

## Separation of Church and State Summary

### Descriptions:

Civil governments, rulers and magistrates are to be respected, and in all temporal matters, not contrary to conscience and the word of God, to be obeyed; but they have no jurisdiction in spiritual concerns, and have no right of dictation to, of control over, or of interference with, matters of religion; but are bound to protect all good citizens in the peaceable enjoyment of their religious rights and privileges.

No organic union of Church and State should be tolerated, but entire separation maintained: the Church should neither ask for, nor accept of, support from civil authority, since to do so would imply the right of civil dictation and control. The support of religion belongs to those who profess it.

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. But that civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with, religious matters. (*The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, Edward T. Hiscox, 1859)

“Baptists firmly believe that neither the state nor the church has a right to pass laws that obligate people to conform to a religious belief, much less to persecute those who do not conform to such. Individual believers do have the right to vote and to express their views as citizens of a country, but they do not have the right to persecute those of a contrary belief. Similarly, governments have the right, and indeed the responsibility, to make just laws, and to require taxes to be paid to support the legal structure necessary to do this, but they do not have the right to control a church, much less to persecute those who hold to their own beliefs. All citizens of a country should be free to believe and practice their religious beliefs without fear of coercion or persecution.” <unknown author; used widely>

God established both the church and the civil government, and He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation. The government's purposes are outlined in Romans 13:1-7 and the church's purposes in Matthew 28:19 and 20. Neither should control the other, nor should there be an alliance between the two. Christians in a free society can properly influence government toward righteousness, which is not the same as a denomination or group of churches controlling the government. [faithlafayette.org/church/about/what-we/believe](http://faithlafayette.org/church/about/what-we/believe)

### AMENDMENT I (Constitution of the United States of America)

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

### Clarification:

As the history of the United States easily affirms, Separation of Church and State is NOT what is being taught or propagated a great deal in our day. It is not separating the state from the influence of the Church. It is not driving religion into invisible or private-only settings (limited to one's home). It is simply that the state cannot endorse a specific denomination, and the church cannot formally run the state. The state needs the influence of the Church to help leaders understand the God-given source of the truth, righteousness, law, morality, and what the God-defined roles are (and are not) of the government.

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## Biblical Principles that Direct Our Actions Towards the Government

### 1. Acknowledge God as the Giver and \_\_\_\_\_ of Authority

**Rom 13:1-7** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not **bear the sword** in vain; for **he is God's minister, an avenger to [execute] wrath on him who practices evil.** <sup>5</sup> Therefore [you] must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes [are due,] customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

- **We are subject to sinners/unsaved that are in authority over us.**
- **We show our belief that God controls those He has chosen to place over us.**

### 2. Identify the God's \_\_\_\_\_ for Government

**1 Peter 2:11-17** Beloved, I beg [you] as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, <sup>12</sup> having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by [your] good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. <sup>13</sup> Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man **for the Lord's sake**, whether to the king as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, as to those who are sent by him **for the punishment of evildoers and [for the] praise of those who do good.** <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men – <sup>16</sup> as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor all [people.] Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

### 3. Recognize the Different \_\_\_\_\_ of Authority that God Created

**Matt 22:15-22** Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in [His] talk. <sup>16</sup> And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. <sup>17</sup> "Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" <sup>18</sup> But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, [you] hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription [is] this?" <sup>21</sup> They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." <sup>22</sup> When they had heard [these words,] they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

- **We must not confuse the responsibilities (education, provision, etc.)**

### 4. \_\_\_\_\_ to & Honor [Sinful] Government Authorities

**Titus 3:1-2** Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, <sup>2</sup> to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. (1 Peter 2:17 "Honor the king.")

**John 19:6-12** ... <sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." <sup>8</sup> Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, <sup>9</sup> and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

### 5. Disobey Authorities \_\_\_\_\_ When Laws Violate God's Commands

**Acts 5:24-42** Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. <sup>25</sup> So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" <sup>26</sup> Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. <sup>27</sup> And when they had brought them, they set [them] before the council. And the high priest asked them, <sup>28</sup> saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" <sup>29</sup> But Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. <sup>30</sup> "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. <sup>31</sup> "Him God has exalted to His right hand [to be] Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ... <sup>40</sup> And they agreed with him [Gamaliel], and when they had called for the apostles and beaten [them], they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. <sup>41</sup> So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. <sup>42</sup> And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

- **Obeying God over government requires suffering the consequences.**

### 6. Pray for Leaders for \_\_\_\_\_ Advancement Conditions

**1 Tim 2:1-7** Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. <sup>3</sup> For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For [there is] one God and one Mediator between God and men, [the] Man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, <sup>7</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle – I am speaking the truth in Christ [and] not lying – a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

### 7. Invoke the Law \_\_\_\_\_ Its Divine Purposes and to Further the Gospel

**Acts 16:37-39** But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, [and] have thrown [us] into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out." (cf. Acts 22:25-29)

**Acts 25:11** For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."