

CLARITY
IN CONTROVERSY

Ballots and the Bible: Why Voting Matters to the Christian



American Council

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible.

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About this Resource

Maria stood in line at the polling station with her young daughter tugging gently at her arm. It had been a long day of work and school pickup, and dinner still needed to be made. As she clutched her ballot and shuffled forward, she thought about her grandfather, who fled a communist regime that silenced Christians and outlawed their votes.

He never forgot the privilege it was to have a say in the direction of a nation. Now, Maria stood in his place, aware that her small action was part of a much greater story. Her daughter may not have understood what was happening, but Maria was planting seeds for the next generation. She was not just casting a vote. She was making a declaration of faith.

Voting may feel ordinary, but for the Christian, it is an act of discipleship. It is a statement that we care about the world God has placed us in. It is a way of stewarding our influence for the sake of others and pointing to a greater King.

Some see voting as a temporary engagement with a flawed system. But for those who follow Jesus, it is a powerful opportunity to reflect Kingdom values in a world that desperately needs light. Our vote is not about trusting in earthly kings. It is about honoring the King of kings through faithful presence in public life.

This book is an invitation to rediscover why voting matters. Not as an idol. Not as an afterthought. But as a sacred responsibility shaped by Scripture and driven by love.



Created to Influence, Not Isolate

In the beginning, God gave Adam a mandate to cultivate and govern the earth. This was not just a call to gardening. It was a commission to shape creation. Humanity was not designed for withdrawal but for dominion, exercised through stewardship. To bear the image of God is to reflect His rule and character in every sphere of life—including civic life.

This creation mandate means that Christians are not called to escape from culture but to engage it. Throughout Scripture, God's people were placed in foreign lands to bear witness to His truth in public ways. Joseph governed Egypt. Daniel served in Babylon. Esther influenced Persia. None of them waited for perfect circumstances. They lived faithfully where God had placed them.

Jesus affirmed this calling in Matthew 5:13–16. We are to be salt and light in a decaying and dark world. Salt preserves what is good and slows the spread of corruption. Light exposes darkness and reveals what is true. Neither salt nor light fulfills its purpose by hiding. Christians who disengage from politics and culture may preserve personal purity, but they risk abandoning their prophetic role.

In a nation where the people help shape the government, our influence is not only possible but expected. To vote is to extend our voice beyond the sanctuary and into the city gates. It is to embody Christlike influence for the sake of the common good.



Render to Caesar What Belongs to God

When Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees about paying taxes to Caesar, He responded not with political partisanship, but with profound clarity. Holding a Roman coin in His hand, He said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). He affirmed both the legitimacy of earthly government and the supremacy of divine authority.

This principle teaches Christians how to live in the tension of dual citizenship. We are citizens of both heaven and earth. We do not worship the state, but we also do not ignore it. Instead, we live responsibly within it, honoring God through lawful submission and active participation.

Romans 13 expands this idea, teaching that governments are God's servants, designed to uphold justice, promote peace, and restrain evil. Paul writes this while living under the Roman Empire—a government far from godly. Even so, he sees participation and respect for governing authorities as consistent with gospel witness.

In our modern context, rendering to Caesar includes voting. It is one of the clearest ways we participate in public life. In a system where citizens choose their leaders and shape their laws, our ballot is part of what we owe. But our primary allegiance always belongs to God. We render to Caesar, but only what is rightfully his. Our convictions, our conscience, and our worship belong to Christ alone.

A photograph of a woman and a young boy outdoors, both smiling and holding small American flags. The woman is in the foreground, looking down at the boy's flag. The boy is in the background, looking up at his flag. The scene is bright and sunny, with a blurred background of trees and a building.

The Parable of the Talents and the Stewardship of Influence

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells a story about a master who entrusts talents to his servants before going away. Two of the servants invest and multiply what they were given. One hides his talent out of fear. The master calls this third servant wicked and lazy—not because he failed to succeed, but because he refused to try.

This parable is about stewardship. It is not about perfection. It is about faithfulness. God gives His people gifts, opportunities, and influence. We are not responsible for outcomes, but we are responsible for obedience. In a democracy, our vote is one of those entrusted resources. It may seem small, but it is significant in God's economy.

Voting is not just an act of preference. It is an act of stewardship. The issues at stake in an election often involve human life, religious liberty, moral clarity, and justice for the poor. How we vote is one of the ways we reflect our theology and love our neighbor.

