that his "citizenship is in heaven?"

Mark forewarned us, saying, "This topic can make it feel like you're stepping on Legos in your bare feet in the middle of the night."

1. Is that true? Have you ever stepped on Legos with bare feet?
2. Why can it feel that way? Do you have a testimony?
3. Does the topic add stress to your life?

Pastor invites us to look at lessons to be gleaned from ancient government workers whom we can discover in the biblical narrative.

1. How many ranking government authorities can you name from the biblical accounts?
2. How do the biblical "heroes of faith" each behave toward those in authority?
3. In Old Testament accounts?

4. In New Testament accounts?

In Daniel 3 Nebuchadnezzar builds a statue sixty cubits high and commands that the city bow down to it whenever the music plays.

1. What would you do?
2. What should one do?
3. What did the children of Israel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do?
4. Did they revolt? Did they obey? Explain.

What do you know of Daniel? Daniel was brought to the king's court to be trained and to serve in Babylonian government. Look at how Daniel's service begins in Daniel 1:³*Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials, to bring in some Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—⁴young men without blemish, handsome, gifted in all wisdom, knowledgeable, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace—and to teach them the language and literature of the Chaldeans. ⁵The king assigned them daily provisions of the royal food and wine. They were to be trained for three years, after which they were to enter the king's service. ⁶Among these young men were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ⁷The chief official gave them new names: To Daniel he gave the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. ⁸But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's food or wine. So he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself.*

1. Whose idea was it that Daniel serve?
2. What do you think? What purpose would it serve to invite nobility from every conquered land to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's government?
3. Was the king right? Explain. In how many ways did Daniel serve the king effectively?
4. The government gave them names after their gods. Did they refuse them?
5. The government spoke Aramaic rather than Hebrew. Did they refuse to learn the language?
6. What did they each refuse to do?
7. Mark says, "There is a way that we can honor those leaders that are placed over us without defiling ourselves." Is this true?
8. Explain.

✦ **What do you know of Ezra and Nehemiah?** Pastor says, "This is another power team. They show us that spiritual renewal and civic responsibility go hand in hand. Ezra was convincing the people to turn their hearts back to God's word, and Nehemiah was saying, 'Hey, we have to rebuild these walls to protect this city.' They came together and realized that worship and government both matter, because godly influence in the public square helps people flourish. To be clear: Christians in public service help people flourish."

1. What do you see? What have you seen?
2. Look at Proverbs 11:10 *When the righteous thrive, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.* When have you seen the righteous thrive?
3. Compare this to Proverbs 29:16 *When the wicked thrive, rebellion increases; but the righteous will see their downfall.* When have you ever seen the wicked thrive? Did you also see rebellion?

4. Compare this to Proverbs 28:**28**When the wicked come to power, people hide themselves; but when they perish, the righteous flourish. Do you have a testimony? Have you ever seen people hide themselves rather than speak out?
5. Mark asks, "Even if we are not called to enter into the public square, how do we engage in such a way that it is honoring to God?" Do you have ideas?

✚ What do you know of Esther?

1. Discuss what you know.
2. Did she carry signs of protest on the front steps of the palace?
3. How did she influence government? List the steps she took. Tell the story for those who haven't read Esther.
4. How did Mordecai, Esther's cousin who raised her after her parents died, influence government? List ALL the steps he took.
5. What do you think: Can a Jewish woman marry a Persian king? What are the risks and implications?
6. How did this marriage benefit, indeed, save the Jews? Explain.
7. Pastor Mark says, "God had placed her in this position not to oppose, but to influence a heart." Explain.
8. Examine closely what Mordecai tells Esther when she hesitates to act according to her position: Esther 4:¹³*he sent back to her this reply: "Do not imagine that because you are in the king's palace you alone will escape the fate of all the Jews. ¹⁴For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows if perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* Is there any excuse not to act?
9. Do you know when, in the story, Mordecai had himself already acted in deference to the king, to preserve his life? What was the result of his report?
10. Describe how Esther acted. Compare this to what you might have done in her position.
11. How did Mordecai's wisdom and courage help Queen Esther?
12. How does this clarify our own position today? What can we do?
13. Mark asks, "How do we act in a way that honors God and that we do not defile ourselves in the process?" Answer him.

✚ What do you know about Paul?

1. Did he hold a position of power in government at any time? What happened?
2. How many times did Paul exercise his rights as a Roman citizen?
3. What did that lead to?
4. To what degree did his own citizenship influence those in authority? Explain.

