

# Voices: How does the Christian vote? Part 3

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*This is Part 3 in a series written by Ellis Orozco regarding Christian civic engagement. Part 1 is available [here](#). Part 2 is [here](#).*

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*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Jesus to his disciples, [Matthew 28:18](#)).*

My New Testament 101 seminary professor was a rising star among New Testament scholars. The first day of class, he told us ours was a survey course and would not be scholarly, because none of us had spent enough time with the text. “The text” he referenced was the New Testament Scriptures.

I was a little offended.

I was in my second year of seminary studies. I was raised in the church and rarely had missed a single day of Sunday school. After God called me away from engineering to ministry, I started a rigorous routine of daily Bible reading and, by the time I sat in his classroom, had read the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation several times. I felt I was pretty familiar with “the text.”

I was wrong.

After a few days of lectures, I was painfully aware I had not spent enough time with “the text.” He was referencing stories, teachings and nuances in the New Testament that at times I was vaguely familiar with and other times I had no clue what he was talking about. By the end of the first week

of classes I was crying, “I haven’t spent enough time with the text!”

## The Christian dilemma

*“Thus says the LORD, ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the LORD”* ([Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)).

In developing a biblical-theological approach to political engagement, most Christians agree the Bible should be our roadmap and the Holy Spirit our guide. However, a growing number of Christians don’t seem to spend much time with either.

According to a [2021 research project conducted by Barna](#) in partnership with the American Bible Society, just over one-third of U.S. adults (34 percent) read the Bible once a week or more, while half (50 percent) read the Bible less than twice a year.

The report also states only 9 percent of Americans read the Bible daily, while 25 percent read it weekly, and 38 percent never read it at all.

Other Barna research has found the average American struggles to name the four Gospels, more than two or three of Jesus’ disciples, or more than five of the Ten Commandments.

“No wonder people break the Ten Commandments all the time,” pollster George Barna said. “They don’t know what they are.”

The Christian dilemma in America is a biblical-theological framework for political engagement is completely dependent on a biblical worldview even most Christians could not articulate, because they simply haven’t spent

enough time with “the text.”

Rampant biblical illiteracy has produced an American Christianity that boasts of her strength and her wealth and her political power but does not know the Lord. This dilemma is vitally important for understanding the next Christian principle for political engagement (See [Part 2](#) for principle No. 1).

## **2. Christians should always strive for consistency.**

*“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules’” (Jesus on the Pharisees, [Matthew 15:7-9](#)).*

Too many Christians are inconsistent in the application of biblical principles. We pick and choose which Bible verses we prioritize, and any verses that challenge our predetermined ideology either are ignored or gutted of their original meaning.

This minimization of passages that mitigate against our politics is accomplished in one of several ways. Sometimes, they are spiritualized in a way that rids them of their obvious and original purpose.

Other times, they are ripped from their context and squeezed into a meaning foreign to the gospel but congruent with our political ideology. Most often, they simply are ignored and relegated to the ash heap of Old Testament Scriptures we no longer consider relevant.

Scripture passages that speak to the way we are to treat foreigners, care for the poor, accept the marginalized and love the enemy largely are ignored or diminished through crafty rationalizations.

For instance, most Christians believe God created every human life in his image ([Genesis 1:26](#)) and that he fashions each life in the womb ([Jeremiah 1:5](#)). God knows us before we ever are known.

I believe the Bible teaches that perspective on life. Therefore, I unashamedly am pro-life and have advocated in favor of legislation and programs that help prevent unwanted pregnancies and support at-risk pregnant women. I care about the life of the mother, as well as the life of the baby.

I've witnessed a fundamental inconsistency in many of my pro-life friends. They are adamantly against abortion, yet seem mostly unconcerned about other important pro-life issues—such as poverty, criminal justice, addiction, racism, gun violence (especially against children) and environmental care.

These serious issues have the potential to destroy lives just as surely as abortion.

## **Inconsistent pro-life stance**

Critics will say Christians seem to think life begins at conception and ends at birth. I do not believe this is true of most Christians, but I can understand how some would get that impression.

For instance, the Global Humanitarian Aid Act proposes the allocation of additional funds to support humanitarian efforts in areas affected by conflict, natural disasters and extreme poverty.

The Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience Act addresses the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities and aims to protect vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of climate change.

The Global Poverty Reduction Act allocates funds toward poverty reduction

programs in developing countries, focusing on providing access to education, healthcare, clean water and basic infrastructure to marginalized communities worldwide.

The Safe Migration and Refugee Protection Act recognizes the global refugee crisis and seeks to establish comprehensive guidelines for the safe migration and protection of refugees.

Each of these are pro-life legislation that can be defended forcefully with both Old and New Testament teachings. Yet many self-proclaimed pro-life congressional leaders have voted against them or sought to diminish their funding greatly.

Sadder still, I suspect many pro-life Christians would be against some of these legislative bills, because they are backed by “woke liberals.”

I have only one bit of advice for those Christians who feel this way: Don't read the [Sermon on the Mount](#). It will ruin your day.

We must strive to be consistent with our moral outrage, lest we become the hypocrites Jesus routinely excoriated.

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