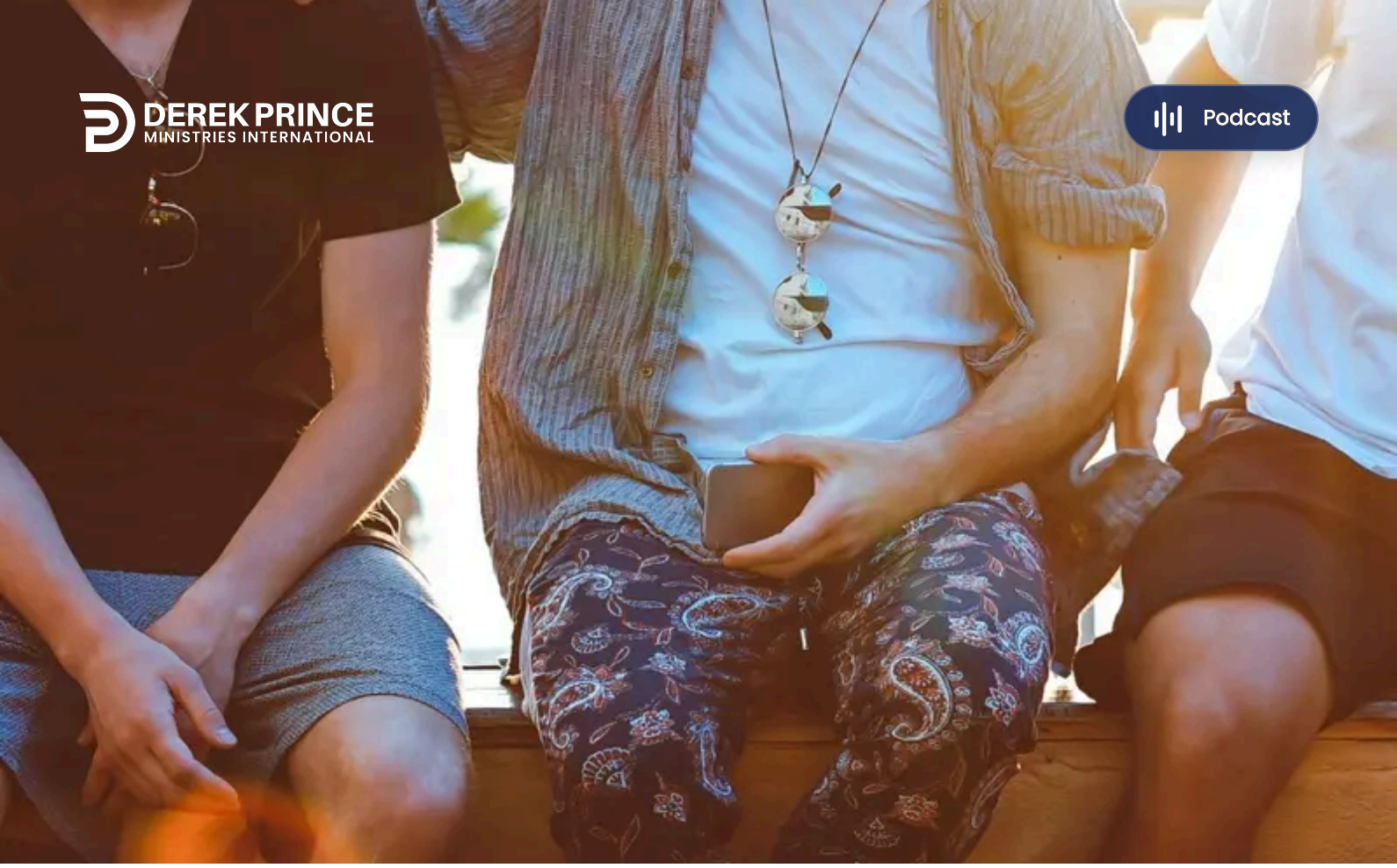


DEREK PRINCE
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Podcast

Seeing Ourselves as Part of a Whole



Part 1/10

What Is a Patriot?
By Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. I probably don't need to remind you that we are now just one week away from the week of Thanksgiving. For my talks both this week and next, I've selected a theme which is particularly appropriate for this special season in our American calendar. This theme takes the form of a question: "What is a Patriot?"

In my approach to this question, I need to establish a basic principle of great importance but one which today is frequently neglected or misunderstood. The principle that I have in mind is: seeing ourselves as part of a whole. One conspicuous feature of our contemporary culture, and especially in America, but also in most of what is called the (quote) "civilized world" is excessive individualism. People have grown up and even been trained by various types of philosophy that are prevalent today, to look at themselves simply as individuals. Everything in this philosophy and approach to life revolves around "me." My approach to a situation is: "What will I get out of this? What will this do for me?" I see myself in some way, according to this view, detached from the people around about me. I am, as it were, a little island, floating in a great sea. You've probably heard that statement somewhere, "No man is an island," and that really is true. That is a false view of life in which you see yourself as detached from people round about you, as being, as it were, the center of everything; in which you see yourself as everything else revolving around you, and things only matter in so far as they affect you, and what they will do for you.

