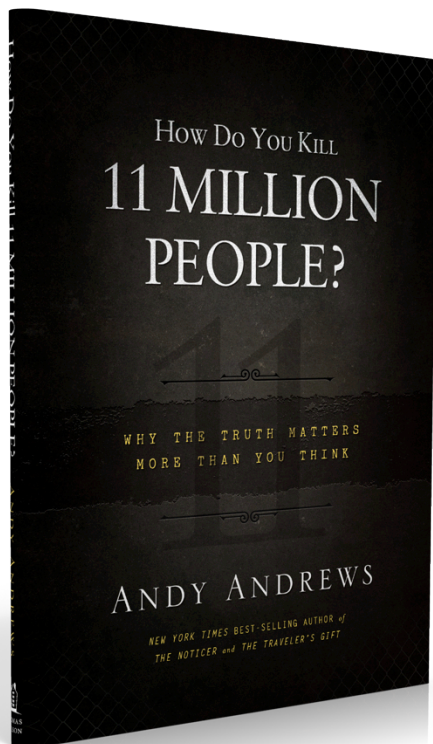


How Do You Kill 11 Million People?

by Andy Andrews



Sermon Series - 4

Truth: Christians and
Civil Government

“For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.”

- Romans 13:3-4, NASB

In Romans 13:1-8 and I Peter 2:13-17 believers are instructed to live in submission to governing authorities. God instituted governing authorities and is sovereign over those who govern, thus it is an expression of obedience to God to respect the authorities He has established.

Not all governments or individuals in government are Christian, righteous, or just. Yet our sovereign God is in no way limited by this nor is His work derailed. God's design for establishing civil government is to establish justice and maintain order; all for the good and protection of the governed.

The focus of this message is helping Christians think and act Biblically as they deal generally with civil government. Two Biblical principles guide the content:

1. Christians have clear instruction from Scripture on how to respond to government.
2. As is true in all of life, believers are stewards of the instructions, blessings, freedoms, and opportunities God has provided them.

I.

Recognize the sovereignty of God in establishing governments – Romans 13:1

A. Definition: The Sovereignty of God is the biblical truth that all things and all people are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works all things according to the counsel of His own will. His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted; nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God means God has the power and right to govern all things, and that He does so always and without exception. God is sovereign in both principle and practice.

1. Psalm 103:19; 115:3; 135:5-6; Isaiah 46:10-11; Daniel 4:34

2. Ephesians 1:11; I Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16

B. The greatness and mystery of His sovereignty

“Furthermore, His sovereignty requires that He be absolutely free, which means simply that He must be free to do whatever He wills to do anywhere at any time to carry out His eternal purpose in every single detail without interference. Were He less than free He must be less than sovereign. Grasping the idea of unqualified freedom requires a vigorous effort of the mind. We are not psychologically conditioned to understand freedom except in its imperfect forms. Our concepts of it have been shaped in a world where no absolute freedom exists. Here each natural object is dependent upon many other objects, and that dependence limits its freedom.” The Joy of Knowing God, Richard Lehman Strauss, pg. 114-115

C. God’s sovereignty is in complete harmony with His heart of love and justice – Psalm 62:11-12

D. There is an end to human, finite understanding of God’s sovereignty.

1. Job 38:1-40:2
2. Isaiah 55:8

E. Civil leaders and governments are intended by God to establish justice and maintain civil order.

1. Romans 13:3-7
2. Exodus 20-22, Leviticus 13 and 20, Deuteronomy 17-22

F. In cases of civil law clearly contradicting God’s Word and law, believers follow God’s law with sobriety, faith, and humble confidence – Acts 4:19; 5:29

II.

Maximize the stewardship of the freedoms we enjoy in this democracy – Romans 13:5 (I Corinthians 4:2; Luke 12:48)

A. We are to be good stewards of all that God entrusts to us – Matthew 25:14-30

B. We enjoy the freedom and privilege of participating in our government, at the local, state, and federal level. It is a freedom we should cherish and exercise with sobriety.

“People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote—a very different thing.” – Walter H. Judd

“The most important political office is that of the private citizen.” – Louis Brandeis

C. Government deals with social, economic, and international issues, all of which have to do with the high concepts of biblical morality and justice. How could we not participate? We are instructed by God to engage in good deeds / works; involvement in our democratic system of government is an avenue by which we can engage – Galatians 6:9-10; Titus 3:1-2

“No interest = no involvement;
No involvement = no representation;
No representation = no voice;
No voice = no trust.” – Unknown

D. Historically, Christian values have been helpful to our society at large (hospitals, education, regard for human life, regard for justice, regard for character, etc). Our participation in government may serve to continue that help while our lack of participation may allow other values / agendas to prevail.

E. We are responsible for what we can do – James 2:26; 4:17

1. Pray for our leaders

2. Engage the process and act for the advancement of justice, truth, and civil order.

“All that is required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing.” – Edmund Burke

F. Our engagement with government is a role-model for future generations

III.

Prioritize the use of your time per God's clear agenda – Romans 13:11

- A. By discipline and with urgency share the Gospel of Jesus Christ; it is the most important message men and governments need to hear – John 1:4, 14:6**
- B. Pray for all who serve in government (their salvation, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, discernment, and courage). – I Timothy 2:1-4**
- C. Use the freedoms you enjoy as an American to support justice and civil order; engage in the process and thus have a voice.**

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