Look at what he told the Romans in chapter 13:¹*Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which is from God. The authorities that exist have been appointed by God. ²Consequently, whoever resists authority is opposing what God has set in place, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

1. Describe how we see Paul submit to governing authorities in Jerusalem.
2. On Cyprus.
3. In Philippi.

4. Continue in this context: *³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the one in authority? Then do what is right, and you will have his approval. ⁴For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not carry the sword in vain. He is God's servant, an agent of retribution to the wrongdoer.* What do you see?
 5. Knowing this was written under Nero's reign, how does that clarify the context?
 6. What questions does this fact raise?
 7. Look at what Jesus told Pilate, when Pilate asked if Jesus understood that he had the authority to condemn Jesus to death: John 19:¹⁰*So Pilate said to Him, "Do You refuse to speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?" ¹¹Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of greater sin."* How does this apply to what Paul says?
 8. How do we understand the sovereignty of God in all matters political? Who is ultimately in authority?
- ✦ **What do you know about the US Constitution?** "God has given us models, examples that say we can engage in politics. Here is that dilemma. We know our citizenship is in heaven, but yet the rules and laws that exist today will either allow freedom and cause the people to flourish, or they will abridge those freedoms."
1. Explain.
 2. What or who are the governing authorities today, to which or to whom we are exhorted to submit?
 3. To what degree has the constitution replaced kings?
 4. Has the US Constitution replaced God? Explain.
 5. Where and in what order does our allegiance lie? Explain.
 6. What does it mean to "protect the US Constitution? Why does it need protection? Protection from whom or from what?
 7. Why is it biblical for American citizens to protect the US Constitution?
 8. Discuss this quote from founding father, James Madison: "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." Is it true?
 9. Can angels go wrong? What document is used to bring angels to justice?
 10. Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence declared the Creator as self-evident, and as the author of our inalienable rights. Why is this an important point? (See [footnote 1, below.](#))
 11. When Jefferson listed our inalienable rights, he said, "**among these are** life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This, then, is not an exclusive list. Can you list other inalienable rights?
 12. Pastor says, "These rights are not 'biblical', but they are rooted in scripture." What does he mean?
 13. How does one pursue happiness? Where is happiness found?
 14. He says, "We learn to surrender our lives under a God in whom we trust, coming underneath His rule and His law found in scripture, and we hold a document that protects our pursuit from anyone's attempt to abridge it." What does this mean?
 15. How do we know, as Mark says, that "...pursuing life liberty and happiness was part of God's design for humanity?

16. If your citizenship is in heaven, why does it matter if your constitutional rights get eroded?
17. How important is it to be able to worship God in the freedom expressed in every service at GCC?
18. What do you know of lands and governments that do not allow this free worship?
19. Look up Jeremiah 17: [9](#) *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? [10](#) I, the LORD, search the heart; I examine the mind to reward a man according to his way, by what his deeds deserve.* Why is government necessary?
20. What do we know of the end of each person's deeds? What comes inevitably last?
21. Why is good government necessary?
22. Why are the checks and balances found in the US constitution so pivotal?

Respond to Mark's words: "We realize that when Jesus taught us, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's,' this is this dynamic of being 'in the world and not of the world.' We still need to live in a world, influencing that world according to Jesus' Word, for His sake, and for the freedoms that He has for us. Protecting the Constitution matters, because it protects our God-given freedom to worship, to pray, to preach and to live out our faith without fear. This is not just patriotic. It's biblical stewardship of the freedom with which God has entrusted us."

1. What do you see? How do you react to this?
2. If we are stewards, what is our duty?
3. Do you live out your faith without fear? Where does fear come from?

✚ **What do you know about Christian nationalism vs. Christian influence?**

Mark says, "A definition is so important. How you define a term leads to its acceptance or rejection. In this, then, Christian Nationalism says, 'Our nation is God's Kingdom.' Biblical Christianity says, 'Our nation belongs under God's Kingdom... One Nation under God.'"

