

Principles for Election 2024

by Timothy Kroll, President of Woodrow Kroll Ministries

Introduction

This is an update of something I wrote for the 2016 Election while Senior Pastor of Northside Baptist Church {St. Petersburg, FL}. I wish we had mastered these principles 8 years ago, but it seems we haven't yet. Many Christian leaders have weighed in on this matter. Their contributions have been helpful and confusing at the same time since they have advocated so many different positions. Here are some of what I deem to be their best voices:

Quotations

"For years, I have urged Christians to take seriously their obligations as citizens, starting with exercising the right to vote. In the public square and at the ballot box, we must be more engaged, not less. But what happens in a race where Christians are faced with two morally problematic choices? Should voters cast a ballot for the lesser of two evils?...For starters, unless Jesus of Nazareth is on the ballot, any election forces us to choose the lesser of evils."

– **Russell Moore**

"When I see Christians defining deviancy down to justify a political decision, I see a real problem for the church. When I see Christians saying we have license to choose bad men because God chose bad men, I see the sparks of apostasy...The level of fear many of my friends have...has turned to desperation and desire for a protector. But we already have one and neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)" – **Erick Erickson**

"Christians looking for a strong man to protect the church instead of the strongest man who conquered death is a terrible thing to see. Many Christian leaders are engaging in a kind of syncretism, trying to blend patriotism with Christianity. They seemingly argue that if the nation falls, the church falls and for the church to rise the country must rise. But Christ has already risen so the true church is in no danger of falling. The gates of hell shall not prevail."

– **Erick Erickson**



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“Many Christians have it right. There is a real dilemma for their vote in this election. The choice we have before us is no real option.” – Darrell Bock

“So where does that leave us? I will not proclaim a moral must against a person who weighs this no option choice differently than I. In an election with such alternatives, all options fall short of the bar we ought to have. I will not challenge the Christian integrity of the person who feels the weight of the dilemma I have just described and makes a different choice from me, because no choice is good.” – Darrell Bock

“...my vote may conclude that neither candidate represents the world I hope to see where neighbors love one another. That choice is made while recognizing God holds us all accountable for our choices with a multi-layered standard unlike the world...There are no musts in this election when it comes to the candidates we have. The fault is ours corporately. The only musts that exist are to think through our vote now with a sensitive conscience, trust God, withhold our most stringent friendly fire for choices others make, and do much better next time.” – Darrell Bock

“For the past nine presidential elections - intentionally or unintentionally - I have stuck with one clear principle when I go to the voting booth: I do not vote for candidates but for policies.” – Ronnie Floyd

“Yet we must not forget that, from George Washington to Barack Obama, no candidate has ever been perfect or fully acceptable. And at times when the candidates don't measure to our precise measures and tastes, we must be able to see past the names on the ballot and into the underlying issues that really matter...This is not about our endorsing a person by our vote, but about using our vote to endorse the issues we care about. The goal is to elect someone who will represent and stand for us. We don't vote for personality but for policy.” – Ronnie Floyd



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“Yet the problem with this presidential election is that we have been so transfixed with the candidates that we have lost sight of what’s really on the ballot.” – Ronnie Floyd

Sources Quoted

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Floyd, Ronnie (2016, September 29). “We Need to Start Looking Beyond the Candidates.” *Christianity Today*. {Dr. Floyd is the former president of the Southern Baptist Convention}

Erickson, Erick (2016, September 21). “Reconsidering My Opposition to Trump.” *www.theresurgent.com*. {Mr. Erickson is a Christian blogger and media personality}

Biblical Principles

Here are some Biblical Principles that I would encourage you to follow regardless of how you vote, and even if you don’t vote.

First Principle

Trust God – He is always on the throne

1 Peter 1:3-7

3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4 *to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

5 *who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*



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6 *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,*

7 *so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

Don't place your trust in democracy, elections, presidents, congressmen, or judges over your trust in the Lord God Almighty – if you do, that's a form of idolatry.

Cast your vote and support your candidate only as it demonstrates your faith in God not in place of your faith in God.

