

# Alabama Megachurch Pastor Offers Strategic Voting Advice

Dr. Harry Reeder III, senior pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Ala., was going to hold off on publishing his thoughts about Christian voting until right before the November election, but the current state of American politics convinced him otherwise.

He said he hoped the commentary, which he called a “distillation” of his answers to questions concerning how to vote in regional elections, would equip Christians to “not simply know how to vote in one election, but how to evaluate voting in any election.” He said the most important question they should ask themselves is, “How should I, as a Christian, prepare to vote with prayerful deliberation and wisdom?”

“Given the position I have taken (for multiple reasons) to not publicly endorse candidates, I feel it is important to pastorally share a Biblical process by which candidates for public office should be evaluated,” he wrote. “So, in light of the multiple texts in God’s Word designed to guide us in evaluating leaders in general and civil magistrates (public officials) in particular, I thought it best to give a brief distillation consisting of a five-fold paradigm to prayerfully make a decision in exercising the providential blessing, duty and privilege to vote for elected officials.”

His “five-fold paradigm” boils down to these points:

- **Character: Who are they?** “In considering a candidate the prevailing issue is character. In God’s word when electing Elders, multiple texts give us the qualifications that are essential. In I Timothy 3 there are 17 such qualifications. Of the 17, 15 of them deal

with character and conduct.”

- **Content: Do they know their stuff?** “It is imperative that they ‘know their stuff.’ Have they demonstrated the ability to work with others while holding to principled positions?”
- **Competency: Are they effective leaders?** “Have they developed and displayed the skills to effectively lead others to achieve a noble mission together? In other words, can the proposed candidate produce unity when confronted by situations where a multiplicity of perspectives, a diversity of desires and a disparity of objectives are competing for supremacy?”
- **Convictions: What are their heart-felt beliefs?** “Attempting to ascertain a leader’s true convictions is a crucial component of deciding before the Lord if a candidate is worthy of our vote. Confessional convictions will ultimately be authenticated or exposed as superficial as a leader’s operational convictions are observed.”
- **Core: The foundation and capstone of candidate assessment.** “A prayerful assessment of a candidate’s past provides clarity for interpreting a candidate’s promises in the present as well as anticipating how and what they will propose in the future. It is a truism because it is true. The best interpreter of the present and the best prognosticator of the future is a man’s past.”

Reeder said the responsibility of selecting leaders for the public square is of such importance that they must never be made without “focused seasons of intercessory prayer seeking guidance from God’s Word and ‘wisdom from above.’ He urged Christians to pray often about their electoral decisions.

“In God’s Providence, many have died for us to have this privilege of voting,” he wrote. “Use it wisely, and then, cast your vote under the eye of God.”