

**Christian Nationalism:  
The Problem of Pride and the Humility that Redeems It**

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## Abstract

Title: Christian Nationalism: The Problem of Pride and the Humility that Redeems It  
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Christian Nationalism is a growing political movement among evangelicals that combines the interests of the individual, church and the state into a self-exalting, self-promoting, and self-preserving political agenda that is not supported by the scriptures. While many of the ideological tenets of Christian Nationalism are structurally inept, the most significant problem that Christian Nationalism presents for the believer is that it caters to the sin of pride in the human heart. It does so in the following three ways. First, this ideology misuses scripture to support a prideful self-exalting agenda and fails to apply a Christ-focused hermeneutic to biblical texts. Second, this political perspective advocates for a revisionist history of the United States of America that promotes man's agenda above historical facts in our nation's origin account. Finally, the pride of Christian Nationalism blatantly rejects the commands in the New Testament for believers to place others interests before their own (Phil 2:4), humbly honor governing authorities (Rom 13:1) and submit to every human institution for the Lord's sake (1 Pet 2:13).

While it's clear that Christian Nationalism is problematic for believers, the politics of this ideology are not the problem – the sin of pride is. Pride is the stubborn selfishness of the heart that has the potential to lie (Psa 59:12), deceive (Ob 1:3), and entice away from the Lord (Psa 10:4). Additionally, the heart of pride will always lead to strife (Prov 13:10), arrogance (Ob 1:3), a rejection of God (Psa 10:4), and destruction (Prov 16:18). While Christian Nationalism has its structural problems, it ultimately caters to a prideful heart that elevates the agenda of a man-centered nation over the agenda of God's Christ-centered kingdom and fails to teach believers how to live humbly as citizens of heaven during their time here on earth.

This project is meant to help the field of biblical counseling understand and navigate the growing political ideology of Christian Nationalism using biblical terms and biblical solutions. Additionally, this thesis will examine a heart of pride in the major tenants of Christian Nationalism and propose a gospel-motivated remedy that can redeem that heart of political pride with the humility of submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## I. Introduction

### A. Statements of Relevance

1. The objective of this thesis is to help the field of biblical counseling understand the political ideology of Christian Nationalism and counsel individuals that are living in a prideful manifestation of that political perspective. Christian Nationalism is a growing political movement among evangelicals that combines the interests of the individual, church and the state into a self-exalting, self-promoting, and self-preserving political agenda that is not supported by the scriptures. This thesis will examine the heart of pride that drives the major tenants of Christian Nationalism and propose a gospel-motivated remedy that can redeem that heart of political pride with the humility of submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Although this study will address the political ideology of Christian Nationalism, this thesis is ultimately directed at identifying pride from a biblical perspective and navigating the manifestations of that pride in the political worldview of Christian Nationalism. Consequently, this thesis will focus less on presenting a comprehensive survey of Christian Nationalism and focus more on the ways that the major principles of Christian Nationalism provide a platform for sinful manifestations of pride in the heart of the believer.
3. The bible has a lot to say about pride. Pride is an abomination to the Lord (Prov 16:5). Pride lies (Psa 59:12), pride deceives (Ob 1:3), and pride entices believers away from the Lord (Psa 10:4). Pride always leads to strife (Prov 13:10), arrogance (Ob 1:3), and destruction (Prov 16:18). Additionally, scripture tells us that pride is a sin (Prov 21:4), that God opposes the proud (Jas 4:6), and that God hates the sin of pride in the heart of man (Prov 8:13, Prov 6:17). Finally, Jesus Christ rebukes the proud in the gospels and

invites his followers to find redemption for the pride of their hearts through a posture of humility before God (Matt 23:12, Lk 18:9-14).

4. On this, the bible also has a lot to say about humility. The bible tells us that God blesses the humble (Prov 22:4), that humility accompanies wisdom (Prov 11:2), that God promises to exalt the humble (Lk 14:11) and that God gives favor to the humble (Prov 3:34). As to the means by which humility may be acquired, the gospel of Jesus Christ invites pride-ridden sinners to place their faith in Jesus Christ, the Lowly Servant (Isa 53:3), and to receive the undeserved gift of humility through the humble life, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Phil 2:5-11). From this, believers are called to put on humility (Col 3:12), clothe themselves in all humility (1 Pet 5:5), and to humble themselves before the Lord (Jas 4:10).

#### B. Intended Audience and Scope

1. My primary audience consists of adult Christians in my own local church that have considered, been tempted by, or have fully ascribed to a prideful manifestation of the Christian Nationalist worldview. My secondary audience are biblical counselors that require training in navigating the doctrinal challenges and questions that arise from man-centered political ideologies. My tertiary audience are believers in the American church that need guidance navigating the current American political landscape through a biblical lens.
2. The scope of this thesis will include a comprehensive biblical survey of the sin of pride and explore the ways that pride manifests itself in the man-centered agenda of Christian Nationalism. Additionally, this thesis will present a proposed remedy for that political pride in the gospel of Jesus Christ and provide a humility driven, others-focused and God-honoring alternative for believers to pursue.

### C. Research Methodology

1. The majority of my research will be done using library resources, purchased books, and internet searches for relevant articles. Specifically, I intend to conduct my research in the following three categories: 1) Defining Christian Nationalism, 2) Prideful Manifestations of Christian Nationalism, and 3) Biblical Pride and Humility. I also plan to conduct several interviews with individuals from my own local church context that ascribe to a Christian Nationalist worldview in order to develop a real-life plan for counseling based on the real needs of real people.

### D. Assumptions

1. There are several assumptions that this thesis will be working from. First, this thesis will assume that the reader embraces the doctrines of the inspiration, inerrancy, authority and sufficiency of scripture. The doctrine of the inspiration of scripture tells us that God himself wrote the Bible (2 Pet 1:21) whereas the doctrine of the inerrancy of scripture tells us that God's Word is perfect and completely free from error (Psa 19:7).<sup>1</sup> On the doctrine of the authority of scripture, the bible tells us that scripture carries the full weight and power of God's decreed decisions for the believer (Isa 55:10-11) and the doctrine of the sufficiency of scripture tells us that God's Word is profitable for teaching and training believers for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).<sup>2</sup> This thesis assumes a basic understanding and acceptance of these doctrines.
2. Second, this thesis will assume that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means by which a man might be saved. The scriptures tell us that the gospel is the message of

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2017), 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 100.

Christ's sinless life (1 Jn 3:5), substitutionary death (1 Cor 15:4), and glorious resurrection (1 Cor 15:6-7) that promises to bring salvation to all those who would place their faith in Christ (Rom 1:18). This gospel of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Mk 1:15) is the only message of salvation (Eph 1:13) and the scriptures explicitly prohibit us from preaching a gospel contrary to the gospel message of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:6-9).

3. Finally, this thesis will assume that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means by which a man might be sanctified. The scriptures tell us that the grace of God in Christ Jesus trains the believer to renounce ungodliness and teaches them to live self-controlled and God-honoring lives (Tit 2:11-12). Additionally, this gospel has given the believer everything they need for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3), has sealed the believer with the promised Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13), is the standard of truth for the believer and promises to bear fruit in the believer's life for the glory of God (Col 1:6). With that in mind, this thesis will not attempt to convince the reader of the value or importance of applying the gospel to the problems, questions, or struggles in one's life. However, it will attempt to demonstrate how the gospel of Jesus Christ applies to the problems, questions and struggles of life in a winsome way.

