

“Voting”

To vote means to formally declare a choice for a candidate or a course of action. In contrast to many other countries, all citizens of the United States enjoy the privilege to vote. But are Christians obligated to vote? On the one hand, Scripture only reveals two obligations of the Christian citizen in any country. First, the Christian is obligated to pray. “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Paul appeals to Christians to pray for a basic stability to the public order (“a peaceful and quiet life”). Second, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men, kings, governors, who are sent by him (God) to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right” (1 Pet. 2:13). Certainly, submission to governing authorities is not ultimate, for we must obey God rather than the demands of human authority, if it goes against God’s law (Acts 5:29). Scripture does not command Christians to vote.

This makes voting a matter of wisdom. If a Christian casts a vote, then that choice must be guided by three biblical principles. The first biblical principle is that it must be done from faith. Paul writes, “whatever is not from faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23). In the immediate context, Paul appeals to the strong in faith to avoid tripping up in those weak in the faith by having them go against their conscience. Paul encourages the strong in faith to persuade the weak in faith from fear to maturity (15:1-3). The principle of verse 23 teaches the importance of humbly relying upon God and not fear or pride.

The second biblical principle is that it must be done according to the Law of God. Paul tells us that we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God

prepared that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10). Those good works are further clarified as the commandments, or Law of God. “You shall observe My judgment and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 18:4). Jesus tells us that man lives by the very word of God (Matt. 4:4). Our choices must uphold God’s moral law and restrain evil.

The third biblical principle is that it must be done for God’s glory. “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). Above all else, the Christian seeks the glory of God’s name, kingdom, purposes, and law.

So, at the end of the day, may it be said of Christians that they prayed, they submitted, and they obeyed God. This is living wisely.

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