

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Truth In An Uncertain World

What's the Word?

- Our society faces major challenges.
- The culture is talking about many significant topics.
- What does the Bible say about these topics?

Last Week's Topic

The Value of Life

Next Week's Topic

Israel and Antisemitism

Today's Topic

Politics and Government

The Bible contains numerous examples of God's people engaging in politics as part of a holistic approach to ministry that meets both spiritual and temporal needs.

Joseph and Daniel served in foreign administrations and used their influence to implement policies that benefited society. In the case of Joseph, during a devastating famine (Genesis 45:9-12), God used his position in the Egyptian government to protect and provide for his extended family (which would become the nation of Israel).

Queen Esther used her influence in the Persian government to save the Jewish people from a state-sanctioned genocide (Esther 8). The Prophet Jeremiah instructed the exiles in Babylon to seek the welfare of their new city. He also commanded them to pray for the city, "for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7). A thriving society would benefit God's people as well as the city's other inhabitants.

- <https://www.billygraham.ca/stories/politics-how-involved-should-christians-be/>

Because government and its laws are an inextricable part of our lives, there is no way to avoid some level of involvement. This is true for Christians, who, though “sojourners and exiles” (1 Peter 2:11) in this world, are nevertheless citizens of the “City of Man” as well as the “City of God.” Christians ought to endeavor to be good citizens of both cities and leverage their influence for the advancement of laws, policies and practices that contribute to the flourishing of our neighbors.

Because power resides with the people in our republic, when Christians vote, they are delegating their ruling authority to others. By voting, Christians are entrusting their “sword-bearing” responsibility to officials who will govern on their behalf. Voting is a matter of stewardship; failure to vote is a failure to exercise God-given authority.

Given the United States' far-reaching influence in the world, how can American Christians love the people of the nations well without having a vested interest in how our government approaches the issue of religious liberty and human rights worldwide? Will America's ambassadors be stalwart defenders of religious freedom overseas? Christians who support missionaries should care about the state of international religious freedom, an area of advocacy in which the U.S. exerts significant influence. Will abortion, under the euphemism of "family planning," be funded overseas by American taxpayers, or will U.S. foreign policy value the life of the unborn? Again, American believers, by exercising their right to vote, have a direct say in these matters.

Compelled by love for our neighbors and a desire to steward our God-given responsibilities, we must, as Christians, engage in the political process. But we must engage Biblically. This requires that we be prepared to grapple with the moral issues of our day, the reality of our two-party system, and follow our Christian convictions to their logical end by voting for candidates and parties that support clear Biblical values.

Are you registered to vote?

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Primary Elections in Texas

Last Day to Register to Vote

Monday, February 2, 2026

www.VoteTexas.gov

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

Please remember...

- Our political leaders are found in Washington and Austin
- Our laws are made in Washington and Austin
- Our salvation is NOT found in Washington and Austin
- Our hope is NOT found in Washington and Austin
- Our purpose in life is NOT found in Washington and Austin
- Our Savior is greater than those in Washington and Austin

Why be informed? Why get involved?

- Christians can and should be active in government and the political process, and to fail to participate is to forfeit the right to shape the moral future of America as God the Father would will it.
- Those who profess no faith in Christ will continue to dominate the political process until influential, dedicated Christian citizens enter the political arena and make a faithful stand for the cause of Christ.
- Rather than allowing government and religion to remain separate and distinct, Christians ought to take their biblical principles and seek to change their governments for the better through voting and seeking elected office.

Watch Our Priorities

- To honor God in government and politics, one must be involved to serve others and to serve God, not for financial gain or to assert power over others.
- As believers in Jesus, we are primarily concerned about eternal matters, not temporal ones.
- “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

Matthew 5

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said...

“You [second person plural] are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.” Matthew 5:13

Qualities of Salt

1. Valuable

- Salary comes from the Latin word *salarium*, which also means "salary" and has the root *sal*, or "salt." In ancient Rome, it specifically meant the amount of money allotted to a Roman soldier to buy salt, which was an expensive but essential commodity.

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/salary>

Qualities of Salt

1. Valuable

2. Adds flavor

- Salt permanently changes the flavor of food, just as the influence of godly people can change a culture.
- <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-13.html>
- “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Colossians 4:5-6

Qualities of Salt

1. Valuable

2. Adds flavor

3. Preserves against decay

- As salt was added to foods, not only for spice but also to preserve them from decay, it became a symbol of incorruptibility and permanence. – Mike Ford
- As salt preserves meat from rotting, believers in Jesus, distributed around the world, help to preserve humanity from falling into godlessness, immorality, chaos, and the resulting judgment.

- <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/5/Matthew-5-13.html>

Qualities of Salt

1. Valuable
2. Adds flavor
3. Preserves against decay
4. Creates thirst

- Jesus' followers would be like salt in that they would create a thirst for greater information. When one sees a unique person who possesses superior qualities in specific areas, he desires to discover why that person is different.

Q: What characteristics of Christ-followers would make non-believers **thirsty** for the gospel?

A: Grace, faith, honesty, peace, hope, love, humility

Q: What characteristic of Christ-followers would NOT make non-believers **thirsty** for the gospel?

A: The candidate or party they supported in an election

- Please God, would the world know followers of Jesus more for the FORMER and less for the LATTER.

