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## *The Christian and His/Her Vote*

### *Romans 13:1-7*

In God's providence, we live in a country in which we have an important role in the selection of our political leaders on a regular basis. And while it's true that as Christians, we are not of this world, that we belong to the kingdom of God, that our true citizenship is in heaven and that we live by a different set of principles; nevertheless, God called us and placed us in this world to be a light and salt, to influence this world through the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. Part of our calling and responsibility as Christian citizens is to participate in the political realm.

However, regardless of our political convictions, the truth remains that Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives (1 Cor. 12:3). He is also Lord over all even if unbelievers do not acknowledge it (Phil. 2:11). In our text, Paul mentions three truths about the believer's relationship to government.

#### **1. God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of government**

No human government at any time in history, at any place on earth, at any level of society has ever existed or will ever exist apart from the sovereign authority of God because all power belongs to God (Psalm 62:11; Matthew 28:18). God's purpose for government is three-fold:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
Government exists to protect and help those who are truly poor, needy, and innocently oppressed or wronged.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_  
Government acts as God's ministers for protection of life and property (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_  
Government is God-ordained to punish the violators of the law (1 Peter 2:14; Psalm 72).
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#### **2. God \_\_\_\_\_ the church from government**

God designed the church and government in such a way that they should not be totally separated or isolated from each other nor should they be totally identified with each other. Nevertheless, **both of them should be answerable to or accountable God**. The separation of church and state has been misunderstood as a separation of state and God.

God designed the church to be the moral conscience of government to confront the state government on matters of immorality and injustice.

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#### **3. God \_\_\_\_\_ Christians to fulfill their civil obligations**

God expects us to be subject to state authority, to obey government by fulfilling the following civil duties:

- We are to be subject to the government unless it asks us to disobey God (Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-14; Acts 5:29; Daniel 1, 3, 6). We are to do right and cooperate with government authorities whenever possible (Titus 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:15).
  - We are to pay taxes (Rom. 13:6,7; Matt. 22:17-21) and pray for government authorities (1 Tim. 2:1-2); and when possible, to share the gospel and disciple government leaders (1 Tim. 2:3-4; Matt. 28:19).
  - We are to exercise our duty through responsible voting.
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## Practical Application

Below is a practical guideline on choosing whom to vote. Let's call these tests for wise voting:

a. *Tests of \_\_\_\_\_: Who are they?*

In 1 Timothy 3 there are 17 qualifications for the office of an elder. Of the 17, 15 of them deal with character and conduct. This principle guideline could also apply for civic leaders. Ask yourself: Are these candidates trustworthy? Do they stand with truth? Do they value truth? Do they stand by their word?

b. *Test of \_\_\_\_\_: Are they effective leaders?*

Ask yourself: How good are their platforms? Do they have the skills and experience to do what they are promising? Do their accomplishments support their promises? Do they know what it takes to do what is right for the people? Have they developed and displayed the skills to effectively lead others to achieve a noble mission together?

c. *Test of \_\_\_\_\_: What are their heart-felt beliefs?*

Observe the values of the candidates. What do they stand for in life? Do they respect and protect the sanctity of life? Or the sanctity of marriage? Do they respect, support and protect religious rights? Is their value system in line with God's value system? Whose personal convictions are closely aligned to the principles of God's word? Does the candidate show any fear and respect for God and God's people? Does the candidate respect the law? If those are not clear in the candidate's platform, then consider the political party they represent. Does the party they belong to promote the values and beliefs that are closest to biblical truths and principles?

d. *Test of \_\_\_\_\_: Do they really care about you?*

Look at the history of the candidates and see if they really care for the welfare of the people. A prayerful assessment of a candidate's past provides a clear way of interpreting his/her promises in the present as well as anticipating how and what they will propose in the future.

Regardless of who becomes President, the Lord Jesus Christ is still the king of Kings. When all is said and done, government cannot save you. Our hope is not in earthly presidents, governors, political legislations or armies, but in the heavenly Kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ.