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Should Christians pledge allegiance to the flag?

Should sincere Christians pledge allegiance to the flag of any nation? Let's look at the facts of this situation, and Bible principles that may apply.

Since **“each of us will give a personal account to God” (Romans 14:12 NLT)**, each person must make a personal decision regarding this issue. This article is presented to give a scriptural overview of the facts, but is not intended to tell anyone what they should, or shouldn't, do.

For starters, reciting a pledge is required by the United States constitution, and there is no law in the United States that requires anyone to recite a pledge of allegiance. The U. S. Supreme Court has ruled that it is completely voluntary to recite the pledge, or not recite the pledge, and recitation of the the Pledge cannot be required by anyone, nor by any entity, governmental, or other. The pledge was not even composed until 1892, over 100 years after the founding of the U.S.

Most people, like robots, parrot the words of this pledge. Most do it because they sincerely think that is what they are supposed to do. Some do it out of pressure to conform to what is expected of them. Does not mean that you, as a Christian, should recite it? The Bible encourages the use of, **“wisdom and understanding . . . sound judgment and discretion” (Proverbs 3:21 NIV)**, and advises against, **“following the crowd” (Exodus 23:2 NIV)**.

The Bible tells us that Christians should obey the laws of the nations they live in. **“Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from**

God, and those that exist are instituted by God. So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have its approval. For government 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 government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong. Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of your conscience. And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor." (Romans 13:1-7)

The one exception to this principle of obedience to the governing authorities is laws which conflict with God's laws. Jesus stated this principle, **"Then He said to them, 'Therefore give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' "** (Matthew 22:21) Jesus' apostles and early Christians followed this principle when commanded to do violate what Jesus told them to do. **"Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide.' (Acts 4:19) "But Peter and the apostles replied, 'We must obey God rather than men. "' (Acts 5:29).**

But keep in mind that the Pledge of Allegiance is not required by law, nor can it be required by any rule or ordinance.

Which Bible principles might a person want to consider in deciding whether to recite the Pledge or not?

1. Jesus directly, without any qualifiers, prohibits Christians from making an oath to

anything for any reason. “Again, you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, You must not break your oath, but you must keep your oaths to the Lord. But I tell you, don’t take an oath at all: either by heaven, because it is God’s throne; or by the earth, because it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. Neither should you swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. But let your word ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from the evil one.” (Matthew 5:33-37)

2. Jesus points out the eternal truth that a person cannot serve two masters at the same time. “No one can be a slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves of God and of money.” (Matthew 6:24) This principle also applies to serving other masters, or serving God. One master always takes precedence. For Christians, that master should be Almighty God!

3. Jesus’ Kingdom is not part of this world. “‘My kingdom is not of this world,’ said Jesus. ‘If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here.’” (John 18:36)

4. His followers are not to be part of this world. “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you.” (John 15:19) “I have given them Your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. ” (John 17:14) “They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.” (John 17:16)

5. Christians’ primary citizenship and loyalty is heavenly, not earthly. “But our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ” (Philippians 3:20)

6. The oath of “allegiance to the flag and the republic for which it stands” is tantamount to idolatry in that the person puts his/her allegiance to it unqualifiedly. “Little children, guard

yourselves from idols.” (1 John 5:21) This pledge of unqualified allegiance to the flag and nation makes it an idol, ahead of Almighty God.

Christians are told to, **“live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear” (1 Peter 1:17 NIV)**, similar to pre-Christian faithful ones who were, **“foreigners and strangers on earth” (Hebrews 11:13 NIV)**. Following Bible principles makes Christians like **“foreigners and strangers”**, oddballs, to this world.

Early Christians, at times, were said to be **“all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus” (Acts 17:7 NIV)**. **“Let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance in his name” (Hebrews 13:15 NLT)**. Early Christians gave their **“allegiance”** to **“God”** and **“Jesus”**. In one of the last books of the Bible written, notice to whom Christians should give their primary allegiance, according to the scriptures:

“His command is that we should give our allegiance to his Son Jesus Christ, and to love one another”—1 John 3:23 REB

“You have given your allegiance to the Son of God; This letter is to assure you that you have eternal life”—1 John 5:13 REB

The Pledge of Allegiance is not required by U. S. law, and according to that law, no entity or person can compel anyone to recite the Pledge. Our eternal life depends on giving our **“allegiance to the Son of God”**. Christians’ should definitely obey all laws of the nation they live in, except those laws or commands that conflict with Bible principles, but their primary allegiance should be to Almighty God and his king, Jesus Christ, because **“the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our God and his Messiah” (Revelation 11:15 NIV)**.

All scriptures quoted from the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), unless otherwise

noted.