

8 Qualities We Need in Our Next President

The 2016 U.S. presidential contest has become an endless TV soap opera: It's part drama and part comedy, with surprising plot twists and a cast of colorful characters that includes a former president's wife accused of lying, an eccentric tycoon who spends millions of dollars of his own money on his campaign, two conservatives of Hispanic origin who fight daily with the tycoon (and sometimes with each other), an African-American neurosurgeon, and a socialist senator with a New England accent who sounds like a nerdy university professor.

Only in America can you get this much entertainment during one election. But in November the political theater will end and voters will elect the next commander in chief—hopefully without triggering recounts. And hopefully we will choose a leader who has the qualities needed to guide this nation wisely for the next four years.

What are those qualities? I have never been of the opinion that the president of the United States should be the “pastor” of the country. But I do look for character in presidents because I think leaders should have moral values. Call me old-fashioned, but I still believe the best leadership qualifications are found in the Bible—and I prefer leaders who actually exhibit those qualities.

When the apostle Paul outlined the necessary qualifications for a bishop in the church, he was specific. The character qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-6 could help us decide who is the best candidate to move into the White House. According to this passage, a qualified leader is:

1. Blameless. The Greek word is *anepilēptos* and it means “above reproach.” The modern-day term would be “squeaky

clean.” Good leaders exhibit a consistently moral lifestyle. They don’t have skeletons in their closets. They tell the truth, admit their mistakes, refrain from bribery, pay their bills and obey the law.

2. Responsible. Paul told Timothy: “If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5). Shouldn’t the same question be asked of a president? The way a leader manages his family is not an irrelevant issue. How is his or her marriage? Some Hollywood entertainers might change spouses like outfits, but government leaders should be held to a higher standard.

3. Temperate. The Greek word for this quality, *nēphalios*, means “sober.” The Message Bible translates it as “cool and collected.” A leader should control his temper instead of flying off the handle. And wouldn’t it be a good idea for the leader of the free world to use restraint, dignity and tact when addressing other world leaders—instead of flippantly offending them?

4. Prudent. This word means “self-controlled,” and like temperance, it involves curbing one’s desires and impulses. We don’t need a president who is addicted to alcohol or drugs, who can’t restrain his sexual urges, or who is so prideful he can never forgive an enemy. A leader who can’t control his private life will eventually spin out of control on the public stage.

5. Respectable. The Greek word *kosmios* means “modest or of good behavior.” In modern terms, a president should be a gentleman—or, in the case of a woman leader, a lady. Good leaders recognize they have been entrusted with a public charge. They earn respect by doing what’s right.

6. Gentleness. We all want a bold, decisive leader who will make hard choices and be willing to confront evil. But the best leaders also know how to temper their strength. They

don't throw their weight around, bully people or use inflammatory language to pick fights. Paul told Timothy that a good leader is not "a striker" (1 Tim. 3:3, KJV)—which means he is not a contentious, quarrelsome person.

7. Hospitable. The Greek word for this quality is *philoxenos*, which literally means "love of strangers." In Paul's day, good leaders showed compassion to all people, including those from other racial or ethnic backgrounds. A president who represents a nation as diverse as the United States cannot afford to be racist or bigoted. With the grace of an ambassador, he must promote harmony, not divisiveness.

8. Not greedy. The Greek word *aphilargyros* means "not covetous." All the candidates running in the 2016 campaign are wealthy, but are there any candidates who have not been so spoiled by wealth that they can still empathize with regular Americans? Considering the fact that 45 million Americans live below the poverty level today, we need a leader who actually cares about helping the poor get jobs and opportunity.

Do your own evaluation. How do the current candidates—Carson, Clinton, Cruz, Kasich, Rubio, Sanders and Trump—measure up when it comes to the character test? If you are a Christian, character should matter when you go to the polls. Don't vote for a candidate just because you like his or her sound bites, blistering attack ads or over-the-top promises.

Vote for character. That's what America needs.{eoa}