



Excerpts: *Indivisible* James Robison and Jay Richards

God is not finished with us as a country. Decline is not inevitable. But if we're going to escape decline, we have to make a hard turn - and fast.

Will our grandchildren enjoy the freedom and prosperity we enjoy, or will they ask us, "Where were you when freedom died?" The choices we make in the next few years—in our personal lives, families, churches, and politics—will determine the answer. (Introduction)

To see our culture restored, Christians must do a lot more. We must understand the sources of the ideas that ail us as well as their alternatives. We must learn to connect and apply these alternatives and think clearly about them. We must argue persuasively in the public square; apply our convictions consistently in our personal lives; build lasting alliances among Christians, other believers, and friends of freedom who share some but not all of our views; and act strategically to influence the people and institutions that shape culture over the long term. First, though, we need to clear out the weeds and fog in our thinking that have kept us from succeeding in the past, and clear a path to understanding and progress in restoring our culture. (Chapter One)

Does it really matter whom we vote for or what policies we support? Yes, it does matter. Politics isn't everything, and certainly we should tend our own proverbial gardens. But in today's world, having no political effect is not an option. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Not to stand is to stand. Not to speak is to speak." The question is, "Will you stand idly by while our culture collapses, or join those who seek to restore it" (Chapter One)

To restore faith, family, and freedom in America, we need God's Spirit to transform our individual lives. Our public engagement should be accompanied by tangible, Spirit-filled growth in holiness and humility that others will see. If we were to pray hard for a real outpouring of the Spirit and zealously pursue lives of prayer and heroic virtue, surely we would have a more lasting impact on our culture. (Chapter One)

A free society allows us to love, seek, and enjoy God. It frees us to fulfill our other God-given purposes as free beings made in the image of God—to love our families and fellow human beings and exercise the virtues required to do that. It lets us be fruitful and multiply, and exercise our dominion as God's stewards over His creation. (Chapter Two)

The Founders saw human beings as sinners who could be shaped by society but who have a nature that men can't change. This founding philosophy could not be more different from the so-called "progressive" philosophy that now dominates our public life. Socialists and progressives assume that man can be molded and transformed like a soft lump of clay. You just need society to



be set up correctly and run by really smart people. But even in an ideal environment, human beings can fall into sin. That's how we got where we are to begin with. Even when Adam and Eve were placed in a garden prepared by God, they still managed to get into trouble. (Chapter Three)

We believe America is exceptional and are saddened that so many people are ashamed of our country. That doesn't mean we think it's the kingdom of God on earth. We've had our national sins—slavery and the treatment of Native Americans being the two most glaring ones—but surely we should condemn the sin and not the sinner, particularly when the sinner aspires to high ideals and has done more to spread freedom and justice than any other nation in history. (Chapter Five)

The unraveling of limited government began about a hundred years ago with the progressives. By the 1960s, most of the elites in both political parties had come to believe that there was no problem—no matter how large or small—that shouldn't be solved politically, preferably in Washington, D.C. Now many Americans automatically look to the federal government to solve every problem—from a flood in New Orleans to poverty in Detroit to bad seventh grade math scores in Yuma to fatty foods in Charleston. Fifty years ago, few imagined just where this mentality would lead us. (Chapter Six)

While everyone may long for freedom at some level, history teaches us that people will often give up their freedom without a fight if they are promised security in return. This is a sucker's bargain. As Benjamin Franklin said, "Anyone who trades liberty for security deserves neither liberty nor security." (Chapter Six)

We need to recover the culture of thrift that made America great. Imagine what would happen if millions of us decided to start living below our means. It would take discipline, but we're going to need that discipline as individuals if we're going to have it as a nation. If we can't muster the courage as a society to support politicians of both parties who will tell us the truth about government debt and entitlements and work to fix it before it's too late, we will destroy ourselves, which neither the communists nor the Islamic militants could have accomplished. (Chapter Six)