## II. Defining Terms

### A. Defining Biblical Pride

1. What is pride? Simply put, pride is a focus on self.<sup>3</sup> Pride elevates the agenda, service, preservation, recognition, and glorification of self over the agenda and worship of God and the love and service of others.

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<sup>3</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Focus Publishing, 2000), 6.

2. Human pride originated at the Fall of Man when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and elevate their agenda over his righteous commands (Gen 3:6). On this, Jonathan Leeman writes, “Adam’s bite of the fruit...was a self-justified act of self-rule.”<sup>4</sup>
  - a. This pride has infected every human being since (Rom 5:12) and the bible tells us that pride begins and flows from the sinful human heart of man (Prov 16:5).
  - b. On the scope of pride, C.S. Lewis writes that pride is the “one vice of which no man in the world is free, and of which hardly any people...ever imagine thy are guilty themselves.”<sup>5</sup>
3. God provides a clear judgment regarding pride in the scriptures. The bible tells us that God opposes the proud (Jas 4:6), that God hates pride (Prov 8:13), that God hates the proud (Prov 16:5), and that God defines pride explicitly as sin (Prov 21:4).
4. Pride has many manifestations. Pride lies (Psa 59:12), pride deceives (Ob 1:3), and pride entices believers away from the Lord (Psa 10:4). Pride always leads to strife (Prov 13:10), arrogance (Ob 1:3), and destruction (Prov 16:18). Pride passes judgment on God (Rom 9:20), is easily angered (Matt 20:1-6), looks down on others (Luke 7:36-50), is unteachable (Prov 13:1), cannot see beyond selfish desires (Matt 5:7), and will not listen to instruction (Prov 10:17).<sup>6</sup> Pride can look like moral self-righteousness (Luke 18:9), puffed up knowledge (1 Cor 8:1), boastfulness (1 Cor 4:7) or an independent spirit (Heb 13:17).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Leeman and Andrew David Naselli, *How Can I Love Church Members with Different Politics?* Church Questions (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2020), 16.

<sup>5</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2000), 10.

<sup>6</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (n.p.: Focus Publishing, 2000), 6-11.

<sup>7</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007), 89-100

## B. Defining Biblical Humility

1. Humility, on the other hand, is a focus on God and others.<sup>8</sup> Humility recognizes and submits to the agenda, commands, and glory of God and aims to please God in all things, at all times and in every way.
2. Humility is a posture of the heart (2 Chron 34:27). A heart of humility brings honor (Prov 15:33), righteous exaltation (1 Pet 5:6), favor (Prov 3:34), rest (Matt 11:29), salvation (Psa 149:4), and the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven for those that possess it (Matt 5:3).
3. Humility is a command of God. Believers are called to clothe themselves in humility (1 Pet 5:5), put on a posture of humility toward others (Col 3:12), consider others more significant than themselves (Phil 2:3), think of themselves with sober judgment (Rom 12:3), and to live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16).
4. True humility is a gift that must be received and applied through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the perfect embodiment of humility in that he is the lowly servant (Isa 53:5), the sacrificial leader (Mk 10:45), the obedient Son (Jn 5:19), and the empathizing advocate (Heb 4:15). In his incarnation, he lowered himself (Phil 2:7). In his crucifixion, he sacrificed himself (Phil 2:8). And in his resurrection, his Father bestowed upon him the glory and praise that only He rightfully deserves (Phil 2:9-11). When an individual places their faith in Jesus Christ, they are gifted the humble mind of Christ through regeneration (Phil 2:5) and they are commanded to apply that humility by faith in the context of their interactions and relationships with the world around them (Phil 2:2-4).

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<sup>8</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007), 19.

### C. Defining Christian Nationalism

1. The word ‘nation’ refers both to a large area of land that is controlled by its own government and the collective identity of the people that possess it.<sup>9</sup>
2. The English word ‘nationalism’ is a relatively new concept and only started to appear in literature in the late eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Nationalism is defined as “loyalty and devotion to one’s nation; a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to other nations or supranational groups.”<sup>11</sup> Sociologist Anthony D. Smith defines nationalism as “an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity.”<sup>12</sup> Nationalism is primarily concerned with serving, promoting, and preserving the interests of one’s nation above the interests of all other nations.
3. Christian Nationalism is a political ideology that promotes the idea that the geopolitical nation-state must exalt, promote, and defend the Christian ethic, identity, and ideal above any other ethic, identity, or ideal. Simply put, it believes that the interests of the state need to reflect the interests of the Christian faith and that the state is responsible for using its power to accomplish that.
4. American Christian Nationalism promotes the notion that the geopolitical nation-state of the United States of America must serve, promote and preserve the Christian ethic, identity, and ideal above any other ethic, identity, or ideal. Specifically, American

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<sup>9</sup> *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Nation,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nation>.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Backhouse, *Kierkegaard's Critique of Christian Nationalism*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Nationalism,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nationalism>.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Backhouse, *Kierkegaard's Critique of Christian Nationalism*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

Christian Nationalism advocates for the idea that the American republic was founded solely as a Christian nation, that the power of government rests not on the consent of the governed but on the theological doctrines of Christianity, and that our nation's laws must reflect the principles and commands of scripture.<sup>13</sup>

#### D. Defining Principles of Christian Nationalism

1. Christian Nationalism believes that America has been, is and must continue to be a Christian Nation. Prominent Christian Nationalists argue that the United States of America was founded by evangelical Christians and that, as a nation, it was built using Christian principles.<sup>14</sup> They also argue that our Founding Fathers used the Ten Commandments as the basis of law in the United States in order to ensure that the American nation would always be a Christian nation.<sup>15</sup>
2. Christian Nationalism believes that the American Constitution must reflect and defend Christian values according to the Word of God. The Council for National Policy, the largest Christian Nationalist lobbying group at the national level, asserted in 2014 that their mission was to be “a united conservative movement that restores religious and economic freedom, a strong national defense, and Judeo-Christian values under the constitution.”<sup>16</sup>
3. Finally, Christian Nationalism believes that Christians must assert their moral, ethical, and religious dominion in American civilization and culture. C. Peter Wagner, former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and self-professed ‘godfather’ of Christian

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<sup>13</sup> Katherine Stewart, *The Power Worshippers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew L. Seidel, *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American* (New York: Sterling, 2019), 8.

<sup>15</sup> Jerry Falwell, *Listen, America!* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 29.

<sup>16</sup> Council for National Policy, *Membership Directory 2014* (Council for National Policy, 2014), 1, [https://splcenter.org/sites/default/files/cnp\\_redacted\\_final.pdf](https://splcenter.org/sites/default/files/cnp_redacted_final.pdf).

