I. Biblical Principles for Flourishing Society

Living in accordance with God's law is the key factor for a flourishing life.

Psalm 119:89–91 Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast. By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants.

Psalm 96:10 Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

The fear of God is the understanding of God's role as the Creator and Master of the universe and the resulting respect for Him and the desire to live in harmony with Him.

Proverbs 2:3–5 if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

Romans 1:21–22 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

Isaiah 5:20–21 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

Proverbs 3:5–10 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Proverbs 3:13–15 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Proverbs 3:16–18 Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
A. Justice

Psalm 15:1–3 O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? 2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; 3 who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

1. Treating people justly

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm 15:1–3 O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? 2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; 3 who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

Leviticus 19:15 “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

Jeremiah 22:3–4 Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you will indeed obey this word, then there shall enter the gates of this house kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their servants and their people.

Isaiah 1:21–23 How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. 22 Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water. 23 Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them.

Isaiah 1:25–27 I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy. 26 And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.” 27 Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness.

Isaiah 11:1–5 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

2. Honesty

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Isaiah 5:20–21 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!

Romans 1:21–22 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools.
3. Just treatment of private property

Deuteronomy 5:19–21  "‘And you shall not steal. 20‘And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 21‘And you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.’"

Deuteronomy 24:14–15  "You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns. 15You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the L ORD , and you be guilty of sin.

B. Kindness

Micah 6:8  He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the L ORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm 57:9–10  I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. 10 For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Psalm 89:14–15  Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. 15 Blessed are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face,

Psalm 117:1–2  Praise the L ORD, all nations! Exalt him, all peoples! 2For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the L ORD endures forever. Praise the L ORD!

Proverbs 3:3  Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Proverbs 20:28  Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.

Matthew 5:43–45,48  ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust… 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Micah 7:18  Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.

Proverbs 19:11  Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

C. Humility

Micah 6:8  He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the L ORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
"Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the daytime, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings."

William Bradford
Ye Governor of Ye Colony

Deuteronomy 8:12–14 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,

Deuteronomy 8:17–19 Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish.

Il. The phenomenon of the American experiment

A. Faith of the Pilgrims

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently

2 Declaration of Independence https://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/
implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.³

B. Influence of the Evangelical Churches

- Ministry of Evangelical Churches
- Schools of preachers

AFTER GOD HAD carried us safe to New England, and we had built our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God’s worship, and led the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity;... Over the college is Master Dunster placed as president, a learned, a conscionable, and industrious man, who has so trained up his pupils in the tongues and arts, and so seasoned them with the principles of divinity and Christianity, that we have to our great comfort (and in truth) beyond our hopes, beheld their progress in learning and godliness also⁴.

- Great Awakenings
- Fundamentalism of the early 20th century
- Evangelicalism in the mid-20th century
- Turn around in the Southern Baptist Convention in late 20th century

C. Respect for private property

Ephesians 4:28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

1 Thessalonians 4:10–12 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹²so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

D. Respect for the law

³ http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/thanks.htm
E. Separation of the three branches of government

F. Generous philanthropy