



Surrounded by Tea Party supporters, Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., answers questions from a conservative journalist.

CitizenLink®

# The Cost of Discipleship

Two members of Congress buck the political status quo to do what is right.

by Catherine O. Snow

“**H**ave I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

~ Joshua 1:9

This powerful Old Testament verse relates to the Lord’s command and promise to Joshua and the children of Israel; however, it also speaks to many Christian men and women working in the nation’s capital.

Tea Party icon Sen. Jim DeMint,

Tough, courageous, rock-solid and unflinching, Jim DeMint charts the way for all of us in truly historic times.

*Rush Limbaugh, radio talk show host and recipient of “Human Events’ 2007 Conservative of the Year” award*

R-S.C., is just one example of a Christian opting to stand on principle — and his faith — and paying the price in doing so.

While his fiscal conservatism is widely reported, his strong social values and Christian beliefs have proffered him not only perspective, but also courage and perseverance — rare commodities inside the Beltway.

## DeMint: The High Cost of His Convictions

Though named the “2010 Conservative of the Year” by *Human Events*, it’s a bittersweet recognition for the junior senator from South Carolina.

After years of trying to initiate social and economic reforms within the so-called Republican Establishment in Washington, D.C., DeMint abandoned Party orthodoxy, and embraced the Tea Party movement early on.

DeMint admits that the cost of standing for conservative values and breaking from the Washington status quo were most high in terms of friendships. Not to mention retaliatory comments aimed at him — in the press and behind closed doors. It would be enough to shake anyone’s faith.

“It has been a very painful process for me,” he told *Citizen*. “Going outside friendships. Working on things that I thought were very important for our country. We are trying to repair some of those (friendships) right now. There are a lot of people who didn’t want to change at all, and they blame me for some of the changes that have been made.

“Fortunately, once I get outside of Washington, people are pretty supportive.”

DeMint says that he knows that it wasn’t all about him, and that there was more — much more — at stake than his personal comfort or being liked by his colleagues and the hostile media.

“Few politicians will have the courage to lead the way. ... They will wait to see how the media and the public respond,” DeMint wrote in *Saving Freedom*. “I will lead, as will a few others in Congress; but, we will need thousands of leaders outside of Washington to stand with us. We need Americans who understand freedom and are willing to speak out for the values, principles and policies that will allow freedom to work.”

So, how did this “Conservative of the Year” get to this point? What drove him to take such a stand?

### Rock-solid ‘Force of Nature’

In his book, *Saving Freedom*, DeMint shared, “I wasn’t interested in politics, but it was increasingly apparent that politics was interested in me. Government wanted more of my money and more control over my business, my family, my community — my life.”

Elected at the age of 47 to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1998, DeMint quickly learned that there was a cost involved in trying to change Washington’s status quo.

“It is easy to come in, get in the flow of things, and try to work within the establishment, and then hope you can change it. I just found that to be impossible,” said the self-identified recovering “ear-marker.”

“There are committees that I wanted to be on when I was in the House. I really wanted to be on Ways and Means and work on tax policy and Social Security. Those are the issues that I came here to work on, but they told me that I could never work on [that committee], unless I reneged on my term-limit pledge, which was six years. So, I gave up on being on Ways and Means. Here in the Senate, a lot of those same issues are true.”

While in the House, DeMint teamed up with like-minded believers to push for reforms. In an interview with *Human Events*, one

## Member Snapshot: Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C.

### Member of Congress:

1998 - 2006 (U.S. House),  
2006 - Present (U.S. Senate)

### Profession:

Marketing/Advertising;  
Small Business Owner

### Family:

Married to Debbie;  
4 grown children

### Denomination:

Presbyterian (PCA)

### Became a Christian:

Age 25

### Bible Study (Capitol Hill):

Yes; Active

“I have a small group I meet with, and we continue to pray and encourage each other. Meeting people of faith up here, it is not a majority, but as God said, ‘We are salt and light.’ So there are people of

faith who have been sprinkled in Washington, D.C. ... (It is one of the) best parts of being up here. ...”