Nationalist ideology, wrote, “Christians are called to take control of the major areas of civilization including government, business, education, the media, the arts, family, and religion.”<sup>17</sup> He also writes, “Apostles have a responsibility for taking dominion over whatever molder of culture or subdivision God has placed them in,” ultimately “taking dominion back from Satan.”<sup>18</sup>

#### E. Defining the Problem of Pride in Christian Nationalism.

1. The Christian Nationalism ideology caters to the sinful agenda of pride in the human heart.
2. The Christian Nationalist ideology exposes and caters to the sinful agenda of pride in the following four ways:
  - a. The Christian Nationalist ideology embodies a self-exalting agenda that intentionally misuses scripture, fails to apply a proper Christ-focused hermeneutic to biblical texts and makes a nation the focus of biblical texts instead of God.
  - a. The Christian Nationalist ideology embodies a self-promoting revisionist history of American Christianity that distorts historical facts about our nation’s beginnings with propaganda fiction.
  - b. The Christian Nationalist ideology embodies a posture of self-preservation that blatantly rejects clear biblical commands regarding the believer’s sacrificial, humble and submitted interactions with the state.

### III. The Problem of Pride

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<sup>17</sup> C. Peter Wagner, “*Dominion! How Kingdom Action Can Change the World*”, (Ada, Minnesota: Chosen Publishing, 2008), 144.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 154-55.

## A. Pride is Self-Exalting

1. Pride demands to be worshipped.<sup>19</sup> The first commandment that God gave to the Israelites declared, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3). Pride sees this command as a threat to the glory and praise of self and rejects it, opting instead to worship self. On this rebellion, Puritan Thomas Watson said of pride, “It is spiritual drunkenness; it flies up like wine into the bran and intoxicates it. It is idolatry; a proud man is a self-worshipper.”<sup>20</sup> In essence, Watson argues the following: “Pride seeks to ungod God.”<sup>21</sup> Scripture tells us that the proud rejects God (Psa 10:4), that the proud says “I am god” (Ez 28:2) and that the proud elevates the glory of self above the glory of God (Isa 14:13-14).
  
2. Pride demands to be served. The bible sets pride in direct opposition to an others-focused mindset (Phil 2:3-4). Pride is incongruous with relational harmony (Rom 12:16) and antithetical to a servant mindset. In fact, when James and John pridefully requested that Jesus sit them at his right and left, Jesus corrected them in their pride and said “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:43-45). Christ’s words to his disciples consistently rebuked the self-serving mindset of pride (Matt 18:1-4).

## B. Pride is Self-Promoting.

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<sup>19</sup> Wayne A. Mack and Joshua Mack, *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*, Strength for Life (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2005), 99.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man’s Picture* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), 574.

<sup>21</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Focus Publishing, 2000), 5.

1. Pride leads to an inflated view of self. Pride has a proclivity toward boasting in beauty (Ex 28:17), success (Ez 31:10), strength (2 Chron 36:16), wisdom (Jer 9:23a) and wealth (Jer 9:23b). Ultimately, pride boasts in the flesh because pride causes us to have an inaccurate view of ourselves (Gal 6:3). Pride leads to an inflated view of an individual's importance, gifts, abilities and accomplishments.<sup>22</sup>
2. Pride steals the credit (Judg 7:2). In 1 Corinthians 4:7, Paul warns that pride causes man to have a superiority complex where he takes the credit for things he didn't accomplish. He writes, "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (1 Cor 4:7). Wayne Mack argues that this prideful boasting is a lie that behaves as though man deserve the credit for something he didn't actually do.<sup>23</sup>
  - a. When King Nebuchadnezzar looked at the glory of Babylon and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty" (Dan 4:30), God immediately spoke from heaven and rebuked him, saying, "...the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will" (Dan 4:32).

### C. Pride is Self-Preserving.

1. Pride is linked to fear
  - a. When King Saul saw that David had defeated Goliath, Saul was jealous of David's glory (1 Sam 18:8a), saw David's glory as a threat to his throne (1 Sam 18:8b), and attempted to kill David with a spear (1 Sam 18:10-11).

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<sup>22</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Focus Publishing, 2000), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Wayne A. Mack and Joshua Mack, *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*, Strength for Life (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2005), 103.

Following this, the text tells us that Saul was afraid of David (1 Sam 18:15) and removed David from his presence in an effort to keep him from taking the throne (1 Sam 18:12).

- b. Pride is afraid of conquest and competition and influences man to take extraordinary measures to defend his own safety, reputation, and glory at all costs.

2. Pride is linked to self-protectionism.

- a. When King Uzziah was successful in his military conquests (2 Chron 26:6-8), he returned to Jerusalem and enacted unprecedented defense mechanisms to protect the city from foreign invasion. As he did this, the text tells us King Uzziah grew strong and that “when he was strong, he grew proud” (2 Chron 26:16). As his strength grew in a climate of security, this provided a fertile ground for the sin of pride to grow in his heart (2 Chron 26:16).

3. Pride rejects the provision of God and replaces it with the provisions of man.

- a. Influenced by the temptation of pride, Eve chose not to trust in the provision of God and sought to acquire satisfaction and wisdom for herself through the forbidden tree in the garden (Gen 3:6).
- b. Pride elevates the value of riches (1 Tim 6:17), possessions (1 Jn 2:16), and human wisdom (Prov 26:12) over the provision and promises of the Lord.

D. Pride is Self-Destructing.

1. Scripture provides a clear diagnosis and verdict for the sin of pride.

- a. God opposes the proud (Jas 4:6), God hates pride (Prov 8:13), God is against the proud one (Jer 50:31), and God promises to bring punishment to the proud of heart (Prov 16:5).

2. Pride leads to conflict.
  - a. Pride is haughty (Prov 18:12), boastful (Zeph 2:10) and will lead to relational strife with others (Prov 13:10). The bible tells us that pride is a desire of the sinful flesh (1 Jn 2:16) that is set in direct opposition to relational unity (Phil 2:3).
3. Pride always leads to destruction apart from salvation in Jesus Christ.
  - a. Although the sin of pride says, “Who will bring me down” (Ob 1:3), God himself promises to bring the proud low (Prov 29:23), bring disgrace to the proud (Prov 11:2), tear down the house of the proud (Prov 15:25) and bring an end to the proud (Ez 30:6).
  - b. In the case of King Uzziah, his leprosy (2 Chron 26:20), isolation (2 Chron 26:21), and removal from the throne of Judah (2 Chron 26:21b) was caused by his pride (2 Chron 26:16).
  - c. In the case of King Saul, his self-centeredness disobedience caused him to be removed as King over Israel (1 Sam 13:13-14).
  - d. In the case of King Nebuchadnezzar, God responded to his prideful boasting and desire to be worshipped (Dan 4:30) by removing him from his position of authority (Dan 4:31) and causing him to experience a state of anthropomorphic insanity (Dan 4:33).
  - e. Pride condemned Satan to hell (Isa 14:12-15), pride caused King Herod to be eaten by worms (Acts 12:23), and pride caused Israel to be ransacked (Isa 3:16-26), ravaged (Hos 13:6-8), and temporarily removed from the land of Canaan (Ez 16:50).

#### IV. The Problem of Pride in Christian Nationalism

##### A. The first way that we see the sin of pride manifest itself in the ideology of Christian

Nationalism is through a self-exalting mishandling of biblical texts.

