

Politics And The Believer

As a pastor I'm often asked about politics and if one political party is more "Christian" than another. Some Christians are very critical of other Christians who vote for candidates from a political party whose platform they consider to be contrary to Christian values. The truth is there is no political party or platform that represents in its entirety the Biblical world view. At some point, and in varying degrees, all political philosophies will contradict and oppose the revealed will of God.

The Church of the Living God is the pillar and ground of truth. (1 Timothy 3:15) The Church is to proclaim the truth of God's word as ambassadors of Christ. As American citizens we have liberty to exercise our rights to be involved in politics, but as Christians our involvement must never lead us to be entangled in them. Our identification with Christ and His will should influence all our choices and all our actions. As followers of Christ our loyalty is always to God and His word and not to any social or political party.

The following is a question and answer that I read on the website of a fundamental Christian group. The answer given to the question accurately reflects my conviction on the subject of Politics And The Believer.

Douglas L. Crook

Question: *"Should a Christian be a Republican or a Democrat? Should a Christian be a conservative or a liberal/progressive?"*

Answer: As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization, Got Questions Ministries is not allowed to endorse political parties or candidates. We can, however, speak for or against certain political issues. In all actuality, though, few political issues are truly spiritual issues. As an example, we may prefer lower taxes, but the Bible does not endorse low taxes; all it says is that we are to pay our taxes honestly (Matthew 22:15-21; Romans 13:6-7). Taxes and many other issues (social security, universal healthcare, education funding, immigration, energy/environment, etc.) are not spiritual issues the Bible explicitly addresses. As a result, Christians can in good conscience have disagreements on these issues.

Generally speaking, Republicans/conservatives prefer smaller government and more individual freedom, while Democrats/liberals/progressives prefer more governmental oversight of society and the economy. Conservatives argue for capitalism, that is free, for the most part, from governmental control, while liberals/progressives have more socialistic tendencies in regards to the government's role. The Bible does not explicitly endorse either capitalism or socialism. God has given governments the freedom to have as much authority as is needed to fulfill their God-given roles of enforcing justice and building order in society (Romans 13:1-7). So, in regards to the size and scope of government, Christians can be libertarian, conservative, liberal, or progressive. None of those persuasions are inherently evil or ungodly. The argument should be over which system best enables the government to fulfill its God-given role.

Politically conservative Christians will argue that as governments get bigger and more powerful, personal

freedom decreases, and if left unchecked, government will bloat itself into a controlling, authoritarian, and oppressive dictatorship. Historically speaking, there is much evidence to support this argument. Liberals/progressives will argue that the government should be greatly involved in providing social services, caring for the poor, sick, orphans, widows, unemployed, etc., pointing to Scriptures such as James 1:27. If these social services result in more governmental control, liberals/progressives are willing to make that sacrifice. Conservatives argue that the more freedom a society/economy has, the more prosperous it becomes. Liberals/progressives argue that some prosperity should be sacrificed for the “greater good.” So, while one economic/societal/political system may be “better,” neither is inherently evil/immoral/sinful. Both systems have strengths and weaknesses, and, historically speaking, both systems have proven themselves capable of fulfilling the basic biblical responsibility of government.

While issues such as the size/scope of government and economic systems are not explicitly addressed in Scripture, there definitely are some political issues the Bible does address, such as abortion (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6; Exodus 21:22-25; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5) and gay marriage (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9). For the Bible-believing Christian, abortion is not a matter of a woman’s right to choose. It is a matter of the life or death of a human being made in God’s image. Endorsing gay marriage is giving approval to a lifestyle choice the Bible condemns as immoral and unnatural. Therefore, Bible-believing Christians should support issues/candidates that are pro-life and should support issues/candidates that oppose gay marriage and uphold the biblical/traditional understanding of marriage. Whether these two issues should trump all other issues is a matter of personal conviction.

The Bible teaches that a leader in the church should be a godly, moral, ethical person (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9). This should apply to political leaders as well. If politicians are going to make wise, God-honoring decisions, they must have a basic morality and worldview on which to base the decisions they are going to have to make. So if there is a clear moral distinction between candidates, as Christians, we should choose the more moral, honest, and ethical of the candidates.

No matter who is in office, whether we voted for them or not, whether they are of the political party we prefer or not, the Bible commands us to respect and honor them (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). We should also be praying for those placed in authority over us (Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). We do not have to agree with them, or even like them, but we do have to honor and respect them. Politics is always going to be a difficult issue for Christians. We are in this world but are not to be of this world (1 John 2:15). We can be involved in politics, but we should not be obsessed with politics. Ultimately, we are to be heavenly minded, more concerned with the things of God than the things of this world (Colossians 3:1-2). As believers in Jesus Christ, we are all members of the same political party—monarchists who are waiting for their King to return (Revelation 19:11-16).

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