### Accountability Group:

Yes; D.C. and South Carolina

### On His Faith:

“(I) no longer need validation from anyone in this world. I am a child of the King and don’t need to waste my time trying to impress any of my fellow sinners.” — *Saving Freedom*

### Why Political Life:

“I wasn’t interested in politics, but it was increasingly apparent that politics was interested in me. Government wanted more of my money and more control over my business, my family, my community — my life.” — *Saving Freedom*

Christian congressman said, “Senator Jim DeMint is a force of nature in the conservative movement. His steadfast and consistent stand in defense of fiscal discipline, a strong national defense and traditional moral values is unparalleled in Washington, D.C., and should give hope to millions of conservatives across the country as they look for conservative leadership in our nation’s capital.”

### Courage to Take a Stand

As President George W. Bush swept into office for a second term in 2004, DeMint won his bid for the U.S. Senate. However, the Republican celebration was all too brief. Despite achieving a Republican trifecta — capturing the presidency and majorities in the House and Senate — the Republican Establishment continued to push bigger government legislation.

“In 2006, we lost the majority in

both houses,” DeMint said. “At that point, I thought Republicans might huddle and decide, ‘What did we do wrong? What can we do better?’

When that did not happen, DeMint became concerned and began to work differently. It was not until after the devastating 2008 election that he realized there was not much to lose. Concerned that the country faced bankruptcy and, quite possibly, economic and cultural chaos, he decided to do everything he could to get real conservatives elected — regardless of the cost.

DeMint’s courageous step of faith paid off, and he raised millions of dollars for Tea Party candidates — primarily from grassroots donations.

“We found a lot of good candidates,” he said. “Most of them won. A few of them did not. I picked underdogs in every race, so I did not expect them all to win. But, I did see, with the help of the American

people, that we can change things. And, that a conservative *can* be elected anywhere.”

Joining DeMint as Senate colleagues are several Tea Party candidates he endorsed and helped financially: Marco Rubio of Florida, Rand Paul of Kentucky, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, Mike Lee of Utah and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin.

## Establishment Repercussions

The backlash was swift and fierce to DeMint’s apparent forsaking of the establishment by joining forces with the Tea Party movement.

One Republican aide told a reporter, “If on Nov. 3 there are two or three seats in Democratic control that otherwise would have been Republican victories, then that anger will come back up to the surface and there will be consequences.”

“We don’t need a lot of Jim DeMint disciples,” former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., turned D.C. lobbyist, said in an interview. “As soon as they get here, we need to co-opt them.”

In response to the backlash, DeMint penned an open letter to incoming senators, which appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*. He outlined five ways to stay true to conservative values and cautioned his new Senate colleagues that “someone can’t be bribed if they aren’t for sale.”

By publishing the open letter, he not only tried to caution freshman Republicans, but he also tried to educate the American public on the Senate’s *quid pro quo* process.

## ‘Tea Time’ for Social Conservatives?

Political pundits and operatives have long attempted to convince the American public that social conservatism is passé, and that the Tea Party movement is made of Libertarians and fiscal conservatives.

(continued on p. 22)

## Do You Have the Courage of Your Convictions?

Say you are a Christian parent at a school board meeting. The school board is discussing the new sex-education curriculum for middle-schoolers — which includes instructions on condom use, encourages kids to experiment with sex, and teaches them that homosexuality is natural and healthy.

The school board invites comments. It is clear the audience is in favor of the curriculum. What do you do? Would you have the courage of your convictions to say that such a curriculum would be bad for pre-teens? Could you explain why, even as the boos and hisses and cries of “bigot” cascade from all sides of the meeting room?

What kind of courage does it take to stand up, to make your beliefs known publicly, no matter the consequences?