1. The ideology of Christian Nationalism applies a self-exalting hermeneutic to John 1:5 that replaces the glory of Jesus Christ with the desire to worship and praise the American nation.
  - a. The Apostle John writes in John 1:5, “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it”.
  - b. On the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush concluded his commemorative speech with a casual, but intentional, exegesis of John 1:5 for his American audience. Of the American nation, he proclaimed, “Ours is the cause of human dignity; freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind. The hope that drew millions to this harbor. That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it.<sup>24</sup>”
  - c. An American-centric hermeneutic would read John 1:5 and believe that God intended for the American ideal to be the light that shines in the darkness. However, John 1:9 clearly identifies Jesus Christ as the ‘true light’ that has come into the world. Therefore, John 1:5 exalts Jesus Christ as the ‘light that shines in the darkness’ and not the values of a particular nation-state.

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<sup>24</sup> President George W. Bush, “President’s Remarks to the Nation”, (Ellis Island: NY, 2002), <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020911-3.html>.

- d. The ideology of Christian Nationalism replaces the glory of Jesus in this text with a prideful exaltation of the American nation and it uses a self-exalting hermeneutic to facilitate this agenda.
2. The ideology of Christian Nationalism applies a self-exalting hermeneutic to Matthew 28:18-20 that aims to serve the purpose of building a Christian nation instead of recognizing the commission to build building Christ's kingdom.
    - a. Jesus told his disciples prior to his ascension, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20).
    - b. Marshall Foster quotes these words of Jesus in his book, *The American Covenant*, and writes, "The Great Commission provided the primary impetus for the building of Christian civilizations around the world."<sup>25</sup> Likewise, he writes, "Our forefathers understand that our commission was to spread the message of Christ to the world and build a Biblically based civilization."<sup>26</sup>
    - c. A nation-building hermeneutic reads Matthew 28:18-20 and believes that Jesus is calling his believers to build a Christian Republic.<sup>27</sup> However, Matthew 28:18-20 does not advocate for this. Instead, this text advocates for the expansion of Christ's kingdom across many nations and the discipleship of people, not inanimate geo-political constructs.

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<sup>25</sup> Marshall Foster, *The American Covenant: The Untold Story*, American Campfire Revival ed. (Ventura: Nordskog Publishing Inc., 2021), 70

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 202.

- d. The ideology of Christian Nationalism replaces Christ's commission to make disciple of all nations with a self-exalting mission to create a Christian nation and it uses a prideful hermeneutic to facilitate this agenda.
3. The ideology of Christian Nationalism applies a self-exalting hermeneutic to Luke 4:18-19 that replaces Christ's mission to bring liberty to the spiritually enslaved with the mission of bringing independent self-governance to the politically ruled.
    - a. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus commissions his formal ministry by declaring, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
    - b. The ideology of Christian Nationalism argues that this text shows us that Christ promised to bring religious and civil liberty to the believer. On this text, Marshall Foster concludes that Luke 4:18-19 is the biblical precedent for self-governance. He writes, "There is no limit to what we as self-governing Christians can accomplish when we understand our history and stand firm in the liberty for which Christ has set us free."<sup>28</sup>
    - c. Whereas a self-governing hermeneutic might read Luke 4:18-19 and believe that Christ promised to set captives free from tyrannical political rule, the promise of Luke 4:18-19 is a prophetic fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-2 which

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<sup>28</sup> Marshall Foster, *The American Covenant: The Untold Story*, American Campfire Revival ed. (Ventura: Nordskog Publishing Inc., 2021), 126

anticipates spiritual salvation, not self-governance, for those that would place their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>29</sup>

- d. The ideology of Christian Nationalism replaces Christ's promise to set spiritual captives free with a prideful desire for autonomy and it uses a self-exalting hermeneutic to facilitate this agenda.

B. The second way that the sin of pride manifest itself in the ideology of Christian Nationalism is through a self-promoting adherence to an American revisionist history.

- 1. The Christian Nationalist ideology ignores historical facts about our nation's history and replaces them with exaggerations and inventions that support its own self-promoting agenda.

- 2. There are two false historical convictions that the Christian Nationalist ideology promotes that expose an exaggerated view of reality and attempts to give the Christian religion credit for something undeserved.

- a. First, the Christian Nationalist ideology falsely promotes the idea that the founding fathers of America were distinctly Christian leaders.

- i. Prominent televangelist Jerry Falwell writes, "Any diligent student of American history finds that our great nation was founded by godly men upon godly principles to be a Christian nation."<sup>30</sup>

- ii. This is historically inaccurate. For example, George Washington, our nation's first president, did not claim to be a Christian and he did not

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<sup>29</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 126.

<sup>30</sup> Jerry Falwell, *Listen, America!* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 29.

advocate for explicitly Christian doctrines in the founding of our nation.

- iii. While George Washington is quoted as giving credit to ‘almighty God’ and the ‘beneficent Author of all good that was’ in his Thanksgiving Declaration of 1789, those terms for God are more consistent with a deistic religious perspective than a Christian one. It is important to note that George Washington excluded the distinctively Christian doctrines of human sinfulness, the incarnation of Christ, and salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone in all of his public addresses.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Washington’s bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church said that Washington never took communion in his church and that he had “no degree of recollection will bring to my mind any fact which would prove General Washington to have been a believer in the Christian revelation.”<sup>32</sup>
- iv. Ben Franklin, another founding father who signed both the Declaration of Independence and the United States constitution, did also not claim to be a Christian. On his lack of Christian faith, he once wrote in a letter to a friend, “As to Jesus of Nazareth...I think the system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, is the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various

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<sup>31</sup> Steven Green, *Inventing a Christian America: The Myth of the Religious Founding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 149.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his divinity.”<sup>33</sup>

- b. Second, the Christian Nationalist ideology falsely promotes the idea that the United States Constitution was originally intended to be a distinctly Christian document.
  - i. Rosalie Slater wrote in her book, *Teaching and Learning America’s Christian History*, wrote of the U.S. Constitution, “The spirit which was intended and understood by our Founding Fathers is missing – and has been for the last one hundred years. That spirit was a Christian foundation of our Constitution – the faith of our fathers.”<sup>34</sup>
  - ii. This is historically inaccurate. George Washington did not intend for the U.S. Constitution to embody the spirit of a Christian document. When confronted by several Presbyterian ministers for omitting distinctly Christian language from the U.S. Constitution, he responded, “The path of true piety is so plain as to require but little political direction. To this consideration we ought to ascribe the absence of any regulation, respecting religion, from the Magna-Charta of our country. To the guidance of the ministers of the gospel this important object is, perhaps, more properly committed.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *To Ezra Stiles: With a Statement of His Religious Creed* (Letter: March 9 1790), <https://www.bartleby.com/400/prose/366.html>

<sup>34</sup> Rosalie J. Slater, *Teaching and Learning America’s Christian History*, (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1975), 240.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew L. Seidel, *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American* (New York: Sterling, 2019), 35.

iii. Additionally, Joseph Story, Supreme Court Justice from 1812 to 1845, wrote regarding the prohibition of religious tests for publicly held offices in Article VI, Clause 3 that the prohibition existed “to cut off for ever every pretense of any alliance between church and state in the national government.”<sup>36</sup>

C. The third way that pride manifests itself in the ideology of Christian Nationalism is through a self-preserving rejection of explicit biblical instruction.

