

## ***HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS VOTE?***

**1 Timothy 2:1-4**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

We have a big election coming up: Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Donald Trump vs. Kamala Harris.

How should Christians vote?

You might say, "It's none of your business who I vote for." I'm not asking you who you are voting for; I'm asking, How should Christians vote?

Who should Christians vote for?"

You might say, "We shouldn't be talking about politics in church?" Says who? There are two questions that I ask to determine if I should preach on a subject. Does the Bible talk about it? And Does God care about it? As for the first question, does the Bible talk about politics? Absolutely! The Bible is filled with information about the purpose of government, how a government should function, the kinds of laws we should have, how to be a good politician, and how to be a good citizen. For me to not preach about politics I would have to intentionally skip over a large portion of the Bible.

**Pastor Tony Evans** said, "You cannot read the Bible and ignore the political realm."

You might, "What about the separation of church and state?" That phrase is not in the Bible, and it's not in the U.S. Constitution. It was written by Thomas Jefferson to express the idea that the government should not interfere with religious exercise. On the flipside, the church should not control the government, but the church definitely should teach what the Bible says about politics so that people know how to be good citizens, and politicians know how to be good politicians.

As for the second question, "Does God care about politics," the answer is absolutely! The Bible says that God invented the institution of government, and that it is God's servant for your good (Rm 13:1-7). He definitely cares that the government does what He created it to do. He cares about how government functions, and how politicians conduct

themselves, and how citizens behave. As well, God cares about government because it has a huge impact on people, and God loves people. A just and effective government can drastically improve people's lives, while an unjust and dysfunctional government can be catastrophic on the lives of people. The Nazi government murdered twelve million people, including six millions Jews. Communist governments killed over 100 million people. In the twentieth century more people were killed by their own governments than were killed in all the wars combined. God cares about politics because it greatly affects people's lives.

Does the Bible talk about politics? Yes. Does God care about politics? Absolutely. So we need to talk about it.

**Jerry Falwell**, founder of Liberty University, the largest Christian university in America "The idea that religion and politics don't mix was invented by the Devil to keep Christians from running their own country."

Do you know who doesn't want the church to talk about politics? Satan. He would love for preachers to be silent, and Christians to be ignorant about what the Bible says about politics. In fact, the devil would be beyond that. He would love it if Christians just didn't vote or run for office. He would love it for the church to just completely forfeit the political sphere to him. So if you don't think the church should talk about politics, you and the devil agree on something.

In 2021, the President of the Southern Baptist Convention at the time, Ed Litton, said that while he is personally extremely conservative in his politics, he does not address political issues from the pulpit. That approach to preaching may help you grow your church, but it won't help you grow disciples. And that's what the church is supposed to do.

Christians don't need to just be taught Bible stories; they don't just need to be taught what the Bible says about salvation; they need to be taught how to apply the Bible to contemporary issues – issues like politics, critical race theory, DEI, climate change, gay marriage, gender dysphoria, etc.

Today I want us to see what the Bible says about how to vote.

## **SHOULD CHRISTIANS ENGAGE IN POLITICS?**

The first question we should ask is, "Should Christians vote at all?"

The Bible teaches that Christians should be civically engaged in several ways.

Obey the law.

**1 Peter 2:13-14** “13 Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority 14 or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good.”

You might say, “I don’t have to obey the law, I only have to obey God.” Well, God commands us to obey the civil law. The only time we are exempt from obeying the civil law is if it violates God’s law.

Pay taxes.

**Romans 13:7** “Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.”

Taxes are necessary because government is necessary.

Taxes are how we pay for the government.

If you don’t like taxes and want less taxes, then you should vote for a smaller, limited government.

Pray for the government.

**1 Timothy 2:1-2** “First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

Vote.

**Jeremiah 29:7** “Pursue the well-being of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the LORD on its behalf, for when it thrives, you will thrive.”

There is no direct command in Scripture to vote, because Jews and Christians did not have the opportunity to vote.

They didn’t live in democracies. But there is a command in scripture to pursue the well-being of the city where you live. Living in a democracy, that would involve voting.

God created the government and demands that it be just and effective. In the United States, we are in charge of the government. Sometimes we directly pass laws, and other times indirectly through elected representatives. But we are in charge. It is our duty to make sure the government is just and effective.

To disengage from politics is to be irresponsible. It is to neglect your responsibility to God and to your fellow man. Someone is going to vote. If not Christians, then who? If not the righteous, then who? If not the Biblically literate, then who? If not the just, then who? If not the merciful, then who?

