

## DEVOTIONAL SET #4 - CITIZENSHIP

### Devotion #1 - Ephesians 2:12,19

If you had a choice, would you give up your citizenship in America, move to another country and ask to become a citizen there? That would mean you would have to live in that country and not have the privileges that go with being an American. Not many of us might want to leave America but people from all over the world want to come to America to live and become citizens. Can you think of reasons why that is? And to become a citizen means meeting many requirements like; learning the language and passing a test. How do you suppose people feel who fail this test or can't become citizens here in America?

We may be thinking all this "becoming an American citizen talk" is about others. But do you realize at one time most all of your forefathers were not citizens in America. What if they had not become citizens or had not been permitted to become citizens; think how different your life would've been today.

But as wonderful as being an American citizen is, there is an even greater citizenship. Verse 19 of our scripture tells us: "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household." If a citizen is one who lives under the rule of someone or some country, who do we live under and belong to?

But what if we did not belong to God? Verse 12 tells us: "Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenant of promise, without hope and without God in the world." Why is it that we are not naturally citizens of God?

How then did we get to be God's people? See Ephesians 2:4,5. We didn't have to do anything. We had no tests to pass. Once again, how did we get to belong to God? And God makes this heavenly citizenship available to everyone. Tell everyone about your citizenship that is greater than being an American citizen. Tell them Christ invites them to become "heavenly citizens" too.

**PRAYER:** As we learn about our earthly citizenship here in America, thank you Lord for making me an American citizen and bless our country. But may I always prize my heavenly citizenship the most. Keep me belonging to you always and one day, by your grace, bring me into your heaven where I will be a citizen forever with you. Amen

**HYMN:** 660 (TLH) 417 (CW)

### Devotion #2 - Titus 2:9, 3:1

**THEME:** Finding the strength to be a good citizen

Just because someone tells you to do something, doesn't mean you are able to do it. If you are told to lift 250 pounds over your head; and you very much want to do it, doesn't mean you will.

We're told in our verses some things God would want a good citizen to do. We're told not to "talk back," to please those over us "in everything," to "be ready to do whatever is good." Why is this hard? Why is this impossible? Which commandment do we break when we don't do all the things mentioned? How serious is this to fail?

The Christian finds forgiveness and power come from God. Look at Titus 3:5 - "he saved us not because of righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy." Verse 8 goes on to say: "I want you to stress these things so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good." So finally, where does the Christian citizen find strength to be the citizen God wants us to be?

**PRAYER:** Selfish, sinful, weak and unable and unwilling to do as you would have us do as citizens, we rejoice to hear of our forgiveness in Christ's free grace. His love empowers us to be the citizens here on earth God would have us be.

**HYMN:** 400 (TLH) 469 (CW)

### Devotion #3 - Philippians 3:20

**THEME:** Does heavenly citizenship mean we are "so heavenly-minded that we are no earthly good?"

- (1) How we obtained heavenly citizenship (a Savior from there) :20b.
- (2) While "eagerly expecting our Savior" from heaven we lovingly and obediently go about being the best citizen here on earth.

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#### Additional references for the topic.

Genesis 24:7, Joshua 24:11, Judges 9:24, I Chronicles 22:18, 2 Chronicles 12:8, Isaiah 48:2, Matthew 5:22, Acts 16:37,38, 21:39, 22:23-29, 23:27, I Corinthians 15:28, Hebrews 2:8