1. The Christian Nationalist ideology replaces the instruction of 1 Peter 2:13 for believers to humbly submit to governmental authorities and argues instead for a self-preserving dominion of the political sphere.

a. C. Peter Wagner, ‘godfather’ of Christian Nationalist ideology, wrote that “Christians are called to take control of the major areas of civilization including government, business, education, the media, the arts, family, and religion.”<sup>37</sup> He also writes, “Apostles have a responsibility for taking dominion over whatever molder of culture or subdivision God has placed them in.”<sup>38</sup>

b. The bible does not advocate for believers to take dominion over the sphere of government.<sup>39</sup> Instead, believers are called to humbly submit to human institutions for the purposes of preserving their evangelical witness (1 Peter 2:12-13) and to trust in God’s sovereign authority over those institutions.

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<sup>36</sup> Andrew L. Seidel, *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American* (New York: Sterling, 2019), 33.

<sup>37</sup> C. Peter Wagner, “*Dominion! How Kingdom Action Can Change the World*”, (Ada, Minnesota: Chosen Publishing, 2008), 144.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 154-55.

<sup>39</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2010), 99.

- i. Peter writes, “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. This is the will of God, that by doing so you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people” (1 Pet 2:13-15).
  - ii. Similarly, Paul writes in Romans 13, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Rom 13:1).
  - iii. The commands of 1 Peter 2 and Romans 13 are particularly striking considering the fact that both were instructing their original audience to be subject to the irreligious, amoral and evil political authority of the Roman Emperor Nero.<sup>40</sup>
2. The Christian Nationalist ideology doubts the promises of God in the scriptures and asserts that only a Christian state can provide the safety, resource, and provision that the believer requires.
- a. The bible tells the believer that they have been given everything they need for life and godliness through Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:3), asserts that God will provide everything the believer needs when they seek Christ’s kingdom (Matt 6:33), and that God will supply the believer’s every need through Jesus Christ (Phil 4:19).
  - b. The Christian Nationalist ideology disagrees with these biblical promises and argues that the self-governed individual, family, business, church and republic are God’s means for providing for his people.

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<sup>40</sup> Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 127.

- i. Quoting Proverbs 25:28, which reads, “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls,” Marshall Foster writes in *The American Covenant*, “If we cannot rule ourselves, our cities will certainly break down and will, in their chaos, eat up our liberty.”<sup>41</sup>

## V. The Solution of Humility in the Gospel

### A. Humility Commanded

1. God repeatedly celebrates the attribute of humility throughout his Word.
  - a. Humility is rewarded (Prov 22:4), honored (Prov 29:23), adorned (Psa 149:4), and looked upon with favor by the Lord (Psa 138:6).
2. God commands his people to be humble in their relationship with him.
  - a. The Lord requires that believers walk humbly with him (Mic 6:8), instructs believers to humble themselves before him (1 Pet 5:6), and tells his people that humility is a prerequisite for enjoying a relationship with him (2 Chron 7:14).
3. God also commands his people to be humble in their interactions with one another.
  - a. Believers are called to clothe themselves in humility toward one another (1 Pet 5:5), to consider others as more important than themselves (Phil 2:3), and to live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16).
4. As it relates to the pride of Christian Nationalism, the scriptures urge the believer to:

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<sup>41</sup> Marshall Foster, *The American Covenant: The Untold Story*, American Campfire Revival ed. (Ventura: Nordskog Publishing Inc., 2021), 210.

- a. Acknowledge that a heart posture of humility is celebrated by God, commanded by God for their interactions with the Lord and commanded by God for their interactions with others.
- b. Humility is not a suggestion for the believer; it is a command.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the believer must recognize that biblical humility must mark their life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

## B. A Humility Deficit

1. Although humility is commanded and required in the lives of God's people, humility is completely foreign to the natural man.
  - a. God's Word tells us that the natural man suppresses the truth of God (Rom 1:18), refuses to honor God (Rom 1:21), claims to be wise in their own eyes (Rom 1:22), and exchanges the truth about God for a self-serving lie (Rom 1:25).
2. Humility is impossible for the unregenerate.
  - a. Paul writes, quoting Psalm 14, "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one" (Rom 3:10-12).
  - b. Similarly, Psalm 10:4 tells us that the proud do not seek the Lord and that every thought of the proud heart rejects the very existence of God. On this, Wayne Mack writes, "Pride is the nature of the unbeliever, who does not know how to be anything else."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Wayne A. Mack and Joshua Mack, *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*, Strength for Life (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2005), 21.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 123.

3. There are very real consequences for a heart of unrepentant pride.
  - a. Scripture promises that pride will be accompanied by disgrace (Prov 11:2), strife (Prov 13:10), divine opposition (Jas 4:6), God's wrath (Prov 8:13), destruction (Prov 18:12), punishment (Prov 16:5), and hopelessness (Prov 26:12).
4. As it relates to the pride of Christian Nationalism, the scriptures urge the believer to:
  - a. Recognize that any man-made political ideology will promote a self-serving, self-promoting, and self-preserving agenda that is void of true biblical humility.
  - b. Admit that they are unable to cultivate true humility in their heart apart from God's intervening work in their life and recognize the need for divine rescue in order to be saved from the consequences of their sinful pride before God.

### C. Perfect Humility Personified

1. Jesus embodied perfect humility in his incarnation.
  - a. Jesus was born in the modest city of Bethlehem (Mic 5:2), was placed in a lowly manger (Lk 2:7), and had a remarkably modest physical appearance (Isa 53:2).
2. Jesus embodied perfect humility in his submission to God's Word.
  - a. Jesus rebuked temptation with scripture (Lk 4:1-10), answered complex questions with scripture (Matt 19:4), and used the precedent of scripture to understand and navigate current events (Matt 24:36-39).
3. Jesus embodied perfect humility in his obedience to the will of the Father.
  - a. Jesus was perfectly obedient to his Father (Rom 5:19), did all that his Father commanded him (Jn 14:31), always sought to please his Father (Jn 8:29),

recognized his Father's sovereign authority (Jn 19:11), and perfectly prioritized his Father's will over his own (Lk 22:42).

4. Jesus embodied perfect humility in his service to others.
  - a. Jesus embodied the posture of a servant in his earthly ministry (Jn 13:3-5), did not come to be served but to serve others (Matt 20:28), and lived amongst his followers as a servant (Lk 22:27).
5. Jesus embodied perfect humility in his sacrificial death on a cross.
  - a. Jesus empathized with the hopeless state of the unregenerate (Phil 2:6), left heaven and took the form of a servant (Phil 2:7), and humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death on a cross (Phil 2:8).
6. Jesus embodies perfect humility in his reign and rule as King.
  - a. Jesus does not exalt himself but is exalted as King by his Father (Phil 2:9), heaven (Phil 2:10a), the inhabitants of the earth (Phil 2:10b), and the inhabitants of hell (Phil 2:10c).
  - b. Jesus' eternal kingdom is marked by a heart posture of humility (Matt 18:4).
7. As it relates to the pride of Christian Nationalism, the scriptures urge the believer to:
  - a. Affirm the biblical truths of Christ's humble incarnation, Christ's humble submission, Christ's humble obedience, Christ's humble mission, Christ's humble cross, and Christ's humble yet glorious kingdom reign.
  - b. Recognize that the message of Christianity is centered upon the person and work of the humble God-man, Jesus Christ. No other agenda, interest, or ideology can distract for the glory that Christ alone deserves.
  - c. Emulate the example of Christ (1 John 2:6) and follow other believers that are committed to following Christ's humble example (1 Cor 11:1).

