

Are Christians Imposing Unbiblical Standards on Our President?

The leftist liberals who oppose religious freedom and conservative values are incessant in finding a means to disqualify our current president. Whether it's his negative comments on Twitter or his unorthodox methods in governing, his opponents are looking for anything to suggest he is not fit to govern the nation.

Even among some Christians, there are differing opinions on the president's integrity and effectiveness based on his demeanor and style.

If we are to get past our personal preferences and differing opinions, we must look to Scripture to provide proper perspective in what God looks for in a civil leader. In our desire to see a greater Christian witness in the government mountain, are we missing the powerful ways in which the Lord is using nominal or even non-believing leaders to extend kingdom influence? Are Christians imposing a standard on our president that is not even mandated by Scripture?

The specific character qualifications for church leaders (deacons, overseers, elders) are stated in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. It is evident that those whom the Lord calls to lead the church are held to a high standard. They, and their families, must demonstrate godly character and a life of integrity that upholds biblical values. Their role is to bring the lost into the kingdom (Matt. 18:16-20), disciple believers into holiness and godliness (1 Tim. 4:6-11), and to mature the bride of Christ (Eph. 4:12-16). In all the descriptors, it is clear that God expects high moral character and purity of conduct and speech in those who lead

His church.

However, the Bible refers to civil servants differently. Rather than a list of qualifications, the Word details how God will use governmental leaders to accomplish His purposes. In Romans 13:1-6 and 1 Peter 2:13-14, the role of governing authorities within human institutions describes a different kind of leader. They are:

- God's servant for the good of the people.
- A terror to bad conduct, bearing the sword.
- Avengers who carry out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.
- Servants of God, attending to taxation of the people.
- Sent by God to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good

These descriptions of how God will use civil leaders include no indications of personal morality or godliness being necessary. Though it may be desired, it is not required. They are used by God, and in that sense are authorized by Him, yet their personal conduct and behavior are not mentioned. Their primary role is to keep the people safe from harm, punish those who break the law and reward those who do good. The authority granted to them is so strong that it should even bring "terror" (fear of the Lord) to those who break the laws of the land.

In Exodus 18:21-22, judges were appointed to govern the people. Their list of qualifications called for men who feared God, were trustworthy and hated bribes. Again, their personal morality was not a factor, as much as their track record of being truthful, honest and God-fearing. King Cyrus (Isa. 45) and the Pharaoh (Gen. 41) were both heathen rulers who recognized God at work and empowered the people of God to flourish and succeed. In both testaments, God's purposes for governing rulers was to discern rightly, judge fairly and follow the laws of the land so that all would thrive.

What does this mean in today's political process? For those leaders, including the president, whose demeanor or style may not fit our desired approach as Christians, we can look to the primary qualifications in Scripture to determine their ability to govern well. Unlike church leaders who must model Christ to the flock, civil government leaders are called to rule with a strong hand to ensure safety, protection and freedom for all. Even if we do not care for a president's personal style and approach, we must look to his initiatives and legislative actions to determine the greater good he might be doing for the nation.

Perhaps instead of focusing so much on personal style and demeanor, it is time believers start assessing, and championing, our president's effectiveness by the qualifications listed in Scripture. What is his track record since being in office, and what has he accomplished? What legislation has he initiated to improve the quality of life for all citizens? How is he dealing with those who threaten our sovereignty and national security? How is he rewarding those who serve the nation and its good citizens? And, for those concerned about conservative values, how is he supporting Christians and religious freedom?

We must continue to pray that all our elected officials would have an authentic encounter and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But let's not disqualify those who have not yet heard, or are still on the journey. If they are truly fulfilling God's purposes as civil leaders, their actions will speak louder than their words, and their accomplishments outweigh their personal weaknesses.

"Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil works. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from him, for he is the servant of God for your good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid, for he does

not bear the sword in vain, for he is the servant of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:2-4).

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