

Why It's OK to Let the Bible Guide Your Politics

Navigating the complex waters of public policy with a skeptical audience can be challenging for even the most thoughtful of Christians. Taking a stand on a pressing moral issue, such as abortion or homosexuality, and backing it up with Scripture often brings accusations of bigotry or intolerance.

Because the conversation may turn away from political issues to theological issues once the Bible or God is brought into the equation, it can be easy to simply try to circumvent the debate over Christianity by sticking to secular, empirical arguments, rather than moral Christian arguments.

By doing this, we rightly acknowledge that there is immense value in meeting an individual on common ground and reasoning together, from the state of reality around us, to discover truth. However, as we reason, we must constantly remember that empirical data is worthless if not supported by a framework of moral convictions.

Speed limits are baseless without the underlying moral principle that human life should be protected. Human trafficking and other forms of exploitation are insignificant unless we begin with the understanding that all humans possess a God-given right to liberty. Even murder is morally acceptable without the moral foundation that human life is precious and valuable. Every law is based upon someone's standard of morality.

When we as Christians refuse to turn to God and revealed truth as the source of right and wrong, in ethics as well as in codified law, we obliterate the moral foundation on which our conservative arguments stand. Without that foundation, why

does it matter if children grow up in unstable families? Who is to say whether one civil right is more important than another?

Of all the men and women in the Bible who operated in a political context, Daniel stands as one of the most powerful examples of a man who was unashamed to stand on God's truth. In Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar ordered the wise men of Babylon to be slaughtered because they were unable to reveal and interpret the dream which had troubled his spirit. Daniel, whose life was endangered by this decree, did not protest on the grounds of the practical consequences the king would suffer from losing all of his wise men. Instead, he went and made an appointment to speak with the king and interpret his dream.

An incredible aspect of this passage is this: when Daniel made the appointment with the king to interpret the dream, Daniel has no idea what the dream meant. Daniel 2:17-18 says, "Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

Daniel exhibited an incredible amount of faith and reliance upon God in trusting that the Lord would reveal the dream to him. And when the moment came for Daniel to stand before the king, confident in what God had revealed, Daniel took neither the glory nor the credit. Instead, he said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (Daniel 2:27-28b). In the boldness that comes with proclaiming the Word of God, Daniel revealed to the king the demise of Nebuchadnezzar's own kingdom and unashamedly asserted that one day, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never

be destroyed..." (Daniel 2:44).

In response, Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and answered, "'Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery'" (Daniel 2:47). Though he could have scoffed at Daniel's interpretation by pointing to empirical data, such as the fact that the Babylonian Empire had just crushed Judah militarily, and the fact that the articles of the Jewish temple now rested in the Babylonian treasury, he responded in awe and reverence to Daniel's uncompromising stand upon the truth.

Daniel did not reject appeals to common evidence and observation. For example, when he asked to receive a diet of water and vegetables and be evaluated against the other servants, he appealed to his overseer to judge based on who appeared healthiest. But Daniel knew the foundation upon which he stood, and he was unashamed to speak the name of God forthrightly.

So let us not deceive ourselves with the idea that our arguments can be amoral or irreligious. When it comes to the matter of the moral standard upon which laws are built, our arguments cannot ignore the Moral Lawgiver. Let us not constrain ourselves with the false dichotomy that either we must play the role of a conservative who appeals to statistics and evidence, or we must stand on a foundation of biblical morals and principles.

As conservative Christians, we can – and must – do both. Let us not be afraid to hold fast to God and the principles he has revealed in his Word. Only then will we have a truly firm foundation on which to stand.