

On Loving One's Neighbor as One's Self: The Political Component

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Many Christians have been led to believe that we should be apolitical so as to eliminate any unnecessary distractions or impediments in our witness to others. After all, they say, what really matters is the Gospel. The implication of their argument is that politics is messy, divisive, and unspiritual, so for the sake of our Christian testimony we should stay focused on “things above” rather than “worldly” concerns. After all, politics is mostly about the acquisition (and often the abuse) of earthly power, and most politicians are little more than proverbial “pigs at the trough.”

But this is actually quite naive. While I don't necessarily believe with the common adage that “Everything is political,” much in life certainly is. For example, both the early Christians and their state-approved persecutors were quick to realize that there is no more “political” statement than the declaration, “Jesus is Lord!”

Fortunately, America's founding fathers understood that politics is a necessary component of life, and that laws and public policies are either based on the universal moral and ethical principles of justice derived from natural law or else

they are the arbitrary and tyrannical exercises of coercion by the power elite over everyone else. They realized that laws and public policies can either enhance or detract from the quality of one's life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Furthermore, they were mindful that political ignorance, apathy and noninvolvement only empower the most ambitious and ruthless

elements in society. In other words, they understood that politics matters.

When asked, “Rabbi, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind.’ This is the greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ – i.e., “Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you” (Matt. 22:36-39; 7:12).

Now my question is this: How can we possibly love others if we are unconcerned about the kind of laws and public policies and programs that regulate (and often control) their lives? How can we possibly love others unless we are sensitive to – and attentive to – not only their religious and spiritual lives, but their physical, material, emotional, social, intellectual and creative needs as well? In other words, how can we truly love others if we care little about the quality of their lives in any wholistic sense?



The Christian faith is more than merely one's own "personal relationship" with Christ outside the larger context of Christian discipleship. Nor can it be reduced to personal pietism. In its fullest dimension, Christianity is a comprehensive worldview and philosophy of life that influences, conditions and regulates how we think and respond to the full range of issues that affect humanity – or what Francis Schaeffer called "the lordship of Jesus Christ over the whole of life."

Realistically, politics is mostly about damage-control, and at least in that regard it can certainly be contentious, divisive and unsatisfying. As such, it often comes down to doing everything possible to keep the very worst people out of positions of power and influence. And of course, no manmade political party or ideology has a monopoly on truth, reason and wisdom. But it is simplistic, foolish and dangerous to assume that because all parties and ideologies are flawed they therefore must all be morally equivalent. This is, as logicians remind us, a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Here is the stark reality: In our current political climate, the Democrat and Republican parties constitute two contrasting visions for America. In that regard, the Democrat Party promotes a radical authoritarian political agenda that is destroying most everything that is good, decent and just in America. It is, in effect, the initiator and propagator of most laws, policies and programs that are immoral, irrational and counter-productive.

The modern Democratic Party not only shows little regard for the rule of law as established in the U.S. Constitution, but it also functions as the foremost proponent of abortion-on-demand, election fraud, open borders, racial divisions, public indecency, incivility, sexual chaos, civil disorder, liberalized drug and pornography laws, and increased restrictions on religious liberty. Not incidentally, it has also become a radical socialist party. If anyone dismisses this as political hyperbole, simply challenge them to compare the

recent 2024 Democratic Platform with Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, and Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*.

So while the Republican Party is often a source of great disappointment (and even embarrassment) and has the well-earned reputation as the party of mediocrity, the Democrat Party proudly functions as the party of venality. And therein lies the difference. One is a concession to human weakness while the other is a testament to human depravity. One is at least theoretically redeemable while the other is a lost cause. To ignore the differences and pretend otherwise is tantamount to willful ignorance.

Politics is not ultimately what matters most in this life, nor is it the answer to mankind's deepest needs. The Gospel is. But as Jesus clearly taught, the Main Thing is not the Only Thing, and to truly love others as we love ourselves, there is a political component that cannot be denied. We must care deeply about the kind of society and culture in which we and others live. Therefore, to ignore the political implications of wholistic Christian discipleship is not only irresponsible and indefensible but outright immoral.



A Postscript

Laws effect everything:

- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of the media
- The right to peaceful assembly
- Equal justice and equal opportunity under the law
- Personal security and public safety
- Home and family life
- Education
- Economic and vocational freedom
- Free enterprise
- Private property rights
- Protection for pre-born human beings