

Parenting Children Through This Crazy and Chaotic Presidential Election

Can we admit this has not been our favorite presidential election season? I'll admit it. I'm one who tends to see the more positive angle in every scenario, and it's honestly difficult to do this time.

A man with young children asked me recently how he and his wife should parent their family during this season. It's a great question. Regardless of whether or not your choice for president is clear, tensions have never seemed higher. This is true even among believers. Children surely have sensed the tension in us.

I don't have all the answers—and my children are grown—but I have a few.

Please understand, this is not a political post. This is a dealing-with-life-around-you-as-a-parent post. And I would suggest these for other times when their world is scarier than normal.

Here are seven suggestions for parenting children during this presidential election:

1. Help them see hope. There is always hope, right? If you're following after a Savior named Jesus who has overcome the world—there is always hope! Children will seldom be more hopeful about their future than you are hopeful about yours.

2. Don't shelter them. Everything should be age-appropriate, but pretty much every newsstand and every television has something about this election. They hear it at school and in the restaurants and stores. They see you react to Facebook

posts. There really isn't much of a way to escape it completely if they are old enough to carry on a conversation.

3. Don't overexpose them. I certainly don't think I would sit an elementary child in front of the television every night—and, really, this is regardless of what's on television. Again, the child's age is important as well as their interest level. When I was in elementary school, I actually cared about current events. I wanted to watch the news. I do think as parents we should monitor not only how much they watch, but also how it seems to be affecting them.

4. Allow them to ask questions. It's probably best to see if they have questions and let them guide the discussion with how much or how little they want to know. No question should be off limits, and I don't think there should be many "we're not going to talk about it anymore" rules. If children are curious enough they will find information somewhere and where better than from you?

5. Read Scripture together and pray for and with them. The ultimate answer for our day is the truth which never changes. I find great comfort in the Psalms. Children love to read. Find a good Bible for children and read truth together. And I have often heard and said, "Prayer doesn't always change the circumstances, but prayer always changes me." The same is true for children. There is a comfort in prayer—when you "take all your burdens to the Lord and leave them there." Children learn faith from you. Share your faith with them. (The Scripture and prayer time will help you also.)

6. Teach them biblical principles of how to respond to the world. Regardless of the times, we are to love our neighbors, care for others, and strive to live in unity. We even have to respect authority—unless it differs from the commands of God. Those are timeless biblical truths. You can certainly teach them principles of government you adhere to also, but mostly we should be shaping the character of our children—of course,

ultimately into the character of Christ. And wow, wouldn't it be great if the character of Christ impacted our politics today?

7. Have some fun with them. You need it and so do they. The fact is, when we've been living under the cloud of our times like this election has done for many of us our own energy level might be drained. You may be missing some enthusiasm you usually have. But, children need to laugh and play. They need to have fun within the safety of their parent's strength. Maybe turn off the television, play a game, or do watch something which causes everyone to have a big belly laugh. Couldn't we all use one of those about now?

Those are just a few thoughts to get you thinking. I have written similar thoughts before on helping children respond to fear from tragedy. You can read another post [HERE](#). What would you add to my list?

(And, I'm really not looking for political commentary here—just trying to help some young families parent.) {eo}

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