



## POLITICS AND FAITH APOLOGIA

### Discussing Elections with our Students

Since 1788, Americans have taken part in the democratic act of choosing the President of the United States. Every four years, citizens who are 18 or older vote for the candidate they believe will best lead our country.

In recent years, the election has become an area of tension for Americans. Christians have a responsibility to be a torchbearer of respect, kindness, and what is good. This means:

- Engaging in discussions with a spirit of understanding and empathy, even when there are strong disagreements.
- Listen to others' viewpoints, speak with honesty and humility, and avoid personal attacks.
- Voting should be guided by thoughtful consideration of candidates' policies and character.
- Christians are called to pray for wisdom in making these choices.

By modeling respectful behavior and focusing on shared values, we can contribute to a more positive and constructive political environment. Overall, historians agree there are some key overarching themes in the American experience that flow from a larger conversation of humanity inside Western Civilization. The acronym **L.I.F.E.R.** helps us remember the main themes: **L**imited government, **I**ndividualism, **F**reedom (religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition as outlined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution), **E**conomic opportunity based on measures of capitalism, and the **R**ule of law and order. Political discussions help us understand how these are interpreted and shape our country. Our conversations should seek to understand the founding principles of our country better and have constructive conversations, whether they be ideas, questions, or disagreements on ideas and policies today.

### Walk In Humility

We should approach all elections with the understanding that God is not a Republican or a Democrat, nor has he ever been. With regard to eternal salvation, God calls all men to repentance, no matter their political affiliation. With regard to his created order, God has ordained governments over people and calls people to submit themselves humbly to them as unto God (Rom. 13:1-7). Furthermore, God calls His people to pray for their leaders, their decision-making, and their salvation (I Tim. 2:1-4). God calls all men to repentance.

When discussing politics, it's important to remember that no political party or candidate embodies the full truth. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. We will approach these discussions with humility, acknowledging that there's always room for growth and understanding. We must seek to listen to one another rather than just hear our own voices. James 1:19 reminds us, "...Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." The principles from Philippians 2:2-4 remind us to respect others,

regardless of our disagreements, and even to count others as more significant than ourselves as we interact with them and remember who they are in light of the Creator who considers all people equally.

“Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” (Philippians 2:2-4)

## Speak With Compassion

We live in a world where political opinions can be very divided and sometimes intense. Social media often amplifies this with posts that are quick to judge and stir up strong emotions. It's important for us to learn how to discuss differing opinions respectfully and thoughtfully. As we approach this election season, we have an opportunity to practice these skills. This includes being mindful of our behavior both in and out of the classroom, whether online or at a football game, and following our school's social media policy guidelines. The student handbook states, “When you use technology, always treat others as you would in the classroom. Do not bully or be mean to other people. Do not use crude, obscene, or mean words or pictures when using technology. Do not post anything demeaning, disrespectful, or mean-spirited towards another member of our community; doing so may result in suspension and loss of technology privileges on campus.”

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Ephesians 4:29)

"The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." (Proverbs 12:18)

## Healthy Patriotism

The United States is a great country, and we are blessed to live in a time period with so much freedom and prosperity. But loving our country also means recognizing its flaws and understanding that being a citizen comes with responsibilities, such as voting. David McCullough, renowned American author, wrote in his essay *Why History?:*

“History shows us what choices there are. History teaches with specific examples of evils of injustice and ignorance, just as it shows how potent is plain courage, or one simple illuminating idea. History is – or should be – the bedrock of patriotism, not the chest-pounding kind of patriotism but the real thing, love of country.”

Even though politics can be contentious, it's important that we learn about our role in a vibrant republic powered by a democratic passion. Then, we strengthen our love for the country.

## Remain Hopeful

The Constitution was written “in order to form a more perfect union.” Every generation is responsible for moving our country closer to its highest ideals, recognizing the process is challenging and we are all in it together. Each day in class, we get an opportunity to strive after this statement. At the end of our country's greatest conflict, the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln sought hope and healing. God has given us the ministry of reconciliation (I Cor 5:16-21), and we will seek that in our classrooms.

“With malice toward none with charity for all with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan ~ to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.” - A. Lincoln.

In our classrooms, it's essential that we create a respectful environment where everyone feels valued, even if they have different political views. Respecting others doesn't mean all ideas are equally valid, but it does mean treating each person with dignity. We should not live in a spirit of fear but one of hope. God is sovereign and in control: “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:16–17)

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)