Fundamentally, two people of the same sex cannot marry each other. The law can pretend they can. The pair can throw a big wedding ceremony, say their vows in public but calling it "marriage" doesn't make it so. And invoking a right doesn't create a right. Rights come from our nature, and our nature comes from God. If you deny that, then you deny the basis of all our other rights. (Chapter Eight)

Having children and raising them up in the way they should go has always been one of our most profound ways to affect the world. It is in pro-creating that we come closest to participating in God's creativity. The biblical text that says we are created in God's image also contains God's first commandment, which is also a blessing, "Be fruitful and multiply." We live at a moment when the most influential voices in our world discourage childbearing. And they follow their own



advice. So, in the long run, having a large family and passing on your faith and pro-family ideals to your children may be one of the most significant ways to renew our culture. (Chapter Nine)

Restoring a culture is not impossible; it just takes a lot of hands and a lot of concentrated, thoughtful work. If cultures normally change through overlapping networks of elites, then we must influence these elites, penetrate their networks, and/or to create networks that overlap or compete with them . . . If we hope to influence our culture, believers have to be high achievers in many fields—business, academics, science, literature, technology, art, music, politics, journalism, publishing, and philanthropy.

We can't allow our Christian subcultures to become assimilated by a hostile culture or to become dilapidated ghettos isolated from the rest of the culture and from each other. We need to create our own culture, not just complain about popular culture or copy secular culture with a patina of Christianity thrown in for marketing purposes. To quote the overused phrase, we have to be fully in the world but not of it. Wise as serpents; innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16). Working together as allies, not fighting apart as rivals or enemies. (Chapter Eleven)

One thing we know: When people can't acquire property, they can't expect to enjoy the fruits of their labor and the benefits of a global economy. Nor can they create much new wealth. If we really want to fight poverty overseas, therefore, we need to support policies that strengthen rather than weaken the property rights of individual citizens and families. (Chapter Thirteen)

If we want to see things change for the better rather than just chanting "everything must change," then we can't skip over the basic insights of economics. It's unavoidable if we want to translate our good intentions into policies that do good rather than unintended harm.

The most important of these insights concerns freedom. (Chapter Fourteen)

If the government will do its job and prevent the flood of illegal immigration, and we will all help assure that immigrants become productive and loyal citizens, most Americans should come to see the value of immigration and view immigrants as valuable consumers and important creators of wealth. The United States has always been an immigrant nation—a beacon of hope for the oppressed peoples of the world. While immigrants no longer pass through Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty still stands in the New York Harbor, raising her torch high in her right hand, and holding a tablet in her left. It reads "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." In 1989, when Chinese dissidents protested in Tiananmen Square against the communist government, they chose a replica of the Statue of Liberty as their symbol. As much as we hear about how much the rest of the world dislikes us, America still symbolizes freedom to the oppressed people of the world. This is surely one of the greatest compliments a nation can receive and one to remember in our current struggle with illegal immigration. (Chapter Sixteen)

Do you see people as creators of value and wealth, and recognize those exceptional few who create vast wealth? Do you think that wealth created by a few can benefit the many? Or do you assume that anyone with exceptional wealth has extracted it from others, that "poverty is a major



side effect of wealth”? Are you oriented toward human creativity or vicarious envy? (Chapter Eighteen)

We need to purge our culture, our language, and our thinking of this bias against wealth creators. We can't expect unbelievers to retire the rhetoric of envy when even Christian leaders encourage it. We need an economic system that allows the poor to work their way out of poverty and allows entrepreneurs the freedom to create wealth for themselves and others. Only free economies do both. (Chapter Eighteen)

If we can etch these [principles] on our hearts and minds, seek a life of holiness and wisdom so we can discern them, teach them to our children, and apply them wisely in our personal lives and politics, then with God's help, we'll have most of what's needed to restore faith, family, and freedom in the twenty-first century. (Conclusion)