

## **THE SIN OF INACTION**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. I was a Rush Baby. I grew up with my parents listening to Rush Limbaugh on the radio, and so I learned about conservative principles and the importance of politics at an early age.
2. My parents were very active in conservative politics. I remember going to pro-life marches in Baton Rouge when we protested an abortion clinic. I remember setting out signs and volunteering for Governor Mike Foster, and then attending the gubernatorial ball in Baton Rouge afterwards.
3. But as I grew up, I never heard my pastor preach about politics. And that is not atypical. Today, many pastors don't preach about politics. In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention just elected Ed Litton as the new president. I read an article about him in which he said that while he is personally extremely conservative in his politics, he does not address political issues from the pulpit. That is a shame. Last I checked, if God cares about it, and if God has something to say about it, and if it affects people's lives, then the preacher needs to address it. And the Bible is filled with politics.
4. As a result of poor spiritual leaders, today many Christians are civically unengaged. They are uniformed, uninterested, and uninvolved. Of roughly 90 million evangelical Christians in the U.S., only about half vote.
5. Sadly, many Christians seem to be ignorant of the sin of inaction and its consequences.

### **II. THE SIN OF INACTION**

1. What is the sin of inaction? It is neglecting to do good when it is in your power to do it. Sin is not just doing what is wrong; it is failing to do good. When Christians neglect civic engagement, they are committing the sin of inaction.
2. The sin of inaction is a sin of omission. There are sins of commission and omission. Sins of omission are when you do what God forbids. Sins of omission are when you neglect what God commands. The sin of inaction is neglecting to do good when it is in your power to do it. **James 4:17** "So it is a sin to know the good and yet not do it."
3. A good example of a sin of omission is the parable of the Good Samaritan. In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus told a story called The Parable of the Good Samaritan. A Jewish man was attacked and robbed and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest walked by and saw him, but didn't do anything. A Levite passed by and did nothing. Then a Samaritan passed by and stopped to help. He took care of the man. Jesus said that the sin of inaction is a failure to love your neighbor as yourself. Some states have enacted Good Samaritan laws that make it a crime to not render assistance to a person in danger.

4. The military has a name for the sin of inaction. It is called dereliction of duty. It is when a service member willfully refused to perform his duties. It is when a soldier chooses inaction rather than action. Christians who neglect their civic duty are guilty of dereliction of duty.
5. There is also a legal name for the sin of inaction. It is called negligence. Negligence is a failure to exercise appropriate and/or ethical ruled care expected to be exercised amongst specified circumstances. It involves harm caused by failing to act as a form of carelessness (Wikipedia). When Christians fail to be civically engaged, they are being negligent. They are failing to exercise appropriate care.

### **III. THE STORY OF ESTHER**

1. Esther was a young Jewish woman living in a very ungodly place. She was living in the nation of Persia, during the period when the Jews were conquered and taken into exile for seventy years. The Persians were the world-power of that day. They were not God-fearing people. They did not observe the Ten Commandments. They did not worship Yahweh. There were very powerful people serving in the government who hated the Jews and wanted to see their destruction. She was in a very ungodly place.
  - i. We live in an ungodly place. There are a lot of good people in America, but there are also a lot of bad people. Our nation is plagued with murder, abortion, immorality, dishonesty, and theft. Many of those in power do not fear God; they hate conservative Christians. They would like to eliminate our liberties and place the government in control of every aspect of our lives.
2. Esther found herself in a place of influence. The King of Persia divorced his wife, and needed a replacement. So he held a beauty contest of the entire kingdom, and out of all the girls, Esther won, and she became the queen of Persia – the most powerful woman in the world.
  - i. We are in a place of influence as well. We are citizens of the most powerful nation on earth. We have freedom of speech; freedom to vote; freedom to petition; freedom to assemble; freedom to run for public office.
3. Esther was presented with a problem. The king's right hand man, the most powerful of all the government officials, hated the Jews. He told the king that the Jewish people were enemies of the empire, and convinced him to commission the extermination of the Jewish people. This was to be carried out on a specific day – the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. By the way, the king did not know that his own wife was a Jew.
  - i. We are presented with problems today. Abortion is still legal in every state. Christians are being persecuted for not adapting to the LGBT agenda. The public schools have become indoctrination centers for unbiblical, destructive ideology. America's great cities are crumbling under failed policies. The government is far bigger than anything the American founders ever envisioned. There are more problems than we can name.