What happens if believers become less “salty” and more “earthly”?

Jesus said, “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Luke 14:34-35

Jesus said, “You [second person plural] are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket [bowl], but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

Matthew 5:14-15

Qualities of Light

1. Visible
2. Can't be ignored
3. Shows the way
4. Brings peace, security
5. Combats the darkness

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- Each **word** and **phrase** spoken by the Savior carries weight and gives guidance to His followers

Serving Jesus Involves the Body of Believers

Jesus said, “Let **your** [second person plural] light shine before men in such a way that they may see **your** [second person plural] good works, and glorify **your** [second person plural] Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- There is great power in MULTIPLE lights shining together

Jesus said, “**Let your light** shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” John 8:12
- The light within followers of Jesus is actually Jesus Himself

Jesus said, “Let your light **shine** before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- How well do I reflect the light of Jesus?
- Are we proclaiming Jesus in the public arena?

Jesus said, “Let your light shine **before men** in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- Go public with your faith... live it and speak it

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- In what ways can you minister to others who are hurting?
- How can you use your gifts and resources to bless others?
- What “good works” has God called you to?

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and **glorify** your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

- δοξάζω *doxazo* – Greek verb meaning “to praise, magnify, celebrate”

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify **your Father who is in heaven.**” Matthew 5:16

- When observed honestly, are we seeking to GLORIFY ourselves or a candidate or a political party?
- What words and actions glorify the Father?
- What words and actions DO NOT glorify the Father?

Romans 12-13

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13

Bless those who persecute you; **bless and do not curse**. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.
Romans 12:14-16

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord [Deuteronomy 32:35]. “But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good.**

Romans 12:17-21

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing [higher] authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. Romans 13:1-2

- God uses governing authorities as a check upon man's sinful desires and tendencies. Government can be an effective tool in resisting the effects of man's fallenness.

In the United States, the ultimate authority for government is vested in the citizens, according to the U.S. Constitution. That means God has appointed us as citizens to exercise authority properly, as service to Him and to others. That would mean that our job as citizens is to play our proper role in upholding a standard of loving our neighbors as ourselves, and insisting on a government that reflects biblical values for government. God's direction for maximum human flourishing is in creating a self-governing society.

The pillars of self-governance are 1) rule of law 2) consent of the governed and 3) private property.

For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword [punishment] for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath [just punishment] on the one who practices evil.

Romans 13:3-4

But what if the government leaders are evil?

“Our Savior suffered under Pontius Pilate, one of the worst Roman governors Judea ever had; and Paul under Nero, the worst Roman Emperor. And neither our Lord nor His apostle denied or reviled the ‘authority!’”

- William R. Newell

Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, **but also for conscience' sake** [knowing it is the right thing to do]. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom [toll or tariff] to whom custom; fear [reverence] to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Romans 13:5-7

Apostle Paul's idea is that Christians should be the best citizens of all. Even though they are loyal to God before they are loyal to the state, Christians are good citizens because they are honest, give no trouble to the state, pay their taxes, and – most importantly – pray for the state and the rulers.

- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/romans-13/>

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:8-10

Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now **salvation is nearer to us than when we believed**. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. **Let us behave properly** as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. Romans 13:11-14

Titus 3

Remind them [repeatedly] **to be subject to rulers, to authorities**, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed [be active not passive], **to malign** [blaspheme] **no one**, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. Titus 3:1-2

Daniel 2

Daniel said, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; **He removes kings and establishes kings;** He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.”

Daniel 2:20-22

1 Peter 2

Submit yourselves **for the Lord's sake** to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. **For such is the will of God** that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. **Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.** 1 Peter 2:13-17

1 Peter 2:17 gives a summary of Christian citizenship

1. **Christ-followers are to respect** (*timēsate*, “honor, value, esteem”; cf. *timēn*, “respect, honor”) **everyone** (cf. Romans 12:10; 13:7). Believers should be conscious of the fact that each human has been uniquely created in God’s image.
2. **Christ-followers are to love the brotherhood of believers**, their brothers and sisters in Christ. God’s family members should love each other.
3. **Christ-followers are to fear God**. The verb “fear” (*phobeisthe*) here does not mean to be in terror, but awe and reverence that leads to obedience. One will never truly respect people until he reverences God.
4. **Christ-followers are to honor the king**. “Honor” is from *timaō*, the verb used at the beginning of this verse. The respect or “honor” due to all is especially to be given to those God has placed in authority (cf. “the king” in 1 Peter 2:13 and “governors” in v. 14; cf. Romans 13:1).

- Bible Knowledge Commentary

What can believers do in the political arena?

- Pray for your leaders and your community
- Be informed about the issues
- Be involved and let your voice be heard
- Vote for candidates who best express Biblical values
- Run for office if God leads you
- Live as the salt of Jesus, making people thirsty for Him
- Live as the light of Jesus, bringing glory to the Father

What do we do first?

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

- If we are PRAYING for our leaders, we won't have the time or the desire to ADORE them or HATE them or RIDICULE them or IGNORE them.

Always keep in mind...

- For **our citizenship is in heaven**, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Philippians 3:20-21
- For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to **the kingdom of His beloved Son**, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
Colossians 1:13-14