Well, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian murdered by the Nazis, called this “Civic Courage.”

Bonhoeffer identified the lack of civic courage — and the collapse of ethics — as being the downfall of Germany. The German people, one of the most educated, industrious peoples on earth, silently succumbed to the Nazis and thus participated in that regime’s crimes.

This is why some Christian philosophers have called “courage” the greatest of the four cardinal virtues. That’s because your convictions and principles are worthless if you don’t have the courage to live them out.

Mind you, Bonhoeffer knew the price he would pay for living out his convictions. He was executed by Hitler three days before the war ended.

Another prophetic voice for civic courage was the great Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the well-known author and Nobel laureate, and survivor of the Soviet gulag. When he gave his classic speech at Harvard in 1978, he shocked the

crowd by decrying the lack of civic courage in the West. That lack of courage, he said, was leading to the West’s decline.

Heaven knows we have many examples in American history of people having the courage to live out their convictions: Martin Luther King, Jr., the women’s suffrage movement, the abolitionists, or the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Civic courage simply means the willingness to stand up for what you know to be right — not being cowed by the mob around you. It requires getting rid of fear, which is the enemy of faith. It is being willing to speak and act according to your conscience.

That is what nearly half a million Americans have done by signing the Manhattan Declaration. They are saying that they will publicly defend the sanctity of human life, the institution of marriage, and freedom of religion. In November, as you probably know, another 50,000 spoke out on the Manhattan Declaration’s behalf when Apple caved in to gay-rights activists and pulled the Manhattan Declaration App off its iPhone app store. If you have not signed the Manhattan Declaration yet, do so today — and get your friends to do the same thing.

Signing it is just one way you can express civic courage. You can express it with your friends or co-workers when you discuss important issues. We should not clam up and avoid the hot topics. We need to lovingly — and winsomely — explain why we believe what we believe. Never, never be afraid to speak out. ●

*Partial transcript of Chuck Colson’s Jan. 4, 2011, “Two Minute Warning” video.*

*Courtesy of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, [www.colsoncenter.org](http://www.colsoncenter.org).*

## Bachmann: Tea Party Caucus Founder and Chairwoman



Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., says she is walking out what the Lord has called her to do, regardless of the sacrifices.

Like Sen. DeMint, Rep. Michele Bachmann is a force of nature — and a Tea Party favorite — in her own right. Elected to the U.S. House in 2006, at a time when Republicans lost their majorities in both chambers of Congress, Bachmann became the first Republican woman elected from Minnesota to a Congressional seat.

A mother of five biological children and 25 foster care teenagers, Bachmann is an outspoken advocate on a range of social conservative issues, including the sanctity of life, foster care and adoption. Yet from her days in the Minnesota state Senate, this federal tax litigator by trade has also steadfastly championed smaller government, earmark reform and lower taxes.

### Back To The Basics

Following the November elections, Bachmann took steps to safeguard the 87 GOP freshmen in the House by launching the first

Tea Party caucus in the House.

“I have watched people come into public office and watched them melt like wax under the ... pressures from the special interest groups and the lobbyists,” Bachmann said. “A person needs to know, very strongly, who they are and what they believe before they ever go to Washington, D.C.

“They also need to know that they are somebody before they ever get here, or before they ever have a title in front of their name. If a title is what makes them important, then people will do anything to hold that title.”

Bachmann is sponsoring a class to teach the meaning of the country’s founding documents, including the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

She said it is imperative that “we, as members of Congress, can wrap our minds around these magnificent documents —

and around the limits of our jurisdiction.

“I think that if we can focus on what our limits are under the Constitution, we will make better decisions throughout the week.”

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia served as the kick-off speaker for Bachmann’s weekly series.

### Counting the Cost

Similar to DeMint’s experience — and that of numerous social conservatives serving on Capitol Hill — Bachmann has paid a price for her beliefs and stances. Nevertheless, her perseverance is self-evident.

