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**Loving You No Matter What
Your Political Views Are**

Love. No Matter What

Rick Long

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Proverbs 19:11 (TPT)

A wise person demonstrates patience, for mercy means holding your tongue. When you are insulted, be quick to forgive and forget it, for you are virtuous when you overlook an offense.
(Memorize)

When it comes to the topic of politics, Christians have a tendency to go to one of two extremes, both of them wrong. On the one hand you have those Christians who see government and politics as “secular” and therefore of no concern to Christians. They believe we should leave it to “them” to worry about so that we can get on with the business of the church. The other extreme is that we need to win the argument about what and how the government should operate, even if it means being mean and nasty like everyone seems to be these days. The thinking seems to be that the best way to change what is wrong with America is to get the “right” (pun intended) people into political office so that they can enforce the morality that is revealed in the Bible. If we could just go back to the way it was 50, 60, or even 100 years ago all our problems as a country would be solved. The truth, as it usually is, is somewhere in the middle: We need to participate as citizens of America and use the power that God has given us in this country to select our leaders. If we abdicate the government to unbelievers by not being involved, then what kinds of laws will they pass? On the other hand, if we are always arguing with people at the top of our lungs, how can we expect them to listen to us when we share the gospel with them? It is also important that we use the freedom of speech that we still have to speak God’s truth because the solution to all of America’s problems is spiritual in nature; we need Christ in our lives and the truth of the Bible to guide us.

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE –
SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISUSS.**

Proverbs 14:34 (NIV)

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

Proverbs 29:2 (NIV)

When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.

1. What is government? What is politics? Are they the same, or are they different? Does God have anything to do with government? Does God say in His word that there is one type of government that is better than all others? Based on the above verses, what do you think God would consider a good and a bad government?

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Answer – Government is the power to control the actions of other people. The family is a type of government because God gave parents the authority to control their children’s actions. God is government, because all authority to control other people comes from Him and he has ultimate control over everyone’s actions. God created government. Politics is the art or science of governing; it is the method being used to control the people of a nation. There are those who believe a dictatorship is the best way to control people, so that is their politics. Nowhere in scripture does God say that one form of government is better than another, but the most basic form of government is God directly ruling each individual and holding them accountable for their actions. This is called individual self-government.

Romans 13:1-5 (NIV)

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

2. Answer the following questions based on the above passage. What does Paul tell us is the source of all human government? What do you think about this idea? What does Paul say is true if you rebel against the government that is over you? Do you think he means this only if you have a good government over you? What government was over Paul and what was it like? God tells us in this passage what the purpose of government should be - what is it?

Answer – God is the source of all human government; its authority comes from Him because he has all authority as the ruler of the universe. Those who rule do so because He allows them to, the good and the bad. Paul was under the government of Rome, which we know was very pagan and very anti-Christian. No matter what, we are to be submissive to whatever authority God has put over us. The only time we have permission to rebel against any authority is when the authority tries to force us to do what we know God has said is wrong or if they try to prevent us from doing what God says is right. The purpose of government is to punish bad behavior and reward good behavior. In other words, to provide justice. When a government promotes injustice, when they fail to punish evil and reward good, that government is not functioning the way God intended.

Ephesians 4:14-15 (NIV)

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

3. Whenever we speak about politics or anything for that matter, with other people, the above passages give us instructions on how to do so. What does the Ephesians passage tell us to do? What do you think it means for your conversation to be full of grace and seasoned with salt? Answer – Our first responsibility is to speak the truth always. We should never be afraid of offending someone with the truth because Jesus always spoke the truth and it always offended those who rejected him. We should never compromise what we know to be the truth from God’s word. At the same time, it says we must communicate the truth using love as our motive; we should never communicate anything in an unloving manner. The way we are to speak to others is found in the Colossians passage. To speak with grace is to speak to people in a way that they do not deserve because grace is getting what you do not deserve. No matter how loud or vile someone gets, we should never speak that way in return. Salt is added to food to enhance the flavor, to make it more attractive. We should speak in such a way as to make the truth attractive to people. We can never do that while shouting at someone or condemning them if they disagree with us.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NIV)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

4. What does Paul urge every Christian to do in regard to those who rule over them? What does he say is the purpose for doing this? What role does the fact that God wants everyone to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth play in how we should pray? Do you think it is important to God that we have the freedom to share the gospel with people? Do you think this passage gives us any insight into whom we should vote?

Answer – Paul tells us that it is our responsibility to pray for those in authority over us. Why? So that they will allow us to live peaceful and godly lives and have the right to live in a way that pleases God. That is the purpose of freedom from God’s point of view; we need to have the freedom to do what is right. We are commanded to share the gospel with the world no matter whether we have permission from the government or not, but it sure makes it a lot easier to do so if we are given the freedom to obey God unhindered by the government. Obviously, we should vote for those who will allow us to do this.

5. How, as Christians, should we decide whom to vote for in an election? What if it seems that it is a choice of two evils, we think the candidates running are all bad? Should a candidate’s personal behavior determine how I vote?

Answer – God is the only person who has the authority to tell us what is morally right and wrong. Therefore, if a person is going to administer justice, which is the purpose of government, they must know what is right and wrong from God’s point of view. No individual has the authority to say that something God says is wrong is right; they also do not have the authority to say something God says is right to do is wrong. Therefore, how a candidate determines what is right and wrong should be the number one factor a Christian should consider when voting for someone. You can usually determine this by listening to what they say the government should or should not do and comparing that with what God says government should or should not do. Obviously if they say government should do things that God says are wrong, that is not a good candidate. If neither candidate seems to be what would be the best, try to determine which one promotes policies that would punish bad behavior and reward good behavior, which is the purpose of government. If a candidate says that what God says is bad is

actually good, then do not vote for them. Although a person's personal behavior reveals their character, it should not be what we base our vote on. Every president who has ever served was a sinner just like everyone else and had their personal faults. Their personal behavior is not the most important thing, the policies that they want to carry out are. It is better to have a person with poor personal character, who promotes good policies, than to have a person with good personal character, who promotes bad policies since it is the policies that affect all of us. Their personal behavior usually does not affect us unless their actions do damage to our country. If both people have the same policies, then obviously I can consider their character to help decide how to vote.

MAKING IT PRACTICAL (OPTIONAL)

Below are some practical exercises to help you have a Biblical view of politics.

Level 1 Challenge: Do you pray for our governmental leaders? If not, begin praying for our leaders to have wisdom and that they would do the right thing based on God's truth. Pray that we will always have the freedom to speak God's truth. Perhaps you could make this a regular matter of prayer in your group.

Level 2 Challenge: Do you vote? If not, you need to because it is the way in which we get good leaders and remove bad leaders; it is your responsibility as a Christian and as an American.

Level 3 Challenge: Have Pastor Mark come to your group and teach his three-week class entitled, "Government and Politics from God's Point of View."

Preparing to Lead Your Group

PRAY for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.

PONDER YOUR PROGRESS after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what did not. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment.

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Going Further is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We have designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is more important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as, "I need to spend more time in prayer." It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spend 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.

- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately, as part of your accountability to the group, you want to commit to personal life change.
- Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessing of success.