



“What do you think or feel when I say the word
or phrase...?”

What do others think?



Patriotism?



Patriotism?

Nationalism?



Patriotism?

Nationalism?

America – a Christian nation?



“For American Christians, there might not be an issue more complicated or wrapped in history and politics than patriotism. Even saying the word patriotism in a gathering of Christians is likely to garner as many responses as there are people. A love for one's country is looked on with both reverence and revulsion by Christians ... and both sides seem to have good reasons. So how ought Christians to think about patriotism? Is there a Christian response to patriotism? And how can faithful Christians hold in tension their love for country and their primary love and commitment to the kingdom of God?”

Ryan Hamm, Christianity Today



What does healthy patriotism look like?

“A love of country is ... healthy, genuine love when it humbly understands that one’s own nation is an equal member in the world community of nations; and that it not only possesses virtues to celebrate, but also commits sins in need of repentance.”

Tony Magliano



Patriotism can be defined simply as love of country—it's a love that seems to include much of the world's population. It's the kind of love that makes you thankful you're an American whenever you hear the National Anthem, or that makes you thankful you're British whenever you hear "God Save the Queen," or that makes you thankful you're from whatever country whenever your country wins an Olympic medal. It's that feeling of altruistic gratitude for freedom, or democracy, or culture, or any of the other values people around the world treasure in their nation.”

What does unhealthy patriotism look like?

“It's easy for Christians to begin to worship their country as an idol. In *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis puts the matter quite succinctly. He notes that love of country "becomes a demon when it becomes a god." In short, we can too easily allow our celebration of nation to intertwine with and pervert our love of God, and in many cases, usurp our love for God. We see how humanity has twisted almost every gift of God into an idol that can sinfully replace him. Money, sex, work, food, drink—each of these (among others) have become damaging idols for too many Christians. It wouldn't take long for any of us to think of examples of when Christians have placed love of country above love of God—and what disastrous consequences this has had.”

Hamm

Nationalism, on the other hand, takes that love of country and expands it to mean love of country at the expense of other nations. It's when someone believes they are better because they come from a particular place, or that someone else is less valuable because of the country that issued their passport. In the United States, it's often given the innocuous sounding title "American exceptionalism"; sometimes this term means a very good patriotism that is grateful for the gifts bestowed on American citizens, but too often this means treasuring American identity at the expense of others. It's saying, "My country is better than yours, and you are less civilized/enlightened/good because of where you are from." There are ways to say, "The nation that you belong to should consider adopting some of my country's freedoms" without it being nationalism. But nationalism never considers what one's nation could learn from others."

Hamm



“It's not just Americans who struggle with nationalism, of course. Most nations do. And it wasn't a foreign (no pun intended) problem in the New Testament church. There's a reason Paul writes repeatedly about the need for the Jews to recognize the full participation of Gentiles in the kingdom of God. The Jews' national and religious identity made it difficult for them to understand how a Greek, Ethiopian, or slave from Asia Minor could be just as much a part of God's new work. But Paul's famous assertion that there is "neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28) demonstrates that nationalism must never be part of the new kingdom of God.”

Hamm



Patriotism and the Kingdom of God?

“Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

John 18:36

“Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles Lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And **I confer on you a kingdom**, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Luke 22: 25-30



Patriotism and the Kingdom of God?

1. Is it okay with God for us to be involved in political issues?
2. How do I know when I have crossed over from patriotism to nationalism? What are the signs?
3. When has country and “my culture” become more important than the “Kingdom of God?”



Patriotism and Parenting in the Kingdom of God?

- **BALANCE**
- **TRUTH**
- **TRUST**