

# How Should Christians Engage in Politics? Be Peaceable

**James 3:13 – 4:3; Matthew 5:1-12**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / August 25, 2024*

What does God want from us in regards to politics? Not apathy, not rage, but to be joyfully, peacefully, and hopefully engaged!

What would it look like to be peacefully engaged or to be a peacemaker in the midst of so much political conflict?

## I. Start With Your Own Heart

**Psalm 139:23-24** “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; <sup>24</sup>and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”

Ask God to show you what you’re not seeing about you. Why are you so angry, so fearful, so defensive, so ready to attack, and so quick to cancel or cut off someone who used to be your friend just because they’re not seeing it or saying it just like you?

**James 4:1** “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?”

There’s a war inside of you long before war breaks out around you with other people!

That word “passion” is what fuels the internal rage today, because we’ve got passion in all the wrong places. People – including God’s people – are passionate about earthly causes, political parties, systems, and conspiracy theories, but are passive about being peacemakers.

But that’s not what **James 3:17** says about the wisdom from above.

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

The word “peaceable” in that verse is the Greek word “Eirene” which was the opposite of the Greek word “Polemis” that meant war.

From “polemis” we get the English word “polemic” that means a controversial argument where people begin to attack each other over the issue.

When having conversations and or even debates with others, we should not be the ones going polemic on other people where it moves from talking about the issue to attacking the person.

## II. Get Your Marching Orders From Jesus

There’s no better place to see Jesus giving us marching orders than from the “Sermon on the Mount” where He unpacks what it looks like to be the people of God who live for the kingdom of God instead of talking and acting just like everybody else!

In **Matthew 5:1-12**, we read what Jesus thinks are the distinctive characteristics of His people that set them apart from all of the screaming, fearful, hateful, arrogant, and violent chaos of this world.

### A. Peacemakers Aim At Humility Instead Of Humiliation

He's called us to be peacemakers who are known for love. You can't do that without humility. Peacemaking, by necessity, requires a posture of humility that refuses to vilify the opponent while you glorify yourself.

**James 4:10-11** "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. <sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law."

This applies to social media as well because thundering emails and vicious social media posts where you unload and give everybody a piece of your mind will never lead to the "harvest of righteousness" that James is talking about in our passage.

It may feel good in the moment to win a verbal skirmish online, but Jesus has not called us to live for a moment. He's called us to live for something momentous – His kingdom, His glory, and His radical calling on our lives to be peacemakers.

### B. Peacemakers Are Focused On Loving Individuals Instead Of Condemning Entire Groups

Our culture has shifted into wholesale condemnation and blame as the solution for all the brokenness and sin that's actually happened one person and one choice at a time.

**Matthew 5:43-45** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

Peacemakers, who are kingdom people and sons and daughters of God, love, bless, pray, and do good to those who spitefully use them in the midst of chaos and violence.

Jesus knew that wide-spread cultural change only takes place as the result of a heart change that happens one person at a time!

### C. Peacemakers Are Not In A Hurry But Have The Long View In Mind

If you get sucked into a frenzy you will miss what matters most- people in need of Jesus and His kingdom!

"I often meet people whose reaction to the events of life is to sit down somewhere and wait for the Lord to act. This is not a good plan. On the other hand, some people are totally frantic in their endeavors. They are trying to take care of everything as if somehow the destiny of the world depended upon them. Every so often, though, I will meet someone who has grasped the wonder of this truth. There is about him or her a fragrance, a busied restfulness, because they recognize that the providence of God does not remove them from the realm of responsibility."

~Alistair Begg, *My Times Are in God's Hands*

We want to engage, but not be frantic and frenzied as if it's all up to us to make it happen.

Peacemakers have a marathon mentality because they know that until His kingdom has fully come with a new heaven and new earth, we will never be finished with any of the sin issues that are corrupting our culture and crushing people made in His image.