

VOTING WITH YOUR CONSCIENCE IN A WORLD OF CONTRADICTIONS

Since a Christian's worldview is shaped by his faith in God, we should make the strength of a candidate's moral values (represented in his past history, personal integrity, and character) the litmus test to measure his worthiness for office rather than strictly his economic policies or political acumen. Once in office, a leader with a secular worldview is not likely to change his stripes. Morality is woven into a man's character. Character is the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. A leader's moral convictions, or lack thereof, filters into his thinking and eventually surfaces in his positions. An good example is Abraham Lincoln. From his reading of Genesis 1:27, Lincoln reasoned that black people were made in the image of God and entitled to the same rights and privileges as white people. Therefore he would address slavery as a moral issue.

Moral Character

Godly character matters in the eyes of the Lord. Moral character is not a new criterion, because over and over again our forefathers stressed the importance of virtue in officeholders. You have a sense that God is confirming what they said, because 186 years ago Noah Webster's words bear truth today:

*"When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty. If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made not for the public good so much as for the selfish or local purposes."*¹

And Samuel Adams, the Father of the Revolution, said,

"But neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend to the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue, and who, so far as his power and influence extend, will not suffer a man to be chosen into an office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man."² (See Ex. 18:21.)

Even revivalist Charles Finney agreed, an American Presbyterian minister in the Second Great Awakening (1790-1800), saying,

¹ William J. Federer, *America's God and Country*, p 679.

² W. Cleon Skousen, *5000 Year Leap-The 28 Great Ideas that Changed the World*, p. 59

“The time has come that Christians must vote for honest men... God cannot sustain this free and blessed country, which we love and pray for, unless the church will take right ground.”³

A candidate for high office who does not have moral scruples to guide his decision making may not respect boundaries of his authority once he acquires power. The one criterion that is a window to a prospective leader’s thinking on how he will lead once acquiring power is found in his character. Character reveals the values he lives by, his regard for the rights of others, his respect for laws, and how he responds to opposition and conflict, injustices, and needs of people. A person who has a history of lying, defaming, cheating, covering up truths lacks moral character and these traits will follow him. *“For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed”* (Jn. 3:20 NKJV). On the other hand, a person having integrity is authentic, approachable, apologetic when he crosses moral boundaries, and troubled by injustices. This person is more likely to rule in the fear of God. *“But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God”* (Jn. 3:21 NKJV).

Thus character rooted in moral underpinnings is the most important criteria God’s people need when casting their vote, more important than any promised appointment or policy change. We should not take lightly our duty to choose moral leaders, because the chosen leader’s moral values and worldview will shape the direction of the country far beyond bread and butter issues! President Franklin Roosevelt said,

“The Presidency is not merely an administrative office. That’s the least of it. It is more than an engineering job, efficient or inefficient. It is pre-eminently a place of moral leadership. All our great Presidents were leaders of thought at times when certain historic ideas in the life of the nation had to be clarified.”⁴

Voting with Your Conscience toward God

When you pull out of the worldly system, and put your trust in the Lord, how should you vote when you cannot identify with the platform of none of the candidates?

First and foremost is to walk away from the inflammatory rhetoric. If you feed your spirit on contemptuous remarks, they may become your “talking points.” Rather feed off of God’s Word and engraft it into your thought process as a way of life. If you build a foundation on the truths of God’s Word, you will not be moved away from it. It will come back to you and pull you away from the snare that Jesus said would come to all those who dwell upon the face of the earth (Lk. 21:34-35). Discernment will guide you on the right path. Your conscience will speak and you will know instinctively who to vote for. *“Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding,”* you will find it, *“For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding”* (Prov. 2:3, 6 NKJV).

³ Sam Bartholomew and Stephen Mansfield, *American Destiny-God’s Role in America*. Nashville: American Destiny Press, ©2001, p. 65.

⁴ FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, governor of New York, as reported by *The New York Times Magazine*, September 11, 1932, p. 2.

It is not just a candidate's stated position that should guide us in casting our vote, but his character. Morality, decency, integrity are essential characteristics we should look for as well as political views. The following truths help us to move in this direction and provide moral clarity so that we can cast our vote with our conscience in tact.

- ***“You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.”*** (Matt. 7:15-16, 18 NKJV). The tree has to be healthy to produce good fruit. A diseased tree produces little or no fruit or fruit of poor quality. A person who sows moral values into the earth is likened to a tree with a healthy root system capable of producing good fruit (Psa. 1:2-3). In contrast, a person who sows discord into the earth is a false witness and cannot produce good fruit (Prov. 6:19) because his root system is decayed.

We cannot always tell a person's moral character and motives. He can come to us in sheep's clothing, or present with a charismatic personality, while disguising true motives, but there is one way we can tell whether his fruit is authentic.

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt. 12:34 NKJV). Jesus went on to say that the words of a man's own mouth would either justify him or condemn him (verse 37). Works tend to follow words. You can tell the values by which a person lives by the “abundance” or excess that comes out of his mouth. The abundance releases the intentions, burdens, goals and philosophies of his heart. If you examine the abundance of his words, they leave a trail so you can connect the dots. By exploring and then weighing carefully his worldview and history, you can know the truthfulness of his testimonies and how he is likely to govern and conduct himself. A lifestyle driven by a strong moral compass is the greatest criteria by which we can judge a candidate's integrity and veracity of his declarations. This is why Jesus warned his followers to take heed to what they hear (Mk. 4:24). See article entitled *“Be Careful What You Hear.”* [Click here: http://www.freeatlastministries.us/web/articles.aspx](http://www.freeatlastministries.us/web/articles.aspx)

- ***“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful”*** (Psa. 1:1). According to the Hebrew Dictionary, the word scornful means “to boast, mock deride, express contempt.” Do you wonder where all of the torrent of hatred and revenge comes from in the public forum? Words unfitly (indecently) spoken. Consider the measure of the man by how he treats other people, especially his counterparts and detractors. If he spreads discord as a strategy rather than a slip of the tongue, he is giving you a window into his soul and the values or lack of values he will bring with him. The next principle tells you what to do.
- ***“Do not enter the path of the wicked.... Avoid it, do not travel on it. Turn away from it and pass on”*** (Prov. 4:14-15 NKJV). Be separate and touch not the unclean thing. When you perceive a corrupt intent or thought process at work, separate from it. *“Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge”* (Prov. 19:27).

So what should we do in the midst of so much contradictions?

- ***“...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”*** (Matt. 6:33 NKJV). We come into greater revelation, grace (ability), knowledge of God, and deliverance, *“...for the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day”* (Phil. 4:18).

Written policy positions and verbal promises are not the only criteria to judge the fitness of a candidate; the strength of a candidate’s moral convictions and respect for foundational values are two of the greatest litmus tests to determine the direction he will take the country. Do not let other voices rob you of the liberty you possess to think for yourself; seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to distinguish truth from error and not be deluded by false and misleading testimony.

So the day arrives when you must choose a candidate in a bitterly contested election. Before you cast your vote, pray that God removes the smokescreen from your eyes that may be blinding you to the truth so that you can clearly understand what each candidate stands for and how they will likely govern. This is a prayer God will answer without raising one candidate over the other, for He leaves that decision to you. You may perceive some inconsistencies in the representation of a candidate you initially favored. Once you know the governing philosophy and moral character of each, you will know for whom you should cast your vote. Listen to the still small voice in your conscience speak. If your intended choice deviates in any respect from the truth God has revealed to you, let your conscience be your guide. Follow the Lord.

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