Voices: How does the Christian vote? Part 2

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

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"But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns" ([Mark 8:33](#), NIV).

Despite their belief in democracy, the founding fathers accepted and endorsed limits on voting.

The U.S. Constitution originally left it to states to determine who would be qualified to vote in elections. For decades, state legislatures generally restricted voting to white males who owned property. Some states also employed religious tests to ensure only Christian men could vote.

Almost 200 years of protests, political debate and judicial litigation brought voting rights to non-property owners, non-Christians, non-whites, non-English speakers, females and, in 1971, citizens as young as 18. The reasoning for the latter was if they could fight and die in Vietnam, they should be able to vote.

Along the way, numerous obstacles were devised to keep the newly approved voters away from the polls. Literacy tests, poll taxes, English-language requirements and more were aimed at suppressing the vote among people of color, immigrants, low-income populations and women. All eventually were ruled unconstitutional.

The Christian responsibility to vote

The point is your right to vote has been a long, hard-fought struggle and should be approached with a sober commitment to responsible participation.

As a Christian, that responsibility includes approaching the privilege with the spirit of Christ and from a Christ-centered perspective. Jesus is our foundation, the Bible is our roadmap, and the Holy Spirit is our guide.

I never would tell you *who* to vote for. Nor would I tell you which political party to support. As of November 2022, there were at least 53 distinct ballot-qualified political parties in the United States, and none of them have cornered the market on Christian values or ideals.

The Christian framework for voting & political engagement

What I will offer are three Christian-based principles that should guide your vote and serve as a framework for political engagement. I will examine the first in this article and the other two in the next and (hopefully) final installment in this series.

1. Christians should place a high value on truth-telling.

Christians profess to be a people of the truth. It is core to our faith. We proclaim to have good news that is true. We are devoted to the one who said, "You will know the *truth*, and the *truth* will set you free" ([John 8:32](#), emphasis mine).

In contrast, we understand God hates lies. The New Testament word for

"devil" means "slanderer, false-accuser, or liar." Jesus called the devil " a liar and the father of lies" ([John 8:44](#)). When you peddle in lies and half-truths, you align yourself against Jesus.

We always should demand clear truth-telling from ourselves, as well as all our leaders.

There is a danger in becoming so enamored with one candidate that you begin to love the candidate more than the truth. We all are guilty of hearing what we want to hear and ignoring that which might contradict our preconceived notions or damage our political persuasions.

When you agree with certain politicians on so many issues, you might be tempted to excuse them when they are less than truthful.

Jesus said, "I am the way, *the truth*, and the life" ([John 14:6](#), emphasis mine).

Jesus' path to God was not tied to the Mosaic law or sacrificial system centered in Jerusalem. It was through his own personhood. That personhood—the Way—was life-giving, because it was grounded in truth.

When you choose your favorite political candidate over the truth, you have chosen him or her over Jesus. The Bible calls this idolatry.

Part of the problem is we have elevated winning above everything else. Winning becomes more important than the truth.

Gaining the world, losing your soul

Jesus said, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" ([Mark 8:36](#)).

The occasion for that statement was his disciples' rejection of the idea of a suffering Messiah. They didn't want a Messiah whose earthly end was

execution at the hands of the Roman Empire. They wanted a Messiah who conquered the Roman Empire. They wanted a Messiah who was a "winner."

And Jesus asked them, "What good is it to 'win' against the Romans, if it means 'losing' the integrity of the divine mission?"

What good is it for you to post a hard-hitting zinger that destroys your political opponent, if in the process, you perpetuate a lie? It might feel good in the moment and even give you a temporary "win," but ultimately, you are chipping away at the heart of the gospel message.

When you jettison the truth in order to win, you might win the election, but you lost your soul. In our zeal to support our candidate of choice we can fall into the trap of spreading and perpetuating lies.

Fact-checking

For instance, I consistently get emails and Facebook notices from Christian friends who forward or re-post outright lies.

It usually takes no more than three mouse clicks to confirm the post to be a complete fabrication—a poorly photoshopped lie. My question: Why didn't the Christian fact-check it before he or she posted it?

Christians are supposed to be lovers of the truth. Make the search for the truth more important than taking your political opponent down a few notches or winning an election.

There are several good tools for spotting the lies. Snopes, Factcheck and Politifact are great places to start. FotoForensics is a website that can determine if a picture has been photoshopped or AI generated.

Put your political emotions aside and take a moment to search for the truth. Do not be a party to perpetuating lies. Your Christian witness is severely damaged when you consistently perpetuate lies and support those who lie.

Don't sacrifice the truth for your political ideology. Nothing short of the Christian witness is at stake.

EDITOR'S NOTE: [Media Bias/Fact Check](#) is another fact-checking website with a high reliability rating.

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