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Deliberate and vote for the common good.

Election season is upon us and the electorate is deeply divided. The decision of which candidate to support is difficult because there is never a perfect candidate.

In a July 12, 2023 article from The Pew Research Center noted about two-thirds (66%) of the voting-eligible population turned out for the 2020 presidential election – the highest rate for any national election since 1900. Good news perhaps unless voting is increasingly more about candidate popularity than substance.

This brings us to a large voting block that candidates seek for support. According to an average of all 2023 Gallup polling published in March 29, 2024, about three in four Americans said they identify with a specific religious faith. By far the largest proportion, 68%, identify as Christian, including 33% as Protestant, 22% Catholic and 13% who identify with another denomination or simply as a "Christian. How those of faith vote should be based on something more than popularity as candidate values, policies and moral code should be of paramount importance regardless of how candidates identify on faith.

Christians are called to resist evil and do good (Romans 12:21), it reflects a commitment to righteousness and justice, particularly in the public sphere, including voting. One way to be obedient to this command is by evaluating candidates and policies through a biblical lens, considering how they align with the values of God's Kingdom.

As Christians, it is vital to remember that our primary citizenship lies in the Kingdom of God, and this shapes our perspectives and decisions, including how we engage in earthly governance. Philippians 3:20 states, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." While we are called to participate in civic matters, it is essential to maintain an eternal perspective and recognize that our ultimate loyalty is to Jesus, who is the King. This understanding encourages us to approach voting and political involvement with a mindset that reflects the values and teachings of Christ. Jesus called his followers salt and light and as such are to be influencing the world around us with a Christ-centered approach.

Romans 12:21 teaches us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." This can guide Christians to choose candidates who promote policies that foster justice, mercy, and integrity, thereby working against the evil that may be present in society. Additionally, Micah 6:8 calls us to "act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." This verse encourages Christians to engage in the political process in a way that reflects these principles, ensuring that their choices contribute to a more just and compassionate society.

Examine the values and policies of the candidate. Evaluate if their platform aligns with your positions as formed by your faith. Proverbs 29:2 states, "When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." This suggests that the righteousness of a leader's policies is paramount, even if they are not personally righteous. Especially check to see if their values and policies over time align to ensure the vote is not wasted on a double-minded candidate.

One should also consider each candidate's moral code. Morality is the belief that some behavior is right and acceptable and other behavior which is not. One's moral code should define which behaviors towards others based on first doing no harm as well as those intended to do good. A Do No Harm list might include do not lie, do not steal, do not murder. A Do Good code treat others as you wish to be treated, be generous, be fair and honest, take care of your family. Understanding a candidate's behavior towards others says a great deal about how effective they will be in working with others.

By voting for candidates who stand for goodness and righteousness, Christians fulfill their role as agents of change in the world, actively resisting evil while promoting the common good. Thus, through thoughtful voting, Christians can be obedient to their call to resist evil and do good, aligning their political actions with their faith. Voting for a candidate should be a complex, deliberative process for Christians in determining who gets the X.