



**OHIO
MINISTRY
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2020

Navigating the Election Results



A biblical & Godly perspective



Are You Ready?

A powerful opportunity is coming for the people of God to showcase His peace and love to a world that will definitely be watching!

Soon, the United States will finish casting votes for its next president. The control of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and a slew of state and local offices will also be decided. As in the past, we may know the results on Tuesday night, Wednesday morning, or perhaps much later. Remember those hanging chads in Florida?

For months now, many Christians have been praying for God's direction for our nation as it relates to the leaders of our democracy. Much is at stake for a wide range of policy positions, regulations, appropriations, the judiciary, taxes, defense, immigration, and international relations.

Two things appear to be certain at this point:

1) Either the Democrats or the Republicans will take control of the White House for the next four years.

2) Half the country will be very relieved while the other half will be very upset.

As usual, there will be no shortage of finger pointing once the results are known. Inside and outside the church, many will be curious or even angry about the role they think Christians played. Did we vote the right way? Did we show up to the polls in strong enough numbers?

If we're not careful, followers of Jesus can get caught up in the same mentality as the world, believing that all is won or lost depending on which earthly leaders are in power. While we rightly urge believers to pray, to vote, and get involved since elections often have serious consequences, we never lose sight of our heavenly citizenship.

Election season gives Christians a divine opportunity to demonstrate that our trust and our hope rests squarely on a different leader: a King of kings and Lord of lords who is ever present, all-powerful, loving, and flawless!

Our reactions in the coming days will either underscore our belief that we are heavenly ambassadors to a world that is not our home or they will reveal that our confidence has been tragically misplaced. It is a false premise that human leaders and institutions, no matter their potential for good or evil, determine the peace of our souls.

5 Questions to Ask This Election Season

Here are **five questions** that help reveal our potential to seize the coming opportunity, pointing our friends and family toward trust and hope in our loving Savior in the midst of cultural chaos:

1) Whether the candidates I prefer were elected or not, are my speech, actions, and social media activity revealing, or tarnishing, the full nature of Christ?

New Testament disciples had great earthly reason to fret and fuss over the ungodly nature of local and national leaders. Yet, through every curve ball thrown at them, including unjustified persecution, they never deviated from demonstrating the gospel while living at peace with their fellow citizens and maintaining honor for government offices, even when the seats were occupied by parties or persuasions noted for troubling attributes. (Romans 13:1-5)

Jesus said the Holy Spirit came to convict the world of sin. Further, to avoid misinterpretation, He identified the sin: not believing in Jesus (John 16:8-9). When we bypass the Jesus conversation and start yelling at pagans in Jesus' name about their corrupt politics or morals, we deviate from both scriptural teaching and example. It's like screaming at a baby who is too young to understand our instructions. Without the Holy Spirit inside, nonbelievers lack the capacity to comprehend why Christians feel the way they do about daily choices, even when it makes perfect sense to us. Watch what happens when our energies are channeled to proclaim the gospel instead!

2) Am I spending more time in prayer for government leaders than I am criticizing them or worrying about them?

Throughout Scripture, believers influenced godless government leaders to change course, act justly, and encourage peace. Joseph guided Pharaoh, Esther persuaded the Persian king, and Paul influenced the Philippian jailer. Flawed leaders can have a change of heart while in office that blesses the nation in ways no one would have predicted and which glorifies God! Prayer opportunities abound for the saints to unify their hearts and their faith in this regard.

Let's be honest. It is not the world's fault that we choose to spend hours on social media, reading one disturbing news report after another. Regardless of who occupies the White House for the next four years, America will be a much better place if believers spend as much time on their knees as they do on Facebook and Instagram. Don't like what you see on CNN or Fox? Change the narrative. It isn't the world's fault when a lackluster church fails to produce an abundance of New Testament headlines!

3) Are brothers and sisters in Christ who hear and see my witness more likely to feel at peace or more likely to be anxious?

America needs no further auditions for the mass choir of confusion. The lofts are filled to capacity with lost souls belting discouragement and disdain at the top of their lungs. What a colossal waste of our precious time and energy when we actually add to the sense of despair. Instead, out of the abundance of a faith-filled heart, we must speak with clarity and graciously reveal heaven's plan. When church leaders join in fomenting hopeless negativity, they signal to other saints that we might as well follow the world instead of lighting the way toward Jesus.

It should be evident by now that people who love the same Jesus see some issues very differently. Paul's occasional rebukes of certain believers were done in the context of an audience of the saints. By contrast, Twitterness fosters bitterness. When we apply pressure publicly and rebuke our fellow saints, whether we think they are too vocal, too silent, or too misguided, we step into territory that has no foundation in Scripture. Further, we demonstrate that public ridicule versus private conversation must be the way to go. Others follow our example and the discord and anxiety only grows. We can reject that failed approach. The less fractured we are, the more we are able to infuse God's love into a hurting culture.

4) Does our public treatment of other Christians maximize the potential for Jesus to be discovered by a world that is tuning in to watch?

Our reputation as Bible believers is hindered every time we hurl accusations and rebuke at fellow saints in a public fashion. If we are serious about change, we will handle confrontation the biblical way. Lobbing insults at believers across the internet often says way more about

our own immaturity and ignorance than it does about the alleged flaws of our intended target.

Matthew 18:15-17 gives no permission or encouragement to speak ill of brothers and sisters when we know we have nonbelievers in our audience, especially when we fail to discuss our concerns with them directly and discreetly in advance. By contrast, the world will know who Jesus is when they see His followers acting and speaking as one unified body (John 17:20-21). Of course they aren't behaving properly either. No matter, you lead the way!

5) Is it just words with me, or is it actually my conviction that God is on the throne?

After all the hard work is done to exercise my American rights and responsibilities, do I believe that the Spirit of God is still seeking hearts to worship the Father in spirit and in truth? When could any believer ever point to a D or an R attached to an office holder's name and accurately say, "That was a time in our history when the nation was free of abuse, degradation, selfishness, murder, prejudice, addiction or poverty"?

Regardless of who controls the White House, congress, or the statehouse, 2021 has every potential for the unified church to see God's kingdom come, His will be done, and the greatest harvest of souls since our nation was founded! Our broken state and nation are waiting for God's people to step forward with compassion and zeal to see hurting people forgiven, healed, and whole, something the best of human institutions could never provide. May God empower us by His Spirit so our speech, our behaviors, and our attitudes reflect this holy confidence.