4. Esther was called on to use her influence for good. Esther’s uncle, Mordecai, also worked in government, and he became aware of Haman’s plot to destroy the Jews. So, Mordecai went to Esther and asked her to go to the king for help.
  - i. God has not called you to play it safe and to sit on the sidelines. God calls us to use our influence for good. He wants you to get involved. Not just in the church, but in making this world a better place. God wants you to fight injustice, to stand against tyranny, and to defend those in need.
5. Esther did not want to get involved. The Persians had a law stating that if you approached the king without being summoned – unless he extends the gold scepter, you would be executed. Esther had not been summoned in thirty days. Esther did not want to get involved because she did not want to be executed.
  - i. Many Christians don’t want to get involved in politics, and for different reasons.
    1. **Apathy.** Many Christians just don’t care about politics. They aren’t interested in it. You may not interested in politics, but politics is interested in you. They don’t see how much of their daily life is touched by politics. They don’t understand that all of the privileges and liberties that they enjoy are because of politics.
    2. **Ignorance.** Many don’t get involved in politics because they think that all Christians should be concerned with is preaching the gospel and making disciples. This is just plain unbiblical. This kind of Christian is so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good. It is true that politics will not save a person’s soul, but it may save a person’s life. It may keep a person from getting mugged. It may keep a child from being abused. It may prevent the government from confiscating all of your hard-earned money. Politics is not as important as preaching the gospel, but politics will determine whether you are free to preach or persecuted for preaching.
    3. **Hubris.** Hubris is excessive self-confidence. Many Christians believe that our freedoms are not in danger of being lost. They think freedom can’t be lost. The government can’t become corrupt and turn against its own citizens. We could never become like Communist China, or North Korea, or Venezuela. They don’t understand that freedom can be lost. It is much easier lost than gained.
      - a. **Will Durant** “From barbarism to civilization requires a century; from civilization to barbarism needs but a day.”
      - b. **President Ronald Reagan** “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's

children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

4. **Hopelessness.** Many Christians feel that the country is already lost; that it has already been taken over by the progressives, so it is a waste of time to get involved. That’s not true. If America was already in the hands of the progressives, I wouldn’t be allowed to preach this sermon this morning; you wouldn’t have any guns in your house; you would not be able to homeschool your kids; you would be riding a horse rather than driving and SUV; you wouldn’t have freedom of speech or religion; abortion would not only be legal, but imposed after you’ve had one or two children; and most of your income would be confiscated. We are not perfect, but we aren’t China, or North Korea, or Venezuela, or Cuba either. There is a fierce battle being waged for the our country, and while many Christians in the middle of the battle and are winning important victories, there are other Christian who are sitting on the sidelines because they’ve already given up. The battle is not over. It’s not time to retreat. It’s time to get in the fight. Many Christians are discouraged because of the voter fraud in the 2020 election, and so they have thrown up their hands and given up. But other Christians have gotten to work. Since then, 389 bills in 48 states have been filed to deal with voter integrity and put a stop to any funny business. **Galatians 6:5** “Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up.”
5. **Irresponsibility.** Many Christians avoid politics because they assume that in a nation of over 300 million people, their individual contribution won’t make a difference. But imagine if every Christian took that attitude. **Os Guinness** tells the following story in his book *Last Call for Liberty*: There was a European village where it was decided that each villager should donate an amount of wine to fill a vat to present to the king on the occasion of his visit to the village. Secretly at night over the next few weeks, however, each villager took some of the wine, rationalizing the theft with the thought that such a small amount would not be missed. Each one then added water to the vat, so that the vat remained full to the top. When the king arrived, the villagers presented the vat to him, and he drank from it, but was disgusted. “It is just plain water!” If most Christians believe that their contribution is too small to be missed, we can lose our country.
6. Esther was warned about the danger of inaction. Notice Mordecai’s words to Esther. **Esther 4:13-14** “Don’t think that you will escape the fate of all the Jews

because you are in the king's palace. 14 If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this." Mordecai warned Esther that if she didn't get involved, she and her family would be destroyed. And then he reminded her of her purpose. "Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this." Mordecai told Esther that it is possible that the very reason she was elevated to the position of queen was for this very problem. We must heed the same warning. There are consequences for inaction.

**i. We will miss our purpose.**

1. Just as Esther was made queen "for such a time as this," God has placed you where you are for such a time as this. To make a difference. To stand up for truth and righteousness and Christ. To engage. To get involved. To be salt and light.
2. **Galatians 6:10** "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith."
  - a. God has called you to work for the good of all, not just yourself. You cannot do this without involvement in politics.
3. **Matthew 5:14-16** "14 You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
  - a. God didn't save you so that you could hide your light. He has called you to shine.
4. **Matthew 22:39** "Love your neighbor as yourself."
  - a. God has commanded us to love our neighbors. If we do not engage in politics, then we are failing to love our neighbors.
  - b. Politics has a huge impact on people's lives.
5. It would be much easier to not preach about politics. To avoid controversial topics like homosexuality, religious liberty, abortion, transgenderism, critical race theory, and socialism. But if I don't preach about politics, I will miss my purpose as a pastor to proclaim God's word, and to equip the church. **1 Corinthians 14:8** "If the bugle makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle?" **Proverbs 29:18** "Without revelation people run wild, but one who follows divine instruction will be happy."
6. In the same way, if you don't engage in politics, you will miss your purpose as a Christian.

