

Christianity and Politics

What does it mean to be a Christian or a disciple of Christ in the midst of a democratic republic like the United States?

For the Christian, Jesus alone is Lord. (Romans 10:9-10, Luke 14:25-33, Matthew 6:24)

- Anyone or any ideology that demands total allegiance is a competing Lord -- “you’re either with us or you’re against us” is lordship language. (Luke 11:23, Matthew 12:30)
- Jesus Lordship takes on a practical dimension. He informs our worldview. He teaches us which questions to ask. He is the Lord of our minds. Similarly, Jesus informs the passions of our hearts. He is the Lord of our hearts. Finally, He tells us what to get busy doing. He is the Lord of our strength.
- As the Lord’s people, we are foreigners, aliens, and ambassadors in every other land. (1 Peter 2:10-12, John 15:18-19, Ephesians 2:18-20, James 4:4-5)
- This means that, although we may be Americans, we still see ourselves as citizens of Heaven first, on the outside looking in at the behaviors and ideologies of a fallen world that needs Jesus. We are not shopping for a world-view!

What “ought” a government to do, in light of Scripture? Romans 13:1-7 teaches us that the government is leant authority by God and as such has a duty to reward the good and punish evil, in accordance with God’s decree of what is good and evil.

In as much as an individual has the capacity to inform the work of government, they ought to wield that authority to this end. Consider part of the prayers Jesus teaches us to pray, “May your kingdom come, may your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.” Now consider the relationship between prayer and action that persists throughout Scripture. It is good for us to act in such a way that aligns the values of the nation where we live with the values of the nation to which we belong.

Loving the Lord with all of our minds:

- Make sure that we allow Scripture to inform what humanity’s primary problem is, what (or rather who) the primary solution is, and what our role in that story is.
- Judge content against the teaching of Scripture, not by anything else. Consider, but don’t ultimately judge by the source.
- Guard the volume of content we intake and know the bias that comes with it.
- Do not fall into the trap of believing ideas in bulk.
- Do not fall into the trap of dismissing ideas in bulk.
- Understand the difference between being for a people and being for a policy.

Love the Lord with all of our heart:

- Goal: make sure that your passions are aligned with Christ and not informed by media or mob-mentality.
- Method: your heart will care about what your mind regularly ruminates upon. Let your mind expose your heart to the Lord's by regular exposure to Scripture. Pray about what God presses on you in the word.
- Litmus Test: what are our primary concerns or fears? What are our primary hopes and dreams? What informs them? Are they local and temporary in nature or eternal and of a larger scope?

Love the Lord with all of our strength:

- Vote or refrain from voting according to your convictions, which ought to be informed by Scripture.
- In as much as you care about issues, be in prayer about them and the people they affect.
- When lead and when the opportunity arises, take personal actions towards the good of others in your community and beyond, for the glory of God.
 - Even in just nations, the Church does not wholly rely upon the government to love and care for the people around them, especially those that are hurting.

Other considerations

- The lesser of two evils argument.
 - When does it work and when does it fall apart?
 - Are there certain sins that disqualify someone as a Christian candidate?
 - Are these sins only surrounding policy positions or can they include character or habitual behaviors?
- Single issue voting. (Abortion, treatment of the poor or otherwise marginalized)
- Unity of the Church. When are we off-track? What is the canary in the coal mine?
- Make sure that your considerations are not solely selfish. (Philippians 2, Romans 15, ...)
- Consider the implications for the Mission.

Whatever position you take should most likely come with some amount of nuance. Whatever you take action on, make sure it is on purpose and driven from conviction that is informed by Scripture. All of life for the Christian is in submission to God.

About social engagement.

Our goal is to win people for Christ. Our mission is primarily surrounding the proclamation of the Gospel, its acceptance, and the health and growth of the Church. Whatever our political engagement is, it ought not to compromise this end. For this reason, I am more concerned about how we carry ourselves in our personal lives and engagements with others, especially those that disagree with us, than I am about the way we vote.

Now about considerations surrounding who to vote for:

Which candidates beliefs align most closely with the Christian worldview?

Which candidates policies and promises will most effectively advance the causes that Christ tells us to care about in His word?

Has the candidate in question disqualified themselves? Is there an evil here that I can't, in good conscience before the Lord, endorse, even if I agree with their other positions and policies?

What are the major issues in our context over the time-frame this politician is running? How will this individual engage with these issues?

Which candidate, if elected, will be the most helpful for the Mission of the Church?

For a practical model on this, I would suggest the one given by David Platt in the final chapter of his book, [*Before You Vote*](#).

Nonpartisan Candidate Guides:

- [President](#)
- [Governor](#)

Jeremiah 29:4-7 ⁴“Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and

give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Matthew 5:13-16 ¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 22:34-39 ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Romans 12:1-2 ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world,^[c] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Philippians 2:3-4 ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Romans 13:1-7 ¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

1 Timothy 2:1-3 ¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may

lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,

Romans 14:5-9 ⁵ One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Romans 12:9-12 ⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, ^[a] serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

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?

Concerning Abortion

Psalm 139:13-16

¹³ For you formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.^[a]

Wonderful are your works;

my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

in your book were written, every one of them,

the days that were formed for me,

when as yet there was none of them.

Luke 1:39-44³⁹ In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

Genesis 9:6

⁶ "Whoever sheds the blood of man,

by man shall his blood be shed,

for God made man in his own image.

Exodus 20:13 You shall not murder.

Commandments concerning Molech: **Leviticus 18:21, 20:2-5, 1 Kings 11:7, 2 Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 32:35**

Concerning the treatment of "sojourners" & "strangers"

Exodus 22:21²¹ You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.²² You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.

Exodus 23:9 You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:9-10⁹ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.¹⁰ And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:33-34³³ "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.³⁴ You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 23:22²² "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God."

Leviticus 25:35-37³⁵ "If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you."³⁶

Take no interest from him or profit, but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. ³⁷ You shall not lend him your money at interest, nor give him your food for profit.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19 ¹⁷ For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. ¹⁸ He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 ²⁸ “At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. ²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 ¹⁷ “You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge, ¹⁸ but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

¹⁹ “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

Deuteronomy 27:19 ¹⁹ ‘Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’