

**March 14, 2021**

***The Bridge Bible Fellowship***

**Pastor Paul S. Brown**

**Selected Scriptures**

**Covid-19: Principles for a Pandemic**

**Unity (Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 1:27; 2:1-11; 4:1-5) – “Sweet reasonableness”**

**1. Historical Principles**

**2. Biblical Principles**

**3. Constitutional Principles**

**So What?**

## Discussion & Application:

1. Read **Phil. 4:5**. The word “gentle” could be translated “**sweet reasonableness.**” Would you say that is a characteristic of the way people discuss politics today? Covid-19 government regulations? What would it look (and feel) like if we discussed controversial issues that way? What kind of testimony would we have to a watching world? How does knowing that the Lord is near (in proximity and in time before His return) help us maintain sweet reasonableness in difficult circumstances?
2. How important is **unity**? (In the family, neighborhood, workplace, church, country) What is our individual responsibility to maintain unity in the local church? What have you been doing to help The Bridge stay unified during the Covid-19 pandemic?
3. Strong and polarizing **opinions** about Covid-19 abound (where it came from, how serious it is, the validity of statistics, conspiracies, government regulations, vaccines, what individuals and churches should do about it). 23% of Americans said a close friend or family member died of Covid-19 (which means that 77% of Americans didn't). If no one close to you got sick or died from Covid-19, how might that impact your opinions? If someone close to you died from Covid-19, how might that impact your opinions? How might we demonstrate sweet reasonableness when we discuss Covid-19 with people who have lost loved ones?
4. God gives us **commands and principles** for life (directly in His Word, and indirectly through **authorities** He established: husband in marriage; parents in family; government to citizens; boss to employee...). Some see these authorities as totally distinct and autonomous in their sphere, but their spheres of influence overlap each other at certain points. When these commands and principles are clear & harmonious, we need submission and obedience. What do we do when these authorities disagree with one another? What are some contradictory commands and principles that people are struggling with related to Covid-19 (i.e., “stay at home” vs. “not forsaking our assembling together”)? What principles do you apply when this happens?
5. Read **Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:11-20**. What was the government like when Paul & Peter wrote those words? If we oppose governing authorities, who are we ultimately resisting? When should believers resist government rules and regulations? (See Exodus 1:17; Daniel 3; Acts 4:19-20; 5:28-29)
6. Pastor Paul has mentioned the difference between our **Mission, Message, and Methods**. Which of those did the government tell us to change during the pandemic? One concern has been for the “**one another**” commands of Scripture. Which ones have been impossible to do this past year? [note: TBBF has been having in-person worship services since June]
7. People and churches have divided over whether or not they must wear **masks**. What are some reasons some church members are wearing masks or must wear masks? What are some reasons some church members don't want to wear masks? What principles from **Romans 12:10**, and **chapters 14-15** apply to situations like this? How could we demonstrate sweet reasonableness toward one another? Read **Gal. 4:12-15**. What were the people willing to sacrifice for Paul? What are you willing to sacrifice for the sake of others in the church?
8. Read **Heb. 13:17**. What is the difference between the words **obey** and **submit**? What are the responsibilities of the elders toward the congregation according to this verse? What are the responsibilities of the congregation toward the elders? How are you helping the elders lead the congregation with joy and not with grief? Please pray for them right now as they seek to lead the church family through this difficult time.