

How Should Christians Engage in Politics?

Be Truthful But Gentle and Reasonable

James 3:13-18; Titus 2:11-3:5; 1 Peter 2:9-12, 17

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I. Be Truthful But Be Gentle And Reasonable As You Engage In Politics

James 3:17 “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason...”

The word “gentle” is a beautiful word that’s almost impossible to translate into the English language, because like a beautiful gem, it has so many facets to it.

It means to be humbly patient and steadfastly gentle, even in the face of dishonor, disgrace, mistreatment, and persecution. It refuses to lash out with hatred, malice, or revenge, but stays courteous, kind, and considerate despite the way it is treated.

We’re not supposed to be like the Democrats, the Republicans, or like any other political group. We’re supposed to be like Jesus.

Jonathan Edwards called gentleness, “a lamblike, dovelike spirit of Jesus Christ,” that is “the true and distinguishing disposition of the hearts of Christians.”

Being gentle is one of the most Christ-like, Christian things we could be.

“Open to reason” is actually one word in the Greek that means to be easy to live with and work with versus hard and stubborn. It’s a word that means to hear all sides of a question without compromising your own conviction. In other words, you know how to disagree without being rude and disagreeable.

None of us naturally have these qualities! **Titus 2:11-3:5** shows us what we can do to cultivate being gentle and reasonable.

A. When Your Hope Is In King Jesus Your Behavior Is Under Control

Titus 2:12-13 “...training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives in this present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ...”

Notice the connection between **v. 12** and **13**. When your hope is in King Jesus, your behavior will look like **v. 12**.

When you’re really looking unto Him instead of looking unto Washington, you begin to do what **v. 12** is talking about. You live self-controlled and upright in this present age.

He'll help us in this present age to be engaged and to be distinctly Christian as we do it. The hallmark of Christian behavior is self-control, because we have enough people out of control already.

Idolatry has created this out-of-control, political culture we have today because when you put your hope in politics, you'll freak out and justify any kind of behavior if it is threatened in any way. You'll be filled with anger, fear, and anxiety because your hope is in the wrong place.

B. When You Remember Who You Were You'll Be Patient With Who They Are

Titus 3:3-5 "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit..."

We're not supposed to hate unbelievers. That's what characterized us before God saved us. We're supposed to be characterized by love and mercy even in the face of scary things they are doing and saying.

II. Be A Good Steward Of The Political Freedom That We Still Have

We should be politically engaged because the issues today are affecting whether or not people created in the image of God can flourish. We should care about abortion, racism, education, drug addiction, human trafficking, gender issues, and the institution of marriage because these issues impact human beings created in the image of God.

To neglect the democratic process that God has given us is to neglect a stewardship. God has used Christians throughout history to engage in politics for the good of others.

III. Be Focused On Our First And Highest Calling

1 Peter 2:9-12, 17 brings this point into sharp focus.

As Christians we should work for the sake of love and justice to make our world and this nation a better place. But we have to remember that our first and highest calling is not to make this world a better place, but to point to the One who's going to remake it into a perfect place one day!

We may not be able to out-argue other people and they may not be persuaded by our books and articles, but we can love them with the supernatural love that God has shown us in Christ and we can point them to our Savior who can save them from the eternal destruction and judgment that is coming if they don't know Him.

That's a much bigger crisis than anything going on politically right now.