



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 4 October 27, 2024
“Jesus, Politics and Religion”



OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as our nation prepares to vote, please rid our spirit of contempt and judgment. Remind us that people, in our nation or in our family circle, who disagree with us aren't necessarily dishonest or unworthy of love. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV)

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

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INTRODUCTION

Some people believe that there should be no connection - that even the *talking* about faith shaping our politics violates the separation of church and state. But that is not what the constitution says. What Thomas Jefferson meant by the ‘separation of church and state’ was that the government could not establish a state church, nor could it prohibit the free exercise of religion.

Our faith, should impact both our political views and how we practice our politics. We have to decide how the candidate’s political visions align with the Christian values, ethics and moral vision we hold. This may lead us to disagreements among who Christians support. Where we should not have disagreement is how our faith should impact how we practice our politics. Jesus makes it clear that we need to love our enemies, even those of the other political party. This week, bless encourage and do something kind for someone in the other political party.

QUESTIONS

1. Did you do any “Acts of Kindness” this past week? Share with the group.
2. Eighty-three percent of Democrats say Republicans are closed-minded and 69% of Republicans say Democrats are closed-minded. Why do you think the percentage is so high? What would help lower these perceptions?
3. What does the phrase ‘separation of church and state’ mean to you?
4. In his sermon, Pastor Eric said the three things we should look at in political candidates are character, competence, and convictions. What do you look for in a candidate?
5. Read Matthew 5:43-48 (on page 1). Do you believe this is an antidote to the polarization and division in our nation?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, bless encourage and do something kind for someone in the other political party.