**ii. We will reap what we sow.**

1. **Galatians 6:7** “Don’t be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap.”
2. The USA is a government of the people. We are the government. If we do not ensure that the government does what God wants it to do, we will suffer the consequences.
3. The government can be a force for great good or great evil. The only reason the government exists is to protect our God-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That’s why it was instituted in the first place. But we must make sure that the government fulfills its duty, or it can easily turn on its citizens and become a force for great evil.
4. The government has two main responsibilities:
  - a. To restrain evil.
    - i. **Romans 13:4** “For it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For it is God’s servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong.”
    - ii. The government’s job is to protect life, and private property. Protect you from evil people who would want to harm you or steal from you – enemies foreign and domestic.
    - iii. But this is not automatic. If Christians do not ensure that the government fulfills this function, then it won’t.
    - iv. Right now there are efforts around the nation to defund the police; to take guns away from law-abiding citizens so they can’t defend themselves. Some cities are telling police not to pursue fleeing suspects. Prisons are releasing criminals onto the streets simply because of overcrowding. Rioters around the country have destroyed cities while police and city officials do nothing. There are no-go zones in just about every major city in America, places where you are risking your life by just walking down the street at night.
    - v. If Christians do not engage in politics, then evil will prevail.
  - b. To restrain itself.
    - i. The second duty of the government is to restrain itself. Why? Because the government is run by sinful people

(we are all sinful), and when sinful people are given power, they tend to abuse it.

- ii. **Lord Acton** “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”
- iii. Because men are sinful, we need the government to restrain evil. But because men are sinful, we need the government to restrain itself.
- iv. **James Madison, Federalist 51** “If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.”
- v. Mankind has inalienable, God-given rights. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This includes the rights to free speech, the free exercise of religion, freedom of conscience, freedom of assembly, freedom to bear arms, etc. They are inalienable and God-given because they pre-date the government. They are ours because we are human beings. These rights do not exist because of the government, the government exists to protect these rights. But if the government is not kept in check, if it is not limited in its power, then it becomes the greatest violator of human rights in the world.
- vi. In 90 years – from 1900 to 1987 – governments intentionally murdered some 170 million civilians. 84% of these come from the regimes that had the most absolute power such as Communist Russia, China, Khmer Rouge Cambodia, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and Nazi Germany.
- vii. **Charles Colson** “One of the most startling commentaries on this century is the fact that millions more have died at the hands of their own governments than in wars with other nations — all to preserve someone’s power.”
- viii. **Unknown** “That government is best which governs least.”
- ix. The question is how to governments grow in scope and power in a free society? That’s easy. It is when people begin to look to the government to solve every problem and correct every wrong and meet every need.

- x. **President Gerald Ford** “A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.”
- xi. In his book, *How to Destroy America in Three Easy Steps*, Ben Shapiro writes about the growth of our federal government over the past few years.
  - 1. In 1950, fewer than 10,000 pages of regulations were published in the Code of Federal Regulations; by 2018, that number surpassed 180,000 pages.
  - 2. In 1940, approximately 443,000 Americans worked for the executive branch in nonmilitary capacity; as of 2014, that number was 1,356,000.<sup>74</sup>
  - 3. In 1800, real federal outlays (payments) per capita were \$16; by 1990, they were \$4,760.<sup>75</sup>
- xii. The United States government is extremely overgrown. Our state government is overgrown. And if we do not reel it in, and limit its power, then eventually it take control of every aspect of our lives.

**iii. We will incur God’s discipline.**

- 1. Mordecai warned Esther that her inaction would lead to the destruction of her and her family. The Jews would be rescued by some other means, but her family would be destroyed.
- 2. The Bible is clear that God takes the sin of inaction very seriously.
  - a. God called the prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh to warn the people to repent or face destruction. Jonah did not want to go. He did not want to get involved. He wanted to leave the people to their fate. So, as Jonah was running away from his duty on a ship to Tarshish, God caused him to be thrown overboard and swallowed up by a big fish, where Jonah lived for three days before he repented carried out God’s will.
  - b. **Proverbs 24:11-12** “11 Rescue those being taken off to death, and save those stumbling toward slaughter. 12 If you say, “But we didn’t know about this,” won’t he who weighs hearts consider it? Won’t he who protects your life know? Won’t he repay a person according to his work?”
    - i. This verse strongly condemns those who fail to take action when you see someone in danger. God will see your inaction and hold you accountable.