#### D. Salvation Through the Humility of Faith and Repentance in Jesus Christ.

1. Salvation is preceded by a humble recognition and confession of one's sin.
  - a. In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus told a parable about a Pharisee and a Tax Collector that highlights the prerequisite of humility in God's plan of salvation. In it, the Pharisee stood in a public place and praised his own righteous deeds before God whereas the Tax Collector beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Lk 18:11-13). Following this, Jesus celebrates the humility of the Tax Collector and says, "Everyone who exalts themselves will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 18:14).
  - b. The bible teaches that a humble recognition of sin is a prerequisite for justification in God's plan of salvation.
2. Salvation requires a repentant rejection of one's pride.
  - a. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, the Lord tells his people, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."
  - b. Similarly, Proverbs 3:7-8 instructs, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones".
  - c. The bible teaches that forgiveness and salvation only happen when we turn away from our sinful pride.
3. Salvation is secured through faith in Jesus Christ.

- a. Paul teaches that salvation takes place when a person humbly acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ and trusts that God the Father raised Jesus Christ, the Son, from the dead (Rom 10:9).
  - b. Additionally, Paul tells the Ephesian church that salvation takes place through faith in Jesus Christ as a gift of God's grace (Eph 2:8). Salvation is not a result of human works and provides no room for human boasting (Eph 2:9)
  - c. Wayne Mack writes in *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*, "The path to true humility must begin with the new birth. The bible makes it clear that no unsaved person can be truly humble."<sup>44</sup>
4. Salvation accomplishes a regenerative work in the believer.
- a. Salvation gives the believer a soft heart (Ez 36:26), causes them to become a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), and makes them alive in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:22).
  - b. Salvation also gives the believer the humble mind of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5) and the Holy Spirit to propel God-honoring obedience (Ez 26:27).
5. As it relates to the pride of Christian Nationalism, the gospel urges the believer to:
- a. Acknowledge that salvation and the benefits of salvation are only possible through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - b. Recognize that this salvation is given as a gift of God, who saves men in this way to ensure that no man can boast in their own salvation.
  - c. Recognize the fact that believers are given a new nature in order to walk in humility toward both God and others as evidence of their regeneration.

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<sup>44</sup> Wayne A. Mack and Joshua Mack, *Humility: The Forgotten Virtue*, Strength for Life (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2005), 123.

## E. Putting On Humility

1. Regenerate believers are called to completely ‘put off’ their sinful pride.
  - a. Jerry Bridges writes in *Respectable Sins*, “One of the problems with pride is that we can see it in others but not in ourselves.”<sup>45</sup> Pride is deceiving in its nature and the believer must be committed to diagnosing and dealing with their pride biblically.
  - b. Paul calls believers in Colossians 3 to ‘put to death what is earthly’ in them (Col 3:5), ‘put away’ all marks of the old man (Col 3:8), and ‘put off the old self with its practices and desires’ (Col 3:9).
  - c. Paul calls believers in Ephesians 4 to ‘put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires’ (Eph 4:22). The ‘old self’ is darkened in understanding (Eph 4:18a), alienated from life with God (Eph 4:18b), symptomatic of a hard heart (Eph 4:18c), and greedy to practice impurities (Eph 4:19).
  - d. The sinful marks of the ‘old self’ include:
    - i. False speech (Eph 4:25), unrighteous anger (Eph 4:26), dishonesty (Eph 4:28), corrupting talk (Eph 4:29), and slander along with bitterness and malice (Eph 4:21).
    - ii. Evil desires (Col 3:5), idolatry (Col 3:5), slander (Col 3:8), and lying (Col 3:9).
2. Believers are called to completely ‘put on’ their new identity through faith in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>45</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2007), 89.

- a. Paul calls believers in Colossians 3 to ‘put on the new self’ which, through faith, is being renewed in righteous knowledge after the image of its creator (Col 3:10).
  - b. Paul calls believer in Ephesians 4 to ‘put on the new self’ which has been regenerated, justified, and declared holy through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 4:24).
3. Believers are called to ‘put on’ the humble marks of the new self along with its desires, actions, and behaviors.
- a. Paul calls believers in Colossians 3 to ‘put on’ humility, compassion, kindness, meekness and patience (Col 3:12). Likewise, believers are called to bear with one another and forgive one another in the same way that God in Christ has forgiven them (Col 3:13). Believers are also called to put on love (Col 3:14), Christ’s peace (Col 3:15a), and thankfulness (Col 3:15b). Finally, believers are called to do everything in both word and deed “In the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:17).
  - b. Paul calls believers in Ephesians 4 to ‘put on’ truth speaking (Eph 4:25a), recognize the inherent unity in the body of Christ (Eph 4:25b), turn away from unrighteous anger (Eph 4:26), have their lives marked by honesty and generosity (Eph 4:27-28), speak only to build others up (Eph 4:29) and live from a posture of kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness (Eph 4:32).
4. As it relates to the pride of Christian Nationalism, the believer must:
- a. Reject and ‘put off’ the prideful claims of Christian Nationalism entirely. This includes:

- i. Rejecting the self-exalting hermeneutic that attempts to distort biblical texts and replace Christ as the focus of scripture with the American Christian ideal.
  - ii. Rejecting the self-promoting revisionist history that replaces historical truths about our nation's founding with fabricated exaggerations.
  - iii. Rejecting the self-preserving pursuit of self-rule in the believer's life.
- b. The Christian Nationalist must fully embrace the humble message and promises of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This includes:
  - i. Embracing a Christ-focused hermeneutic that sees the promise, person and glory of Jesus Christ as the ultimate focus of the scriptures.
  - ii. Embracing a historically accurate rendering of our nation's history that acknowledges that deism, not evangelical Christianity, influenced our nation's founding.
  - iii. Embracing the biblical commands of humility and the biblical promises of God's provision for believers that walk humbly before the Lord.
- c. The Christian Nationalist must commit to pursuing a lifestyle that will be marked by biblical humility. This includes:
  - i. Replacing a self-exalting mindset with the faith-fueled commitment to honestly speak the truth to one's neighbor in a way that builds others up in love.
  - ii. Replacing a self-promoting mindset with the faith-fueled commitment to walk in meekness, kindness, and to do everything for the glory of Jesus Christ.

- iii. Replacing a self-preserving mindset with the faith-fueled commitment to generously and sacrificially serve others as more significant than oneself (Phil 2:3)

## F. Benefits of Humility

1. Jesus tells his followers that the humble will be blessed.
  - a. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:3).
  - b. Jerry Bridges writes, “This abject poverty of spirit comes from our awareness of our own dreadfully sinful condition.”<sup>46</sup>
  - c. John Owen writes, “He that walks humbly walks safely.”<sup>47</sup>
2. Jesus tells his followers that God promises to lift up the humble.
  - a. “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but that the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:9-14).
  - b. “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18:4).
3. Believers are called to live as missionary servants of God so that others might come to glorify God (1 Pet 2:11-18).
  - a. Believers do this by living God-honoring lives among unbelievers.
    - i. “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak

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<sup>46</sup> Jerry Bridges, *The Blessing of Humility* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, a NavPress resource published in alliance with Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2016), 10.

