

# A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW — OF — GOVERNMENT

A NON-PARTISAN PERSPECTIVE



LEADING  
*The* WAY  
with Dr. Michael Youssef





Dear Reader,

The impassioned and often hostile opinions swirling around us, particularly in the realm of government and politics, can be downright exhausting. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, along with the 24-hour news cycle, create breathtaking urgency—promoting the idea that the fate of the world rests on each upcoming election. Citizens feel anxious and fearful. But a Biblical worldview rests in the knowledge that God controls all things—even appointing the leaders of nations.

As believers in Christ, God has clearly called us to shine His light and sow peace where He's planted us. But how do we live out this mission in the political arena? What does God say about government? To what degree are we called to be involved in politics?

The answers to these questions and more can be found by opening our Bibles. In His Word, God has given us everything we need to be a blessing to our temporary home—wherever we may be. In each and every circumstance, Scripture gives us both the wisdom we need to seek first His Kingdom and the encouragement that when we do, He will take care of the rest.

Armed with the sword of the Spirit, I know we can look beyond partisan politics, meet our earthly responsibilities, and live with a heavenly perspective that gives hope that will never disappoint.

For His Glory,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Youssef, Ph.D.

# 1

## What does the Bible say on the topic of government?

In the Old Testament, God established government. In fact, He was Israel's King, but the people rejected Him. In their foolishness, they wanted an earthly king like the nations around them—so God gave them what they wanted (see 1 Samuel 8:6-9). But He did so with a warning: Earthly kings will rule with selfish motives; their leadership will never measure up to His perfectly just and loving reign.

As believers in Christ, we live as citizens of two different worlds—an earthly kingdom ruled by fallen men and a heavenly kingdom ruled by a perfect God. In a society led by sinners, how do we honor the King of Kings? Two critical passages in the Bible shed light on the answer:

### ► #1 – Matthew 22:15-22: Jesus' Astonishing Answer

*“Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. . . ‘Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?’” – Matthew 22:15, 17*

While the Pharisees hoped to cause trouble for Jesus with this catch-22 question about paying taxes—a ‘yes’ would enrage the Jewish people and a ‘no’ could land Him in prison with the Roman authorities—Jesus brilliantly answered: “. . . give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's” (Matthew 22:21).

Jesus' answer shows that to love God means that we both obey the temporary authorities He has established and obey Him with our ultimate allegiance. We meet our material obligations in this world, which honors God. And we meet our ultimate heavenly obligations: God has “minted” our souls as it were. Far more valuable than a Roman denarius, we must give ourselves—body, soul, and spirit—to God's eternal, all-encompassing rule.

### ► #2 – Romans 13:1-7: God Sovereignly Gives Authority

*“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” – Romans 13:1*

Here, the apostle Paul explains that we are to live peacefully, obeying the law of the land. He also tells us that God is ultimately the one who appoints our leaders and takes them down. He is behind the scenes establishing our authorities, working out His purposes in this age, for He alone is sovereign. Therefore, no matter who is in office, we need not panic or fear, for God is on His throne.

## 2

### **What is the primary role of government on this side of heaven?**

To put it in the simplest terms, God institutes governments to keep the peace, exact justice, and protect its citizenry. This is the primary role of a government, and so Christians are called to live good lives as peacemakers, which glorifies God (see 1 Peter 2:12, Romans 13:1-7).

While a government may do more to serve its people, such as providing health-care or welfare, these things are icing on the cake and do not supply the caring and compassion needed to truly serve and uplift the poor. That is a role for God's church. America is a compassionate country because it was founded on Christian principles, but God never intended for the secular government to take over the ministry of the church.

So as we think about our elections and our vote, we must consider the primary purpose of government and ask ourselves: Which candidate for office is going to keep me and my family safe?

## 3

### **What should I do if the government calls me to do something that conflicts with what God calls me to do?**

If the government requires me to act against God's will, I take my cue from the first-century Christians, who said, "God must be obeyed above Caesar." So, if there is a conflict, I must obey God and willingly pay the price for it. This is very important, and I've experienced it, having lived under a socialist dictatorship in the Middle East.

Jesus warned us to count the cost of following Him. If we are not willing to give up everything we have, we cannot be His disciples (see Luke 14:33). He called us to have in mind the concerns of God and not merely human concerns, asking His disciples, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? . . . For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done" (Matthew 16:23, 26-27). We need not fear to take a stand for Christ, for to earn the delight of the King of Kings is a reward infinitely greater than anything this world or its leaders could ever offer.

# 4

## What responsibility does an individual Christian have in governmental activities?

During my lifetime, I've lived in three different worlds—the Middle East, Australia, and the United States of America. I've also had the privilege of traveling the globe countless times and meeting with heads of state. Therefore, I can say with confidence that your responsibility in governmental activities will be different according to the specific situation or country in which you live.

For example, when I lived under a socialist dictatorship in Egypt for the first 18 years of my life, I didn't have a say in the laws of my country. I didn't have the right to vote or even freedom of speech. But I lived in obedience to the law of that land, as God's Word calls us to do.

