



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 29, 2018

## Rand Paul Tells Evangelical Student Group: There Is No Liberty Without Virtue

On January 23 in Washington, D.C., Rand Paul addressed a gathering of Christian students, speaking to them not, he said, as a senator, but as a “libertarian Christian.”

About 90 students met with Paul, the junior senator from Kentucky, as part of the annual National Association of Evangelicals’ Christian Student Leadership Conference. The Christian confab is designed to help attendees learn from Christian political leaders how to successfully integrate their faith into the public service.



In his presentation, Paul opened with humor. “You’re probably scratching your head and asking yourself, ‘What’s a libertarian doing talking to a bunch of evangelical students?’” Paul quipped.

Paul’s self-deprecation continued, according to a report of the speech published by CBN News. “Aren’t libertarians crazy?” Paul said with a smile. “Aren’t they kind of scary?”

“You hear ‘no rules,’ ‘no laws,’ ‘you can do whatever you want,’” Paul said, adding, “But that’s not exactly what libertarians advocate.”

Paul then segued into the substance of his political beliefs and how they not only coexist with his faith, but how the former could not exist without the influence of the latter. Central to his philosophy of the proper role of government is the non-aggression principle. “The non-aggression principle means that under a libertarian society, if we had one, you could pretty much do whatever you wanted as long as you didn’t hurt somebody else,” Paul explained.

The Ludwig von Mises Institute — a libertarian think-tank where his father, Ron Paul serves as a Distinguished Counselor — defines the non-aggression principle as:

an ethical stance which asserts that “aggression” is inherently illegitimate. “Aggression” is defined as the “initiation” of physical force against persons or property, the threat of such, or fraud upon persons or their property. In contrast to pacifism, the non-aggression principle does not preclude violent self-defense. The principle is a deontological (or rule-based) ethical stance.

There is an obvious Christian element to this principle. In Matthew 7:12 (KJV), Jesus commands his followers, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

In the gospel according to St. Luke (6:31-35), Christ expounds on the demands of discipleship:

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the



same.

And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Rand Paul told the Christian students that he believes that all men, regardless of their religious faith, know right from wrong. “Most of us don’t rape, murder, do all these horrific things, not because there’s a law against it, but because we have a sense of right and wrong,” said Paul. “We have a moral compass. We have something grounded in religion. We have this sense of virtue.”

Later, Senator Paul warned his audience that a government, divorced from virtue, is despotic, and he added that no government could ever instill virtue in a people devoid of it. “Government is not going to make us a virtuous society,” Paul said.

Paul’s identification of virtue as the sine qua non of liberty is supported by the Founders, as well as the wise men who influenced them. Here are a few examples of statements of Founding Fathers and other imminent men supporting this thesis:

George Washington: “There is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists ... an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness.”

“Human rights can only be assured among a virtuous people. The general government ... can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any despotic or oppressive form so long as there is any virtue in the body of the people.”

Benjamin Franklin: “Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become more corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.”

“Laws without morals are in vain.”

Thomas Jefferson: “No government can continue good but under the control of the people; and ... their minds are to be informed by education what is right and what wrong; to be encouraged in habits of virtue and to be deterred from those of vice.... These are the inculcations necessary to render the people a sure basis for the structure and order of government.”

“It is in the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigour.... Degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats into the heart of its laws and constitution.”

James Madison: “To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea.”

“The aim of every political Constitution, is or ought to be first to obtain for rulers men who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of society; and in the next place, to take the most effectual precautions for keeping them virtuous whilst they continue to hold their public trust.”

Montesquieu: “When virtue is banished, ambition invades the minds of those who are disposed to receive it, and avarice possesses the whole community.”

Algernon Sidney: “Machiavelli discoursing of these matters, finds virtue to be so essentially necessary



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to the establishment and preservation of liberty, that he thinks it impossible for a corrupted people to set up a good government, or for a tyranny to be introduced if they be virtuous; and makes this conclusion, That where the matter (that is, the body of the people) is not corrupted, tumults and disorders do no hurt; and where it is corrupted, good laws do no good: Which being confirmed by reason and experience, I think no wise man has ever contradicted him.”

Senator Paul proved true to his Christian faith and his libertarian, limited government philosophy, telling the members of the National Association of Evangelicals’ Christian Student Leadership Conference, “You say, ‘Well government does do some good for people.’ They probably do, but they’re horribly inefficient at it,” continued Paul. “Government is best that governs least, so you have more freedom.”

Image of Rand Paul: Screenshot of [YouTube video of the talk](#)



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