<sup>47</sup> John Owen. *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 300.

against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (1 Pet 2:11-12).

- b. Believers do this by living in humble submission to governing authorities.
  - i. “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good” (1 Pet 2:13-14).
  - ii. “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment” (Rom 13:1-2).
- c. Believers do this by living as humble servants of God.
  - i. “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor” (1 Pet 2:16-17).

4. Humble believers can trust in the promise of God’s provision for the humble.

- a. Peter tells believers, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Pet 5:6-7).
- b. This command is accompanied by a promise of eternal provision in Jesus Christ.
  - i. “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Pet 5:10).

- ii. Stuart Scott writes, “We should strive to keep an eternal perspective and place all our hope in our future with Christ.”<sup>48</sup>
- a. God’s promised provision for the humble is in light of God’s dominion rule and glory.
  - i. Peter concludes his call to humility and promise of God’s provision with the statement, “To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet 5:11).

## VI. A Plan for Counseling

### A. Pre-Counseling

1. The heart of sinful pride is resistant to help, unaware of itself, and unwilling to be challenged. With this, the following two scenarios represent the most likely situations in which someone struggling with a prideful manifestation of the Christian Nationalist ideology would likely seek biblical counseling:
  - a. They have been confronted in their prideful sin by a brother or sister in Christ according to Matthew 18:15-17.
    - i. “If you brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matt 18:15-17).

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<sup>48</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Focus Publishing, 2000), 33.

- b. There were pursued in their prideful sin by a brother or sister in Christ according to Galatians 6:1.
  - i. “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness” (Gal 6:1).
2. Prior to counseling, the counselee candidate would be asked to complete the following steps in order to enter into a formal biblical counseling relationship with the counselor.
  - a. The completion of a PDI (Personal Data Inventory).<sup>49</sup>
  - b. The completing of a Consent to Counsel form.<sup>50</sup>
3. In the first counseling session, the counselee would be asked the following questions accompanied by the identified homework assignments:
  - a. Why have you come to biblical counseling?
  - b. What have you done about your problem so far?
  - c. What would you like to see happen in biblical counseling?
  - d. Homework: please write out your testimony describing how you became a Christian, what your Christian life looks like, and how see you this problem impacting your life.
  - e. Homework: please share a one-page summary of your political convictions including how your faith informs and shapes those convictions.

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<sup>49</sup> Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling*, The Jay Adams Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 433.

<sup>50</sup> Stuart Scott, *Consent Form*. <https://oneeightyministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Consent-Form-counselor.pdf>.

- f. Homework: please read Psalm 19:7, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12-13, and Psalm 1 and tell me, “What do each of these passages tell us about God’s Word and it’s benefit for our lives?”
4. In the second counseling session, the counselor and counselee would take time to review their homework and walk through the gospel of Jesus Christ to establish whether or not the counselee had placed their faith in Jesus Christ. In this gospel presentation, the counselor would use ‘Section V, Subpoints A-D’ to share the gospel with the counselee.
  - a. If the counselee professed faith in Jesus Christ, the counselor would move forward by beginning to address the counselee’s heart issues.
  - b. If the counselee did not profess faith in Jesus Christ, the counselor would remain in ‘pre-counseling’ and aim instead to evangelize the counselee.

## B. Addressing Heart Issues

1. The first heart issue the counselor would address would be the sin of self-exalting pride.
  - a. The counselor and counselee would examine what the bible says about self-exalting pride.
    - i. The bible tells us that pride rejects God (Psa 10:4), pretends to be God (Ez 28:2), and elevates the glory of self above the glory of God (Isa 14:13-14). The bible also tells us that pride is opposed to an others-focused mindset (Phil 2:3-4) and incongruous with relational harmony (Rom 12:16).

- ii. The bible presents the case study of Jonah as a nationalist that elevated his own agenda above the agenda and commands of God (Jonah 1:3) and who God then brought low in his pride (Jonah 1:7-17).
  - b. The counselor would expose the sin of self-exalting pride in the Christian Nationalist ideology.
    - i. The counselor would use ‘Section IV, Subsection A’ to show the counselee that the ideology of Christian Nationalism applies a self-exalting hermeneutic to biblical texts and replaces the glory of Jesus Christ with the desire to worship and praise the American nation.
  - c. The counselor and the counselee would examine the sin of self-exalting pride in the counselee’s heart.
    - i. Using Jeremiah 17:5-10 and the Three Trees Diagram in “The Big Picture”, the counselor would examine the ‘heat’, ‘thorns’, and ‘root’ manifestations of self-exalting pride in the counselee.<sup>51</sup>
2. The second heart issue the counselor would address would be sin of self-promoting pride.
  - a. The counselor and counselee would examine what the bible says about self-promoting pride.
    - i. The bible tells us that pride boasts in the flesh (Ex 28:17, Ez 31:10, 2 Chron 36:16, Jer 9:23) and that pride causes us to have an inaccurate view of ourselves (Gal 6:3).

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<sup>51</sup> Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 2nd ed. (Greensboro, N.C.: New Growth Press, 2008), 83-84.

- ii. The bible presents the case study of King Nebuchadnezzar as an example of self-promoting pride, who promoted his own glory and boasted in the glory of his nation (Dan 4:30), but who God humbled and brought low in his pride (Dan 4:21-33).
  - b. The counselor would expose the sin of self-promoting pride in the Christian Nationalist ideology.
    - i. The counselor would use ‘Section IV, Subsection B’ to show the counselee that the ideology of Christian Nationalism ignores historical facts about our nation’s history and replaces them with self-promoting exaggerations.
  - c. The counselor and the counselee would examine the sin of self-promoting pride in the counselee’s heart.
    - i. Using Jeremiah 17:5-10 and the Three Trees Diagram in “The Big Picture”, the counselor would examine the ‘heat’, ‘thorns’, and ‘root’ manifestations of self-promoting pride in the counselee.<sup>52</sup>
- 3. The third heart issue the counselor would address would be sin of self-preserving pride.
  - a. The counselor and counselee would examine what the bible says about self-preserving pride.
    - i. The bible provides several examples for us of how pride is linked to self-preservation (2 Chron 26:6-8, 1 Sam 18:10-11).

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<sup>52</sup> Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 2nd ed. (Greensboro, N.C.: New Growth Press, 2008), 83-84.

- ii. The bible also shows us how self-preserving pride elevates the value of riches (1 Tm 6:17), possessions (1 Jn 2:16), and human wisdom (Prov 26:12), over the provision and promises of the Lord.
  - iii. The bible presents the case study of King Saul as an example of self-preserving pride, who was jealous of God's anointed, David, and attempted to kill David in an effort to stay on the throne (1 Sam 18:10-11).
- b. The counselor would expose the sin of self-preserving of pride in the Christian Nationalist ideology.
    - i. The counselor would use 'Section IV, Subsection C' to show the counselee that the ideology of Christian Nationalism ignores clear biblical instruction and promise in order to preserve one's own sense of self-rule, autonomy and safety.
  - c. The counselor and the counselee would examine the sin of self-preserving of pride in the counselee's heart.
    - i. Using Jeremiah 17:5-10 and the Three Trees Diagram in "The Big Picture", the counselor would examine the 'heat', 'thorns', and 'root' manifestations of self-preserving pride in the counselee.<sup>53</sup>

### C. Biblical Instruction

- 1. The biblical counselor would use Jeremiah 17:7-10 and the following passages to instruct the counselee to walk in repentance and righteous living through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>53</sup> Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*, 2nd ed. (Greensboro, N.C.: New Growth Press, 2008), 83-84.

