

How to Vote this November

Tim Dance

This year's national election – like most in our time – feels both contentious and momentous. Some Christians are firmly convicted and convinced about who to vote for; while others are so turned off, they have checked out of the whole political scene. Still others have stayed informed but feel unsure how to vote because no candidate seems right.

How should Christians be engaged in politics and this year's election? We may not agree on *who* to vote for, but we can find unity in *how* to vote. If you were looking for candidate recommendations, you won't find them here. But what you will find is six biblical principles and about our calling as Christians engaged in the world.

1- Vote with Prayer

We are new creatures in Christ and citizens of a heavenly kingdom. Yet, God has sent us out into the world and called us to live for him on this earth. This includes praying for our government, laws, officials, and elections. We need to be diligent that *"supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way"* (1 Tim. 2:1-2). This means we pray for our current government official and those running for office: president, vice-president, cabinet, senators, congress, governors, state and local officials. We pray for our leaders to put faith in Christ and lead with the wisdom of God. We pray for God's people to be active and engaged in the government and political process. And we pray for a fair and peaceful election process.

2- Vote with Purpose

The New Testament doesn't directly tell Christians to vote in elections, but we are told to pay our taxes, live honorably, be subject to the government, and honor our rulers (Rom. 13:7, 1 Pet. 2:11-17). Voting in America is a right and privilege of our citizenship, and we see that the apostle Paul made use of the rights and privileges of his Roman citizenship (Act. 22, 25). And so, we should participate in our government because elections do matter. As Christians, we should be informed, wise, and purposeful in how we vote. Some Christians may choose to abstain, but even if this is your conviction – do this with purpose and prayer (and not just because you forgot to vote!).

3- Vote with Knowledge

Keeping up with all that is going on in politics right now can be dizzying! However, if we are going to vote, we should do so from an informed perspective. A host of critical issues impact our nation and our lives – the economy, social issues, immigration, criminal justice, and foreign policy. Of course, the presidential election is on everyone's minds right now – but remember, there are other races for congress, governors, and state and local offices. National politics tends to get all the attention, but state and local government is just as important. And keep in mind, while we may functionally have a two-party system, there are other political parties beyond Republicans and Democrats (and some districts allow write-in candidates). Look at the [ballot for your county](#) and seek to become informed.

4- Vote with Humility

It is interesting that godly Christians who love Jesus and believe the Bible can have different political convictions. Some couldn't imagine a Christian voting for Trump! Some couldn't imagine a Christian voting for Harris! Some couldn't imagine a Christian voting for either! Perhaps we all can agree that there is no perfect candidate and no mandated way for Christians to engage in the American political process. You may be convinced in your own mind, but humility means you show respect for a person's right to hold a different conviction. *"Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'"* (1 Pet. 5:5). Christians need to evaluate and weigh a candidate's experience, character, leadership, and policy stances. Christians will even disagree on how to prioritize critical policy issues: taxes and the economy; religious liberty; sanctity of life; marriage, sexuality, gender; immigration; education and parental rights; racial justice; criminal justice, social programs, foreign policy, on and on. Christian, stay informed, hold your convictions, and remain humble. *"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor"* (Rom. 12:10).

5- Vote with Faith

We need to vote with prayer, purpose, knowledge, and humility. And we can't do any of this unless we act with faith. Trusting Christ as Savior and grounding ourselves in the Word of God must drive all that we do. Don't just vote for who everyone else in your circle is voting for – vote with conviction, guided by your faith. In Romans 14, Paul

is addresses issues of Christian liberty – not clear moral issues of right and wrong. We see that it is common for Christians to disagree on issues of secondary doctrine, lifestyle, and politics. But we read that *“Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind”* and *“whatever does not proceed from faith is sin”* (verses 5 and 23). Let that sink in – if your vote does not proceed from faith, it is sinful. Yes, there are loads of things in life where practical considerations and pragmatics impact our choices, but we can’t leave our faith at the door in any situation. We must always speak and act with a clear conscience before God. While Christians should exercise our right to vote – our highest responsibility is to honor the Lord Jesus and live holy before him.

6- Vote with Hope

Christians are people of hope. We are called to this world, but our hope is not in this world. Christ is our Risen King no matter who sits in the oval office. God is sovereign, and no one gets elected to a government office apart from his will. *“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”* (Rom. 13:1). And so, the day after this year’s election – no matter the outcome – Christ is still our King, and so our hope and our calling won’t change.

God has called us to walk in obedience and faithfully spread the good news of Jesus Christ to our nation and every nation of the earth. And in this nation where he has placed us, we give thanks, we seek to be good citizens, we honor our leaders, we share Jesus, and we pray. We pray that God’s Kingdom would come, and his will would be done, on earth as it is in heaven. This is our hope...

“...the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time – he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. (1 Tim. 6:14-16).