“There is a price that can be paid among colleagues,” she told *Citizen*, “whether it is committee assignments or whether it’s a position that a person may aspire to; but, I think for anyone who decides to run for office at any level of government, they tend to do it based on a calling. That is certainly true for me.

“I am doing this because I feel that the Lord has called me to do this work. That does not mean I am a saint. That does not mean that I am perfect; I am not. But, I am called to walk out what I believe the Lord has called me to do. There are other sacrifices, in terms of my personal time and my family’s time. But, it is for a season of life.”

This season of life for both DeMint and Bachmann has been challenging, with 24-hour news cycles and constantly shifting demands.

“We are in a very high-pressured world,” Bachmann said. “I often tell people that being in Congress is like being in a blender and someone hits *frappe*. Every-

## Member Snapshot: Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn.

**Member of Congress:**

2006 – present

**Previous Office:**

Minnesota state Senate  
(2000 – 2003)

**Profession:**

Tax Attorney;  
Small Business Owner

**Family:**

Married to Marcus  
5 grown children;  
23 foster care teenagers

**Denomination:**

Lutheran

**Became a Christian:**

Age 16

**Life Verse:**

*Now the Lord is the Spirit,  
and where the Spirit of  
the Lord is, there is freedom.*

— 2 Corinthians 3:17

“My motivator in life is liberty,  
because we are free (in Christ).

We have been set free by a liberating God (from sin and death). I am motivated, especially as a member of Congress, for the maintenance of liberty here in this nation.”

**Bible Study (Capitol Hill):**

Yes; Active

**Favorite Bible Study:**

*Precept upon Precept,*  
by Kay Arthur

“I spent a lot of time in earlier years doing Kay Arthur’s Precept studies. I have been a Precept leader and student. I have taught the courses and have taken the courses. I really love that method of study, because, in some ways you go so slow. You slow down and that’s what I find for me when I can really hear that ‘still small voice’ of the Holy Spirit speaking to me ... Because it isn’t about me. It is about Him. And, so the closer I can stay to Him, the better off I will be.”

**Accountability Group:**

Yes; D.C. and Minnesota

“My closest friends are my prayer partners and my friends that I study the Word with. Those are — without a doubt — my closest friends, because nothing is more important to me than that. And nothing is more important to them than that — than our faith. That’s our rallying point — we rally at the Cross.”

**On Her Faith:**

“Jesus Christ is absolutely my Rock and Foundation. ... He is my Motivator, my Creator, and my Sustainer. I look to Him daily.”

**Why Political Life:**

“I am doing this because I feel that the Lord has called me to do this work. ... I am called to walk out what I believe the Lord has called me to do.”

*Paid for by CitizenLink®*

thing goes so fast.”

The key to staying grounded, said Bachmann, is her faith, staying in the Word and her accountability group. Furthermore, one of the highlights of her week is to meet with other believers for prayer. During the first votes of the week, all members can pray in a room off the House floor.

“It’s a very personal time where, as members, we can lift each other up in prayer. There might be constituents, or other people that we know, that are experiencing health problems, financial problems or whatever, and we pray for them,” Bachmann said. “It’s one

of the highlights of my week. I know I can go there — and these are brothers and sisters in Christ that will keep in confidence our prayer requests — and we come as complete equals at the foot of the Cross. We pray for the nation and we pray for each other. It’s very personal.”

### **A Call to Civic Courage**

No matter the cost, DeMint and Bachmann both count it a privilege and an honor to serve. Both are passionate about the liberties granted to Americans by God, and desire for everyone to be good stewards of these gifts.

“Every American — because we have been given the gift of liberty [and] are able to go to the ballot box — we need to at least do the minimum,” said Bachmann. “That is to know who is representing us, and ask, ‘Do their values line up with the values that we believe in and espouse?’