2. The counselor would instruct the counselee in Ephesians 4:22-32, highlighting the following:
  - a. The biblical call to “put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires” (Eph 4:22), is darkened in understanding (Eph 4:18a), alienated from life with God (Eph 4:18b), symptomatic of a hard heart (Eph 4:18c), and greedy to practice impurities (Eph 4:19). This includes:
    - i. Putting off false speech (Eph 4:25), unrighteous anger (Eph 4:26), dishonesty (Eph 4:28), corrupting talk (Eph 4:29), and slander (Eph 4:21).
  - b. The biblical command to ‘put on the new self’ which has been regenerated, justified, and declared holy through faith in Jesus Christ (Eph 4:24). This includes:
    - i. Putting on truth speaking (Eph 4:25a), recognizing the inherent unity in the body of Christ (Eph 4:25b), turning away from unrighteous anger (Eph 4:26), having their lives marked by honesty and generosity (Eph 4:27-28), speaking only to build others up (Eph 4:29), and living from a posture of kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness (Eph 4:32).
3. The counselor would instruct the counselee in Colossians 3:5-17, highlighting the following:
  - a. The biblical call to put ‘put to death what is earthly’ in them (Col 3:5), ‘put away’ all marks of the old man (Col 3:8), and ‘put off the old self with its practices and desires’ (Col 3:9). This includes:

- i. Putting off evil desires (Col 3:5), idolatry (Col 3:5), and lying (Col 3:9).
  - b. The biblical command to ‘put on the new self’ which, through faith, is being renewed in righteous knowledge after the image of its creator (Col 3:10). This includes:
    - i. Putting on humility, compassion, kindness, meekness and patience (Col 3:12).
4. The counselor would instruct the counselee in 1 Peter 2:9-17, highlighting the following:
  - a. The call for believers to live God-honoring lives among unbelievers (1 Pet 2:11-12) and live in humble submission to governing authorities (1 Pet 2:13-14) in light of faith in the promise Christ’s return (1 Pet 2:12) and the sovereign authority of God (1 Pet 2:14).
5. The counselor would instruct the counselee in Romans 13:1-7, highlighting the following:
  - a. The command for believers to be subject to the governing authorities (Rom 13:1) in light of faith in God’s sovereign authority (Rom 13:2).

#### D. Implementing Change

1. Using the biblical benefits of humility from ‘Section V, Subsection F’, the following steps would be taken to begin implementing God-honoring change in the counselee’s life after the counselor addressed the heart issues and provided biblical instruction on pride with corresponding homework.
  - a. Identify your sinful pride.

- i. The Apostle Paul urged the Corinthian church to examine themselves (2 Cor 13:5) and Jesus warned against the danger of having an inaccurate view of one's spiritual condition before God (Matt 7:21, Rev 3:17). Therefore, it is vital for the believer to allow God's Word to identify and expose the sin of pride in their life.
  - ii. Homework:
    1. Read Hebrews 4:12-13 and identify what this passage tells the counselee about the Word of God.
    2. Read *From Pride to Humility* from pages 1-11 and complete the exercise titled, "Manifestations of Pride".<sup>54</sup>
- b. Mourn your sinful pride.
- i. Jesus tells his followers that the 'poor in spirit' will be blessed (Matt 5:3) and James instructs believers to mourn and weep over their sinful pride (Jas 4:9-10).
  - ii. Homework:
    1. Memorize Matthew 5:3 and James 4:9-10.
    2. Write out a list of the ways that a prideful manifestation of Christian Nationalism has led the counselee to sin against God.
    3. Write out a list of the ways that a prideful manifestation of Christian Nationalism has led the counselee to sin against others.
- c. Humble yourself before the Lord.
- i. Jesus instructs his followers to humble themselves (Lk 18:14).

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<sup>54</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Focus Publishing, 2000), 6.

- ii. Homework:
  1. Read Luke 18:9-14 and memorize Luke 18:14.
  2. Write out a daily repentance prayer over the course of seven days acknowledging the way that pride has impacted the counselee's life and confess that pride before God daily.
  3. Write out a letter of repentance to anyone that the counselee has explicitly sinned against in their politically motivated pride.
  4. Temporarily remove access on the counselee's phone, computer, and television to Facebook, Christian Nationalist news sources, and other media outlets that promote a prideful manifestation of that political ideology.
  5. Read *From Pride to Humility* from pages 12-24 and complete the exercise titled, "Manifestations of Humility".<sup>55</sup>
- d. Trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ, and receive his promises for the humble.
  - i. Place your faith in Jesus Christ and commit to serve him, promote his glory, and receive his preserving promises for the humble.
  - ii. Believe in God promises to exalt the humble (1 Pet 5:6-7), restore the humble (1 Pet 5:10), lift up the humble (Lk 18:14), bring rest to the humble (Matt 11:29), save the humble (Psa 149:4), and give the kingdom of heaven to the humble (Matt 5:3).
  - iii. Homework:

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<sup>55</sup> Stuart Scott, *From Pride to Humility: A Biblical Perspective* (Focus Publishing, 2000), 20.

1. Read Philippians 2:1-11 and identify what this passage teaches the counselee about the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  2. Memorize 1 Peter 5:6-7.
  3. Read *From Pride to Humility* from pages 26-34.
- e. Begin living as a humble missionary servant for God's glory.
- i. Peter instructs believers to live as missionary servants for others' benefit (1 Pet 2:11-18).
  - ii. Homework:
    1. Memorize 1 Peter 2:11-12.
    2. Encourage the counselee to begin serving regularly in their local church.
    3. Identify a fellow believer that holds different political convictions than the counselee and invite that individual to coffee to listen, learn from, and honor them as a fellow follower of Jesus Christ.
    4. Identify an unbeliever that God has placed in the counselee's life and develop a plan to pray for them, pursue them, and serve them in a desire to share with them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## VII. Conclusion

1. The emphasis of this paper has been aimed at identifying the problem of pride in the ideology of Christian Nationalism for believers and proposing a gospel-motivated remedy that can redeem that heart of political pride with the humility of submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The bible teaches that pride is self-exalting, self-promoting, and self-preserving and that pride will ultimately lead to self-destruction in an individual's life apart from the intervening work of God.
3. Thankfully, God has provided a remedy for our pride in the person and work of Jesus Christ and his message of salvation by faith to the lowly, humble, and repentant.
4. Therefore, the believer that has succumbed to a prideful manifestation of the Christian Nationalist worldview can begin exposing their pride and redeeming it through faith in Jesus Christ by worshipping Christ above self, promoting Christ's glory above self, and trusting in the promises of Jesus Christ for the humble. They can do this by mourning their sinful pride, humbling themselves before the Lord, placing their trust in Jesus Christ and in God's promises to the humble, and living as humble missionary servants for the glory of God and for the fame of his Son, Jesus Christ.

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