**Plato** “One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.” Christians should vote. But how?

## **TEXT**

**1 Timothy 2:1-4** “First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

This passage tells us how a good government should function. And once we know how a government is supposed to function, then we will better know how to vote.

## **THREE FUNCTIONS OF A GOOD GOVERNMENT**

### **Protect the life and property of citizens.**

**1 Timothy 2:2** “for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

We are told to pray for political leaders so that we may lead “tranquil” lives. In other words, if the government is doing their job well, we will be able to live tranquil lives.

“Tranquil” means free from disturbance.

The government's first and most important job is to establish and maintain law and order. To protect the lives and property of its citizens from bad actors, both foreign and domestic.

This means a strong national defense, and a strong and just police force and judicial system.

A government that doesn't or can't protect the lives and property of its citizens is a failed government. A government that doesn't stop evil and violent people from harming the wicked has lost its reason for existence.

Now let's compare the two political parties in the United States. Which party is better at protecting life and property? Which is the better party on law and order?

Let's begin with the issue of abortion. Murder is morally wrong, and abortion is the murder of unborn children, the most innocent and vulnerable in our society. That's exactly who the government should be protecting. Instead, the Democrats are pro-abortion. They want to allow mothers to murder their own unborn children.

On the whole, the Democrats are notoriously soft on crime.

They championed the Defund the Police movement.

They wanted to abolish ICE – the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

The cities in our nation with the worst crime rates are run by Democrats. 27 of the 30 cities with the highest murder rates are run by Democrats.

Retail theft is soaring in Democrat cities. In San Francisco, where Kamala Harris was the District Attorney, Nordstrom, Whole Foods, and 17 other retailers have all made the decision to leave San Francisco since 2020.

The Biden/Harris administration has opened the southern border, causing an unsurpassed surge in illegal immigration. They stopped the construction of a border wall, and when border patrol catches an illegal immigrant, they release them into the US until it's time to report to court, and many of them never do. They are also the party of amnesty,

stating that they would like to reward illegal immigrants with permanent residency in the US.

The Republicans are the party of law and order.

The Republicans are pro-life.

The International Union of Police Associations endorses Trump.

The Fraternal Order of Police endorses Trump.

The National Border Patrol Council endorses Trump.

So, for the protection of law and order, I'm voting Republican. I'm voting for Donald Trump.

### **Preserve the liberty of citizens.**

**1 Timothy 2:2** "for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity."

We are also told to pray for political leaders so that we may lead "quiet" lives. In the order words, when the government is doing its job, we will be able to lead quiet lives.

"Quiet" means the absence of intrusion and interference.

Next to maintaining law and order, the government's second main function is to restrain itself from intruding and interfering with the lives of its citizens.

The first function of the government is to protect citizens from evil people. The second function of government is to protect citizens from itself – from an overreaching government.

To preserve the freedom of citizens, the government must limit its own power. The bigger the government is, the more it tries to accomplish, the more it has to raise taxes, and the more laws and regulations it imposes on its citizens.

The Founding Fathers were on top of this. They were heavily influenced by the philosophy of John Locke, who said that the only legitimate function of government is the protection of person and property – the protection of life, liberty, and

property. He said any government function or power beyond this is illegitimate.

The Founders knew that the natural tendency of a government is to increase its size and power over time – to keep increasing taxes and making more laws – so they placed intentional limits on the federal government. These include things like:

A written constitution (enumerated powers). The government cannot do whatever it wants. We have a written constitution which tells the government exactly what it is supposed to do.

Federalism. Those powers that are not specifically granted to federal government in the constitution are automatically delegated to the states. The federal government is only supposed to do a few things.

Separation of powers. To prevent the federal government from abusing its power, the federal government is broken into three branches that hold each other in check – the legislative branch (congress) make the laws, the executive branch (president) enforces the law, and the judicial branch (Supreme Court) interprets the law.

To preserve liberty, the government must limit and restrain itself from intruding and interfering in the lives of its citizens.

Let's talk about our two political parties. Which one is best at preserving freedom?

The Democratic party is the party of big government and high taxes, and the Republican party is the party of limited government and low taxes.

Why? The Democratic party puts a lot more hope and trust in the government than Republicans. The Democrats believe the government is the answer to every question, the solution to every problem. For many Democrats, the government is God;

the government is Savior. They believe the solution to all societal ills is more government intervention; more laws; more rules; more regulations; more government agencies. If the government was big and powerful enough, we could have heaven on earth.

