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**B**y Bob's standards, the next day was perfect — an entire, uninterrupted day with his wife and children. After Sunday School and church, they ate at the John Adams Cafe, and then changed clothes and went to Sherman's farm for a family hike. They even saw a deer, although Jacob and Joseph were too excited to take a picture until the deer had disappeared among the trees. By 8 p.m., the two exhausted little boys were in bed and Maria had joined Bob in the study.

The day had been far too busy for any discussion of the David Mullins interview. "Now" said Maria, "We need to do some talking. What conclusions have you reached?"

"Well, I agree with you that David Mullins is on the level. All the things he said really are possible. Incredible as it may seem, it is really possible that we could one day be living in the White House. But that doesn't mean that I agree with everything he said. I give him credit for being sincere, but I am not sure that I go along with all of his thinking."

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“Just where do you disagree?”

Bob thought a moment. “I guess one place is what he said about practical politicians and what he called ideologues. He said that practical politicians make better rulers because they are not influenced in their decisions by any ideology, whereas the ideologues are always trying to impose their own ideology on other people. Something about that bothers me. Looking at it another way, we could say that the so-called practical politicians are those who have no convictions, except the conviction that they want to be re-elected. They seek to rule by doing not what they believe to be right, but what they believe to be popular.”

Maria nodded. “I see what you mean, and I think I agree. In my news work, I learned many politicians spend big money on public opinion experts and pollsters, just to find out where most people stand on any issue. In other words, they find out which way the public is going, and then jump in front. Surely real leadership is something more than that.”

“Maria, I suppose the correct position is somewhere in the middle. Certainly a public official should respect public opinion, but he should not be a slave to it. He should try to lead in the direction that he believes to be right, but should have enough humility to realize that the collective opinion of his constituents may be better than his own. I guess a pure democracy would be mob rule. We don't have that and we don't want that. We have representative government. We try to elect intelligent, honest men and women and trust them to do their best, with due regard, of course, for the convictions of the people they represent. But I am getting off the subject. The point is, I hope I am not a wild, raving, ideologue, but I do have convictions, and I don't think that disqualifies me for public office.”

Bob continued, “Another point along the same line, that

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David made, is what he said about me being entitled to my own personal, religious beliefs, but that as a state senator I am not entitled to impose my beliefs on other people. That sounds alright the way he said it, but if you carry that far enough, I am not qualified to be a senator at all. When he said that it made me think of a court case I read about a year or so back. It seems that the school board in some little town down in the Southwest part of the state would not permit dances in the school gymnasium. Believe it or not, some parents actually took it to Federal court, and the district court actually ruled that the students' constitutional rights had been violated because the voters in electing the school board, and the school board in adopting the rule, had been influenced by their Christian religion. I guess the judge believed that religion should be confined to Sunday and should not affect what you do the rest of the week. By his reasoning, Christians should be treated like convicted felons — disqualified from voting, or holding public office, or serving on juries. Fortunately, the appellate court reversed that judgment.

“Anyway, Jesus made it clear that our religion should affect and, in fact, dominate, every aspect of our lives. I hope that everything I do as a state senator is influenced by my Christian faith.”

Maria patted his arm. “Your faith does show in everything you do, and I think the people of this district appreciate it. But what do you think about David’s argument that we may be butting our heads against a stone wall? He is convinced that the ruling establishment wants abortion and that it is useless to try to stop them. If we really have the opportunity to do so much good for our country and our people, is it foolish to throw it away over an issue that we are going to lose anyway?”

Bob shook his head. “I don’t know what to think. David has me convinced that we do have at least some chance at the

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vice-presidency, and maybe even the presidency. All day long I have been thinking of all the things we could do if we were in one of those high offices. Maria, you haven't been around St. Louis very much. It just breaks your heart to see the way those kids' lives are being wasted. I know you have seen the same thing with your people in San Antonio, and there are a hundred other cities just as bad. I know we can't work miracles, but even if we could reach only 10 percent, or even just 5 percent, of these children, it could be the beginning of something big. The educational opportunities are there; the way of escape is within their reach; but there is no motivation. Instead they are caught in the web of drugs, crime, and welfare. Surely we could help hundreds, maybe even thousands, of these kids to break out of there, and they could help others, and it could really snowball into a great thing. Other minority groups have broken out of the slums, and my people can do it too."

"I agree, Bob. Surely we could do something to motivate some of these street kids to get off the streets and into the classrooms. And I believe we could strike a real blow against racism. As you said, we can't work miracles, and I don't want to sound conceited, but, if you were the first black vice-president, what we did would be noticed, and we could be examples not only to blacks and Hispanics, but also to whites and Asians, and really to all Americans. We would work to help all of them, and we could show that no matter what the color of the skin, we are all Americans, and it is possible for any of us to hold high office and serve everyone. I am sure we could help people of all races to get rid of some of their chip on the shoulder attitude, and to start having more respect for each other."

Bob said, "Maria, we haven't even mentioned the most important thing we could do. Remember the boys' memory

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verse this morning? 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Just two verses before that the Bible says, 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.' In effect, we would be on the highest hill in America. I would hope we could encourage others in their Christian faith, and maybe even lead some to Christ. That would be the greatest thing we could do. And I thought this morning while my mother was teaching her Bible class, as the vice-president's mother, I could see her teaching a weekly Bible class on national television. She would win thousands to Christ, even if we couldn't. And I haven't even started to think of all the good things my father could do, let alone your family."

They sat in silence for several minutes. Finally, Maria whispered, "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this."