- c. **Ezekiel 3:17-18** “17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman over the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, give them a warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ but you do not warn him—you don’t speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life—that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood.”
      - i. God called Ezekiel to warn wicked people of impending judgment. If he neglected to do so, their blood would be on his hands. God would hold Ezekiel accountable for his inaction.
- 7. Esther got involved, and her people were saved. In the end, Esther mustered the courage to go to the king for help. When Haman’s wicked plot was exposed, the king had him executed, and the Jewish people were given the right to assemble and defend themselves all over the kingdom on the same day that their destruction was scheduled. The Jews killed 75,000 of their enemies throughout the kingdom – people that desired their destruction. This day became a major Jewish holiday called Purim.
  - i. Who knows what good will result if the church in America will get involved? Who knows what God will do through us? Who knows what good might come about if just you, personally, become civically engaged?

#### IV. **SOMEBODY HAS TO DO THE DISHES**

1. The United States is the most prosperous, most powerful, and most free nation in the history of the world. It is the most equal and just. It is the land of opportunity. You can start with nothing and become wealthy, and famous, and powerful. No nation is perfect, and the United States certainly has made mistakes, but no nation in the world comes close to the glory of United States. This is why people from all over the world want to come here, and those American citizens who complain the most would not choose to live anywhere else. But the blessings that we have in our country can easily and quickly be lost.
2. **Anonymous** “Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.”
3. Mike Huckabee was asked about those who tell Christians that they should “stay in your lane” and not get involved in politics. “Well, it’s very short-sighted. First of all, to abandon citizenship is not only bad advice, but it’s really almost a complete dereliction of duty. We live in a unique country where citizens run the government. At least we’re supposed to. And if citizens abandon government, then we get what we deserve. We have lost the right to say we don’t like something. I’ll say it this way: Everyone wants to eat from a clean plate, but somebody has to do dishes. So, unless you want to eat from dirty plates, get in the kitchen and roll up your sleeves and scrub the dishes. That’s really what being in politics is all about.” In our society,

somebody has to do the dishes. If we don't, the kitchen will get dirtier, and nastier, smellier.

## V. HOW TO BE CIVICALLY ENGAGED

1. Vote.
  - i. Register to vote at [GeauxVote.com](http://GeauxVote.com).
  - ii. Sign up for voting reminders at [GeauxVote.com](http://GeauxVote.com).
  - iii. Take you kids along so you can teach them to be civically engaged.
2. Stay informed.
  - i. Stay informed of the issues.
  - ii. [LaFamilyForum.org](http://LaFamilyForum.org): Sign up for their weekly newsletter and action alerts.
  - iii. Family Research Council ([frc.org](http://frc.org)): Click on "Subscriptions" and sign up for their different newsletters and alert emails.
3. Petition.
  - i. Write and call your representatives.
  - ii. In June I contacted the government about the Fairness in Women's Sports Act, and I reached out to the city council about the Pride Month Proclamation.
  - iii. City-councilman Andy Naquin said that he received a lot of pressure from people (such as liberal pastors) to support the Pride Month proclamation. This makes a difference, and we need to make sure that our voices are heard.
4. Attend meetings.
  - i. City council meetings. School board meetings. Political party meetings.
  - ii. A New Jersey school district decided this month to remove holiday names from the calendar -- including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Columbus Day -- so as not to offend anyone. It decided to simply call them a "day off." Parents showed up at the local school board meeting, which lasted about 4 hours and included comments from around 50 local residents. An online petition emerged prior to the vote calling for the Superintendent and board members to resign, gaining thousands of signatures. The Board then voted again, and decided in an 8-1 decision to restore the names of the holidays.
5. Speak up.
  - i. Share your opinion. Share information. Keep others informed.
6. Volunteer.
  - i. Volunteer with the Louisiana Family Forum, or for a particular political campaign.
7. Run.
  - i. We need strong Christians on the city council, on the school board, at the state level, and in Washington.
  - ii. We need to encourage our young people to consider a career in politics.
8. Pray.

- i. **1 Timothy 2:1-2** “First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

1. Recently I was revisiting the core values of Church Acadiana. These are the things that are most important to us as a church; they are some of the unique things about our church. And I decided to add one. “We are civically engaged. Evil prevails when good people do nothing. We are active participants in local, state, and federal government. Freedom is not more than one generation from extinction.” I want our church to be civically engaged. Active citizens. Not inactive.
2. Several years ago George Barna coined the term SAGE Cons. That stands for spiritually active, government engaged conservatives. He said, “These are people who believe that because of their faith they have a responsibility to have a positive impact on every dimension of our culture, and that would include politics and government.” That’s us. That’s Church Acadiana. We are here for such a time as this.