Second Principle Submission and Honor to Our Authorities 1 Peter 2:13-17

13 *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,*

14 *or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*

15 *For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

16 *Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

17 *Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

Prepare your heart to submit to whomever our next President is.

Choose now to do what is right when you vote even if it means others will do what is wrong when they vote or be enabled to do what is wrong following the vote.

Stop throwing mud or matching dirt for dirt on candidates – you don't bring glory to God by defending one candidate's horrendous attitudes or actions with a display of the other candidate's horrendous attitudes or actions.



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Third Principle Recognize Another's Individual Soul Liberty Romans 14:5-10

5 *One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.*

6 *He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.*

7 *For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself;*

8 *for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

9 *For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

10 *But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.*

Recognize that another Christian, as wise and godly as you (if not more) may come to a different decision on this matter.

By the Spirit of God, come to your own conviction on this matter – no one should take the place of the Spirit leading you to your own conviction.

Fourth Principle Never Violate Your Conscience 1 Corinthians 8:4, 7-10

4 *Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.*

7 *However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.*

8 *But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.*

9 *But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.*



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10 *For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?*

Vote, and only vote, with your convictions and according to your conscience as given by the Spirit.

Never violate your conscience even if another has freedom, in their conscience, to do something you cannot do.

If you can't vote for a candidate with a clear conscience, then don't – regardless of what it means for the election or the other candidate.

Fifth Principle

Choose Eternal over Temporal

Matthew 5:10-16

10 *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 *Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.*

12 *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

13 *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.*

14 *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;*

15 *nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.*

16 *Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

Don't vote for what might be rewarding here at the expense of what will be rewarding for eternity.



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Vote as salt and light – making sure your vote and support of a candidate or policies leads to righteousness in our nation and never darkens the light of our Father’s glory.

Sixth Principle Pursue and Set a Path for Righteousness with Your Vote Proverbs 14:34
14 *Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.*

Vote, as much as possible, for a path of righteousness for our country and continue your pursuit of righteousness regardless of what happens with this election.

Vote for values of righteousness:

Great Commandment / Golden Rule – love others and treat them as you want to be treated (with kindness, gentleness, forgiveness)

Freedom – freedom to worship and live according to the dictates of one’s faith, freedom to speak without reprisal, freedom to succeed or fail based on your efforts

Moral adherence – principles and practices legislatively and judicially enacted that reflect God’s character (holiness, purity, honesty, integrity) and person (glory)

End to racism – bigoted attitudes and policies must end including those impacting our law enforcement, judicial, and immigration systems

End to injustice – a true recognition of the injustice of the past, which can’t be addressed; a genuine correction of injustice in the present, regardless of the cost; a determined pursuit of justice for all in the future

Sanctity of human life – all life must be respected and, if possible, protected: the unborn in the womb, the born who are abandoned (foster care and adoptions must increase), the marginalized (widows, orphans, foreigners), even our enemies



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Fair and equal treatment of all people – people paid the same for the same work regardless of gender or race; every eligible citizen given a viable opportunity to vote while ensuring a secure system that maintains the integrity of all votes

Preservation of Israel – commitment to the continued, secure existence of the nation of Israel (while not approving or accepting of every action of the Israeli government)

Final Quotations

“Imperfect elections and flawed candidates often make for complicated and difficult choices for Christians.” – Evangelical Leaders, change.org

“I’m going to end this article with a quote from famed theologian C.S. Lewis. Found in his 1964 classic Mere Christianity, I’m going to post it in its entirety -and let my readers decide upon their own personal application and commentary. ‘I feel a strong desire to tell you – and I expect you feel a strong desire to tell me – which of these two errors is the worse. That is the devil getting at us. He always sends errors into the world in pairs – pairs of opposites. And he always encourages us to spend a lot of time thinking about which is the worse. You see why, of course? He relies on your extra dislike of the one error to draw you gradually into the opposite one. But do not let us be fooled. We have to keep our eyes on the goal and go straight through between those errors. We have no other concern than that with either of them.’” – Joe Terrell

“American citizens need patience with each other in this difficult political season. Close friends are inevitably going to make different decisions about the election. We still need to respect each other and thank God that we live in a democracy with freedom to differ about politics.” – Wayne Grudem