I want to present some corrective statements to this viewpoint, statements that have not been made originally by me, but I believe they contain important truth that we need to listen to. The first statement is this:

1. The whole is more than the sum of the parts. When you've got all the parts listed, that isn't the whole, and when you've got all the individuals that make up a family or a community or a nation, that isn't the whole

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story, there is more to it. The second statement is really related:

2. You cannot fully understand the part except in reference to the whole. Take a part of an automobile, for instance—some little screw or some little part that functions in the engine. You take it on its own, it is almost meaningless, until you see what are the other parts that it relates to, what is its function in making the whole operate. Now what is true of a part of an automobile is far truer of us as human beings. Inevitably, whether we recognize it or not, we have actually no choice, each one of us is a part of a whole.

The Bible presents this truth in various ways. I would like to give you just two quotations, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. The first quotation is from the book of Psalms. Psalm 68 verse 6: "God sets the lonely in families." The alternative translation, which I think is more appropriate to our present theme, "God sets the desolate in a homeland." In other words, God takes individuals, and He does not leave them simply as detached, isolated individuals. He puts them in a setting of other human beings. The setting may be a family, or it may be the largest setting of a homeland. But whatever the setting may be, the individual is not complete according to God's purposes, detached from the community in which God has placed him.

And then in Romans 14 verse 7, Paul says:

> "For none of us lives to himself alone, and none of us dies to himself alone."

In other words, our life affects others. This is true from the moment we are born, to the moment we die. Whether we wish or not, we are continually influencing other people. And having an impact on other people, and we cannot detach ourselves from that responsibility.

We remember the story of Cain and Abel. And when Cain was charged by God with his guilt toward his brother Abel, he said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" God didn't actually answer that question. But I want to suggest to you that whenever you or I get to the place where we say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" there is something already wrong in our attitude.

Especially this is true of Christians. You see, Christianity as a religion centers in right relationships. Christianity is not primarily a matter of right doctrine, although that is important. But, more important still, is right relationships in two directions, vertical and horizontal: vertical towards God; horizontal toward our fellow human beings. This is so beautifully typified by the emblem of the Christian faith, the cross, with its two beams, vertical and horizontal: the vertical beam typifying our relationship to God, the horizontal typifying our relationship to our fellow human beings. And it is a matter of physics that if one beam is out of line the other is also out of line. We cannot be right with God if we are wrong with our fellow human beings. So, achieving right relationships is an art that we all need to cultivate. And believe me it doesn't just happen. It has to be cultivated.

I want to apply this principle of right relationships to our relationships within a nation. That is really the issue of patriotism. How do we relate to the nation in which we have been placed?

Again I want to take two examples, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. I want to begin with the pattern of God's dealings with Abraham. I want to share with you again the blessing that God promised Abraham if he would obey the Lord. I want you to see that this blessing centered not just around Abraham as an individual, but it involved a whole nation. In Genesis 12:1–3, this is what we read:

> "The LORD said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 'I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'"

You see that God's purpose for Abraham didn't center in him as an individual. He took him as an individual, he took him out of one setting, but His purpose was to place him in another setting, to make him the father of a great nation. And this God viewed as a great blessing. And then, in the New Testament, in Acts 17:26, Paul is speaking to the men of Athens, and he makes this statement, which is a very remarkable statement:

> "From one man He [that is, God], made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the time set

> for them and the exact places where they should live.“

That is a very far-reaching statement in its implications. God has ordained all nations. He has ordained the area allotted to every nation. He has ordained the times in which nations will live in those areas. And that includes us. It is no accident which nation we belong to. We are part of a plan, a divine plan, that embraces all nations. And we can never really fulfill God’s plan for us as individuals until we find and take our right place in the nation in which God has ordained that we should live.

So I want to offer you, in closing this message today, this definition of a patriot, which will be significant for all the messages that I will be bringing both this week and next. This is my suggested definition of a patriot, and I want you to consider it, and consider its implications: A patriot is one who fulfills his allotted role in the nation in which God has placed him.

See we have to look beyond ourselves; we have to see that our lives and our destiny are in the hand of Almighty God. The nation to which you belong or the nation to which I belong, is not an accident and really it is not a matter of our own individual choice. It is a decision of Almighty God and we can only be the kind of people that we ought to be as we fulfill our allotted role in the nation in which God has placed us.

Well, our time is up for today. Before I close, I am going to make a special request of you. This week and next we are asking our listeners across the nation to express their appreciation of this radio ministry by sending us a special Thanksgiving offering. I am sure you understand that this ministry is kept on the air by the offerings of people just like yourself. People who have been helped and blessed by its message. By sending us your offering at this time you will do three important things:

1. First, you will be expressing your appreciation for help that you yourself have received through this ministry.
2. Second, you will enable us to bring the same kind of help to someone else who needs it as much as you do, but may not be in a position to support us financially.
3. Third, you will encourage and strengthen me personally.

So please take time to say, “Thank you,” at Thanksgiving.

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