1. What is the difference?
2. What changes with each declaration?
3. How can the first declaration lead to idolatry? Whom does it leave out?
4. Who is protected and included in the second declaration?
5. Mark says, "If our identity is rooted in our nationality and not in Christ, that is a problem." Explain.
6. What is the difference between a "Christian nation," and a "nation of Christians?"
7. Which of these two choices guarantees freedoms and human rights?
8. Mark asks, "If Jesus is coming back soon, why do we even care?" Answer him.
9. Answer him with the voice and the heart of your grandchildren. Whose freedom are you protecting?
10. The Preamble to the US Constitution declares its purpose is in part, to "... secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity..." Why is this discussion today so important? Who benefits?
11. Why do your great grandchildren matter?
12. Answer that question as if you were your own great grandparents. Do you think they were looking ahead to your day?
13. In this context, explain what it means when we pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

14. What is the difference between Him absolutely ruling my heart, and my will, my words and my actions, and Him absolutely ruling a nation.
15. Does a truly Christian nation depend on the rulers...or all those who claim to be ruled by Christ?

Mark says, "We want the values of God's Kingdom to be reflected in our world, but to do that we have to engage. Rather than complaining in the results, we need to engage in the process that forms our government and our laws. If the followers of Jesus do not stand for truth and justice, who will?" He continues, "...because the Law that is written on our hearts is greater than that in any law books. He demands that we love...the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and that we love our neighbor as ourself. Until Jesus returns our job is to steward what we've been given—protecting freedoms, promoting righteousness and proclaiming the gospel. We are to occupy until He returns."

1. What do you see?
2. What steps do we take?
3. What does it mean to "occupy" a land?
4. What did the US do when they occupied Germany and Japan after WWII?

✠ **Pastor Mark's practical steps to become Daniels and Esthers:**

1. **Pray for our leaders, whether or not you agree with them, whether or not they are "blue" or "red."** Pray for our leaders. Look at 1 Timothy 2:¹*First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be offered for everyone—²for kings and all those in authority— so that we may lead tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity.*³*This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...*Who is excluded? List the benefits that come for these prayers.
2. **Stay informed (not inflamed).** Look at the following two prophecies: First, Matthew 24:¹¹*and many false prophets will arise and mislead many.* **12** *Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.* **13***But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.* Is wickedness being multiplied? Ask yourself how your love is doing. Ask your brothers and sisters in Christ the same question. Second, Luke 21:²⁶*Men's hearts will fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.* Ask yourself how your heart is doing. What causes you the most fear? Why is it better to "respond" than to "react." Pastor says, "Ask yourself, Is my response honoring Jesus right now?" He reminds us that the soft answer turns away wrath. Do you have a testimony?
3. **Vote biblically, not emotionally.** Pick the candidates that line up with biblical values. They are ultimately going to represent you and Jesus in the making of those laws that will impact the state.
4. **Engage locally.** Transformation begins right where you are. Know who represents you and pray for them.
5. **Keep your eyes on Jesus.** Remember the promise of prophecy: Isaiah 9:⁷*Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from that time and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this.*
 - a. What does "increase" mean? Is there a limit?

- b. What comes with His government?
- c. When does His government end?
- d. When did it begin?
- e. How much effort is on your part? Describe the limits to His zeal.
- f. What happens when you keep your eyes on Jesus.

Pastor concludes, asking, "As Christians, should we be engaged in politics? Let us represent Jesus well, as dual citizens."

1. Answer him.
2. What new ideas did you see today?
3. What are your next steps?
4. What obstacles do you see?

Take the time to pray.

Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. Examine which constitutional rights are the most important for you. Which must be preserved
3. Write down your prayer to sustain these rights. For whom do you want to see these rights preserved?

Footnotes:

1. **On the difference between the USA's inalienable rights, and the French revolution's rights of man and of the citizen**—There is a tendency to conflate the ideals of the American revolution with those of the French, but the contrast lies in the provenance of our "inalienable rights." Ours come from an historic fact: All men are created equal, and we hold from that Creator "certain inalienable rights." The Declaration of Independence recognizes a Higher Power Who delegated rights unto us, such rights that cannot be taken away. In contrast, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, 1792, declares first that "All men are born free and equal in rights...and second that the state's duty is to preserve those rights, listing them as "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression." It is impossible to miss that the right to life is not included...but the right to rebel is. When nature and not the Creator delegates the rights, it's easy to expect that those rights will be contested. Man has always struggled against nature with seeming impunity.
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For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Philippians 3:20-21 Tuesday: Philippians 3:17-19 Wednesday: Proverbs 11:10 Thursday: Proverbs 29:16 Friday: Proverbs 28:28 Saturday: Esther 4:13-14 Sunday: Romans 13:1-3

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.