And since the Republicans don't want to expand the government, since they don't want the government to solve all of our problems, the Democrats accuse Republicans of being heartless; of lacking compassion; of not caring about poor and needy people; of not caring about the problems in the world.

But the Republicans do care about the less fortunate. They do want to help people. In fact, on average Republicans give more money to charity than Democrats, and a higher percentage of their income, even though Democrats average 6 percent higher incomes. But the Republicans know that the bigger the government grows and the more it tries to accomplish, the more it will increase taxes and laws and regulations, thereby limiting individual freedom.

So, Republicans want the government to remain small and focus on a few essentials like law and order and national defense, but when it comes to helping people with their problems, leave that up to families, churches, and private charities.

Republicans agree with the statement, "That government is best which governs least."

Kamala Harris is a big government Democrat. Trump is a limited government Republican.

So for the preservation of individual liberty, I'm voting Republican. I'm voting for Trump.

**Promote religious involvement and good morals.**



**1 Timothy 2:1-4** says that we need to pray for our government leaders “so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

We are also to pray for our political leaders so that we may live in all godliness and dignity. In other words, when the government is effective, we will be able to live in godliness and dignity.

“Godliness and dignity” refer to religious devotion and good morals.

The third function of government is to encourage religious involvement and good morals. By religion, I’m talking about the true religion – Christianity. By good morals, I’m talking about Biblical morality. In other words, when citizens are free and encouraged by the government to be religiously involved and morally upright, the government is doing its job.

You might say, “The government isn’t supposed to have anything to do with religion. What about the separation of church and state?” That is actually a misinterpretation of the constitution, and of the original intent of the Founders. The **First Amendment** actually says this: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” In other words, the government shouldn’t force people to be religious, or prevent them being religious. But it doesn’t say that the government can’t encourage religious and involvement. In fact, the Founders believed that the government should.

The Founders believed in a concept that can be called The Golden Triangle of Freedom. Picture a triangle. At the top is freedom, on the right is morality, and on the left of religion. The founders saw an important connection between these three.

First, they wanted to create a nation where people are free; a nation where the government doesn't infringe on people's rights.

Second, they saw that freedom requires morality. For freedom to be possible, the vast majority of the population must be morally upright – respecting others and responsible for themselves. As morality breaks down, the government must get bigger and bigger, passing more laws and increasing taxes.

**Jay W. Richards and James Robison** “The more people freely obey the rule of law, the less need there is for a state to coerce us.”

**Edmund Burke** “Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites.”

**Ravi Zacharias** “The reason we have 17,000 pages in our law books is because we cannot follow 10 lines on a tablet made of stone.”

Third, the Founders saw that morality requires religion. They strongly believed that the only way to foster and maintain a morally upright population is with a strong Christian church.

The imminent historian **Will Durant** said, “There is no significant example in history before our time of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.”

**Ronald Reagan** said, “Without God, there is a coarsening of the society. And without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.”

**James Madison**, the father of the U.S. Constitution wrote, “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind shall be forever encouraged.”

It is very important for the church to have a strong influence on society. For this reason, they wanted Christianity in America to thrive.

For religion to thrive, the founders also saw that it requires freedom – religious freedom – and more than that, they saw that government should encourage and promote religious involvement.

So, the Golden Triangle of Freedom says that freedom requires morality, and morality requires religion, and religion requires freedom.

The Founders believed that the government should encourage and promote both religious involvement and good morals.

Let’s talk about our two parties. Which one does a better job at encouraging religious involvement and good morals?

The Democratic Party is the party of same-sex marriage, of gender transitions for minors, of Drag Queen Story Hour, of the legalization of drugs. They are the party that doesn’t want prayer and the Ten Commandments in our schools. They are the party of abortion. They are the party that wants to punish Christian businesses for not supporting the LGBTQ agenda – such as bakers and photographers. The Democratic Party is the anti-God, anti-Christian party.

**Charles Colson** wrote, “The Democratic Party, sadly in my mind, has almost excluded conservative Christians by its fanatical allegiance to the causes of abortion on demand (including late-term abortion) and, more recently, same-sex ‘marriage.’” (Colson, Charles. *God and Government* (Kindle Locations 6650-6652). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)

So for the sake of Christianity and good morals, I'm voting Republican. I'm voting for Trump.

## **CONCLUSION**

How should Christians vote?

The Bible tells us what the government is supposed to do:

Protect life and property.

Preserve individual liberty.

Promote religious involvement and good morals.

We have two candidates, and two political parties. As a Christian, you need to ask yourself, which candidate, and which party most reflects these three functions.

And to me the choice is very clear.