“If we spend half our day working for government, we certainly should pay attention to what government is doing. It is that important,” she added. “We need to know the people who represent us agree with our values.” ●

*Paid for by CitizenLink®*

Not so, said DeMint.

“I think, increasingly, while some are calling for a separation of the social and fiscal issues, more and more people realize that [many] of our fiscal problems in this country are related to the breakdown of families, unwed births, as well as other problems, such as school dropout, drug use, juvenile delinquency,” he said. “You cannot really ignore it if you are a fiscal conservative. We need to recognize that good social policy is really important to the fabric of our country.”

While there are Libertarians in the movement who do not see social issues as important, DeMint remains convinced that a majority of Tea Party participants are social conservatives.

“I have been to a lot [of the rallies],” he said. “I have waded into the crowd. I know there is a strong faith component there because I always hear three things: ‘Thanks for fighting, we are praying for you and what can I do?’ I hear that everywhere.

“American believers know that their rights come from God, and they sense that our government is trying to displace God as the rights giver. People are not coming to ask the government to become more religious — or even to promote morality — but to stop promoting immorality and to stop purging faith from the private sector.”

DeMint said the country is ready for someone to tell the truth and provide a balanced view of who we are as a nation — one with a Judeo-Christian underpinning.

“If we continue to erode that,” DeMint said, “then the things like free enterprise and individual responsibility no longer work, if you do not have people with that internal gyroscope, where they are looking to God and biblical principles. Most of the values and principles that make this country work derive from biblical faith.”

## A Call to Civic Courage

DeMint said that as Americans — and as believers — it is our responsibility to shape our government and to force it to act within the terms of the agreement — the Constitution — between the people and the government.

“We cannot allow the government to shape our beliefs, our children, our economy, or our future. We must decide for ourselves whether to live as passive spectators or as active participants in the fight to save freedom,” DeMint said. “Our government has never been further

### Politics: It's a Lonely Business

“One of the major problems of politics [is] you don't have accountability groups generally, because you don't want to confess your sins to someone who may be running against you in the future. Politicians keep their cards close to their chests.”

*Chuck Colson, former aide to President Nixon, and chairman and founder of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview*

from the principles of freedom, but we can begin to change the direction of our country if a vocal minority of Americans speak out and fight for the cause of freedom.

“The Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all people are ‘endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights.’ This governmental philosophy is uniquely American and is based on the Judeo-Christian belief that people are creations of God and ultimately accountable only to Him.”

DeMint said during an interview that his book, *Saving Freedom*, was a clarion call to the American public.

“It's my cry for help, in a way, because I can't change the Senate. I am outnumbered there unless Americans stand up and speak out all across the country,” he said.

“...It's so important to our whole system that we have a people that have strong religious convictions that focus on the accountability of the individual to God. When that happens, you don't need the force of government to restrain you. That is why the Christian faith has proven to work so differently than any other religion around the world, particularly in secular societies, because it focuses on that individual's relationship with God and our accountability to Him. That's what compels us to live a life that's worthy of the kingdom of God, but also improves our countries and our communities. It has always made America different.”

### 'Be Courageous'

DeMint said there's always a sacrifice involved when people begin to stand for their convictions, but he said one must have courage.

“I'm afraid Christians have been intimidated with this idea of separation of church and state — which is not in our Constitution at all — and that maybe their views aren't welcomed in the public square; that maybe expressing a value judgment about right or wrong is no longer welcomed,” he said.

“We can't have that anymore. If a society can't speak out about what's right or wrong according to their religious convictions, the culture will continue to decline and those who want lower and lower standards will continue to prevail. Biblical standards have preserved our country to this point.

“People of faith are going to have to stand back up. They're afraid to go out in the community and say what's right and wrong and challenge the culture. When I speak to pastors today, I challenge them and say, ‘Don't let this government make you hide within the walls of your church.’ We need leaders. If we didn't have pastors to lead this country in the revolution, America would never be free.” ●