

WEEKLY GUIDE

JULY 4, 2021

1
GATHER!
SUNDAY AND
THURSDAY

2
TALK!
DISCUSS THE
LESSONS

3
DO!
PUT THE
LESSONS INTO
PRACTICE

4
PRAY!
MAKE YOUR
REQUESTS
KNOWN TO GOD

BIBLE READINGS:

Psalm 33:12; Acts 17:22-31; Matthew 16:24

PSALM 33:12

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He chose for his inheritance.

ACTS 17:22-31

22 I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with human hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with human hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of people to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the One whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

MATTHEW 16:24

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

"If our worship doesn't transcend our patriotism, then we are guilty of idolatry, of turning God into a national mascot."

-Rick Hogaboam

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DISCUSSION:

Read Psalm 33:12 1:8 and Acts 17:22-31. What does Acts 17:26 mean to you? How does this relate to you being a citizen of this country? From this passage, what can you deduce as the reason you are living where you are right now? What responsibilities do you have in light of this?

Why should our allegiance to the cross come before our allegiance to the flag? In what ways does our allegiance to the cross make us better citizens than only an allegiance to the flag? Why must we be careful not to put the flag before the cross?

Read Matthew 16:24. What does Jesus mean when he tells his disciples to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him? How can our commitment to pick up our cross daily make a difference in the world today? Why is the cross necessary for healing and reconciliation?

APPLICATION:

What impacted you the most from this lesson? What were your big takeaways? What will you apply to your life? How will you put what you learned into practice in your life this week?

SUMMARY:

The grand old flag and the old rugged cross are two symbols that hold great meaning to many. Both represent sacrifice and freedom. Both uphold the ideal of equality and the dignity of persons, the rule of law, the right to life, and the pursuit of God's blessings or happiness. Both encourage virtue and character and represent the highest of moral ideals.

We ought to love our country and the flag which represents it. Yet, as much as we love our country and strive to live worthy of the banner that flies over her, the cross deserves our loyalty and allegiance even above that of our country and the flag. We do well to remember there's a difference between our commitment to the cross and our commitment to the flag. Since the beginning of human governments, rulers have tried to combine the power of their throne to the power of God or their gods. Jesus is the only Ruler with the right to unite throne and altar.

The cross makes better citizens, for it is the cross alone that can transform the human heart. Reconciliation and healing are only found at the foot of the cross. Our commitment to deny ourselves, to pick up our cross, and to follow Christ daily is the only true hope for our nation.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

