

As a Voter, What One Crucial Characteristic Should Your President Possess?

On August 28, I conducted a poll on X (formerly known as Twitter), asking, “As a voter, what is the single most important factor or quality you’re looking for in a presidential candidate?” The four choices were: Integrity/character; Good policies; Backbone; Unifier.

Of the 698 who responded to the poll, slightly over half (50.1%) voted for “Good policies”; 38.7% voted for “Integrity/character”; 10% voted for Backbone; and only 1.3% voted for Unifier.

When I asked my wife Nancy for her response, she said, “It has to be all four. I can’t vote for just one.”

When I explained to her that she could only vote for one of the choices, she again insisted all four qualities had to be present, regardless of the polling rules. (For the record, having been married more than 47 years, her response did not surprise me at all!)

For argument’s sake, though, let’s play by the rules of the poll and pick just one answer. What would your response be, and why?

I’m going to make the case for each one, arguing in the end for integrity/character.

Let’s start with unifier.

America is as divided as it has been in decades, if not in more than 150 years, going back to the days of the Civil War. We desperately need unity, and for that, we need a unifier in the White House.

Is there anything right now more important than harmony? Doesn't the Bible often point to the importance of unity (see Psalm 133 and John 17 as examples), and doesn't common sense reinforce this emphasis on being one? As Jesus famously said, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand" (Matt. 12:25).

The problem with this line of thinking is that unity in itself can be good or bad, depending on the cause around which everyone unites. That's why God scattered the people of the earth in the days of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). They were united in hubris and spiritual rebellion.

Many Bible teachers also believe there will be a future one-world government united under the Antichrist, reminding us that unity for the wrong purpose can be very dangerous. Think Nazi Germany, as one example among many.

As for having backbone, that too is an important quality. That's why we have no respect for the cowardly, for compromisers, for the spineless. (Yes, spineless is literally the absence of backbone.)

We need a political leader who will stand up for what is right and not be moved by polling data or popularity or the shifting sands of human sentiments. We need someone who will neither cower nor collapse when the going gets rough.

But here too, backbone alone can be either good or bad. How many evil leaders have exhibited extraordinary courage under fire? And to what end? The destruction of many lives.

So, both being a unifier and having backbone, when found in the right person for the right cause, are tremendously important. We need a president who can bridge the gaps in our nation and help heal the wounds, someone who will also have a backbone of steel. But that presupposes that we elect the right president, meaning that he or she will need to have good

policies.

No wonder, then, that the majority of respondents gave “Good policies” as their answer. After all, isn’t that why we elect someone to lead the nation? Aren’t the policies of that person ultimately more important than their personality?

It’s great if our president is a gracious person too. But being gracious alone will not nominate the right justices to the courts. Or push back against the tyranny of China. Or fight against radical Islam. Or enforce good border policies. Or help our economy get healthy. Or to stand up to an encroaching Marxist agenda.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

That all comes down to good policies, which is why many evangelical Christians voted for Donald Trump despite his obvious failings and flaws. We supported his policies, and he remained true to his commitments.

Why, then, do I opt for integrity and character more than good policies?

One reason is that a person may campaign based on good policies and may really have good intentions, but without backbone, once in office, they might sell out to the PC spirit, abandoning their base in order to seem “reasonable” and “balanced.” So much for their good policies!

It’s also possible that someone with good policies can have such a destructive personality and style that in the end, they do more harm than good. (Conservative critics of former President Trump would make this very argument against him.)

And that leads me back to integrity and character.

My hope would be that someone who was truly a person of

integrity and had outstanding character qualities could be persuaded to embrace good policies as well. And that same person could be trusted not to be a political compromiser as well as to not destroy the nation through unneeded controversy and drama. Not only so, but using the bully pulpit of the presidency, through which their best qualities could shine, that person could also have a positive moral impact on the nation.

And while you might accuse me of being idealistic (which might be true!), in my view, a person of fine character with real integrity would not support abortion on demand (especially at any stage of the pregnancy) or the genital mutilation and chemical castration of minors, among other destructive policies. And, such a person, in my view, if confronted with sound wisdom and lifegiving biblical principles, would embrace those positive principles.

That being said, I do understand the argument for good policies, and I recognize the importance of having backbone and the power of being a unifier. But if I could choose only one characteristic of the person I was voting for (other than an overtly biblical value such as God-fearing), I would choose integrity and character. {eoa}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!