Refusing to vote out of frustration or apathy may feel like neutrality, but it is a form of disengagement. It is burying a civic talent in the ground. Christians are not called to disengage when things are complex. We are called to shine brighter when the world grows darker.

Stewarding our vote means prayerful research, thoughtful engagement, and faith-driven courage. It is one of the ways we live out our calling to be faithful in little so we can be trusted with much.



Voting as an Act of Neighbor Love

When Jesus summarized the law, He said everything hangs on two commands. Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself. These are not separate callings. They are inseparably joined. If we love God, we will love what He loves. And God loves people.

Voting is one of the ways we love our neighbors. In a broken world shaped by public policy, our votes impact the lives of real people. We vote not merely for abstract ideas, but for policies that affect families, children, schools, businesses, and the vulnerable. Every election has consequences. The laws that govern healthcare, education, taxation, and religious freedom are shaped by those we elect.

To vote with love means thinking beyond ourselves. It means asking how our vote will affect the unborn, the elderly, the immigrant, the widow, the addict, the student, and the prisoner. It means seeking the welfare of the city as Jeremiah 29:7 commands, even when that city is not perfect.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that love crosses boundaries. It inconveniences itself for the sake of another. To cast a ballot with neighbor love means we do not vote for what benefits us alone, but for what reflects God's heart for justice and mercy. Voting with love does not mean voting without conviction. It means that our convictions are shaped not by self-interest, but by sacrificial concern for the wellbeing of others.



Voting Without Idolatry

While voting is an important responsibility, it is not our ultimate hope. The ballot box is not a throne. No politician is our savior. No platform can bring about the new creation. Only Christ can do that.

Psalm 146 warns, "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation." This is a needed reminder in a time when political identity has become a substitute for spiritual identity. Christians must vote with gravity but without idolatry. Our confidence must never be in election results, but in the sovereign rule of God.

That does not mean we become cynical or passive. It means we engage without being enslaved. We vote with full hearts and open hands, trusting the outcome to God. We remember that God has used righteous and unrighteous leaders to accomplish His purposes. He is not limited by our fears or dependent on our victories.

Idolatry turns politics into a religion. It makes opponents into enemies and elections into ultimate battles. But when we see voting as an act of obedience, not identity, we stay grounded in truth. We become free to act boldly without being consumed by the outcome.

Voting without idolatry means we fight for truth without becoming harsh. We pursue justice without forgetting grace. We engage with conviction, but we live with peace.



The Cost of Silence

Silence has a cost. When Christians retreat from cultural engagement, others fill the void. When the righteous stay silent, the wicked often gain ground. Proverbs 28:12 says, "When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, people hide themselves."

In times of moral confusion, silence is not neutral. It is a form of surrender. Jesus told His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth." Salt does not preserve by staying in the shaker. It must be applied. In the same way, faith must be lived out in public life if it is to preserve the moral fabric of society.

History is filled with examples where the silence of the Church enabled great evil. During slavery, during segregation, during the Holocaust, the absence of a prophetic voice was often more tragic than the presence of evil. We cannot afford to be silent when the lives of the unborn, the integrity of the family, or the freedom to worship are on the ballot.

To speak with wisdom does not mean to speak with anger. But it does mean to speak. To vote. To advocate. To act. The Church must be a faithful presence that refuses to withdraw in fear or grow weary in doing good.

There is a cost to courage. But there is a greater cost to silence. When we fail to vote, we fail to steward influence for those who cannot speak for themselves.



The Cross and the Ballot Box

Voting is not the centerpiece of Christian life, but it is a part of our faithful witness in the world. It is an opportunity to express love, truth, and conviction in a tangible way. It is how we bear the weight of responsibility in a free society and reflect the justice of God in public life.

The cross reminds us that our hope is not in power but in redemption. The resurrection assures us that God is working all things toward His perfect kingdom. We vote because we care. We vote because we hope. We vote because we are called to seek the good of the city, even as we long for the city to come.

Our calling is not to win elections. It is to be faithful. Faithful in thought. Faithful in speech. Faithful in action. And faithful with our vote. May our ballots reflect the beauty of our Savior and the truth of His Word.

When you stand in line to vote, remember the story you are part of. You are not just participating in a process. You are bearing witness to a Kingdom that is not of this world, but that breaks into this world through people like you.