In America, God has blessed us with a unique form of government. The Founding Fathers crafted our Constitution so that 'we the people' govern ourselves by voting and electing our officials. Therefore, God has given us the responsibility of helping govern our nation. This is an incredible privilege that God has given us, and I believe it is a dereliction of our duty to the Lord Jesus to not take this responsibility seriously.

We have a responsibility to our democracy and to our fellow believers in Christ to vote and to encourage our nation's leaders to pursue Truth and goodness, peace and prosperity (see Jeremiah 29:7). Today, we see many people trying to influence elected officials for evil. When good people do nothing, evil is victorious. When Christians withdraw from the public sphere, secular humanism always comes in to fill the vacuum. So, I encourage you to get involved in whatever way God leads. Voting is the least we can do.

A background image showing a close-up of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are light-skinned and the background is slightly blurred.

# 5

## How does the Biblical phrase, “In the world but not of the world,” apply to our politics today?

There are many things in the Bible that are designed to be held together in tension. For example, God is sovereign; man is responsible. These two Truths must be held in tension. Being in the world but not of it is another example.

Being a good steward of our republic by voting, being involved, and so forth—that’s being in the world. While we are in this location, on this earth, we are to be a blessing to it. We are to seek the good of the city as far as we are able (see Jeremiah 29:7); we are to serve (see James 1:27, Romans 12:2). At the same time, our citizenship is in heaven. This world is not our home; heaven is (see John 17:14-16, 1 John 2:15-17). Therefore, we are not to be consumed by the problems of this life, as others are who have no hope. We don’t call our political opponent names or take part in the hatred and outrage incited by so many in our society today. In this way, we are not of this world. This is a tension that can really only be understood by those who know and love Jesus.

# 6

## Can a Christian vote for a non-Christian—someone who is perhaps part of a cult or some other false religion?

I personally believe that I would rather buy good meat from a pagan butcher than bad meat from a Christian butcher. Let me explain what I mean by this. When it comes to elected officials, I suggest looking at the person’s policies. When I vote, I know that I am not voting for a saint, meaning a perfect person. We’ve had people in office who possessed differing degrees of morality—but Jesus Christ is the only perfect person. We’ve never had a perfect president, governor, or mayor, and we never will. Therefore, I would rather vote for someone whose policies are consistent with my Biblical worldview than for someone whose views and policies are contrary to the Word of God, no matter how virtuous that person claims to be.

It’s important to keep in mind that, as American citizens, we do not give allegiance to the President, Congress, Senate, or the Supreme Court. When I became a naturalized citizen, I took an oath that said, “I will support and defend the *Constitution* and laws of the United States of America.” Which candidate will best uphold constitutional values—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and so forth?

# 7

## **What should a Christian do when they believe that there is no one running for political office that they can vote for?**

This is certainly a challenge. Some would advise you to write in a candidate. In the end, I think that would become a non-vote. I prefer to make comparisons between the candidates, and select the one who aligns best with a Biblical worldview, who commits to implement policies that would honor God, that is who I vote for.

For example, at the top of my list for determining where to cast my vote, I prioritize someone who is pro-life because someone who is pro-life honors life. Scripture talks about this from beginning to end: The shedding of innocent blood, the killing of someone created in the image of God, is incredibly offensive to Him. I also believe that if someone honors life, that person will honor a lot of other things as well when it comes to issues of morality. This is just my personal opinion, but that's how I determine where to place my vote.

# 8

## **In today's political arena, it seems like the end always justifies the means. Should Christians operate or see the political process in this way?**

The Bible is clear: It is never, at any time, okay to do the wrong thing for the right reason. Doing the wrong thing for the right reason is simply not Biblical. We must understand that it doesn't matter what end we are trying to achieve—if the means are wrong, then we need to stop in our tracks, acknowledge the sin, and repent. Both the means to a goal and the goal itself must be aligned with God's Word, which calls us to live holy lives as God is holy (see 1 Peter 1:16).





## There's so much division in America right now. In the context of our government and the political arena, how are Christians called to bring about unity?

Unity in a family or a church is vitally important. But I don't think that any country can have unity nationally. I'll tell you why: There is good, and there is evil. There are people who follow God, and then there are people who do not. On this side of heaven, there are always going to be people who are set on doing evil, and this means there will be division. We cannot have unity with such people. But we can still love them and remember that our struggle is not against people but against the powers of evil in this dark world (see Ephesians 5:1-20, 6:10-13). So our Christian calling is to seek first God's Kingdom and live as His ambassadors, proclaiming Christ and pursuing peace.

God's Word clearly instructs us how we are to conduct ourselves in an increasingly hostile world:

***“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. . . . Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. . . . ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.’ . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”***

ROMANS 12:14, 17-18, 20-21

I have counseled several families who are divided over politics, and this kind of division can really be dangerous. For families who believe in God and love the Lord Jesus Christ, I would implore them to get on their knees and pray for unity—even if this means agreeing to not discuss politics and vote according to their individual conscience. I think many families are divided right now over these things when they don't need to be. As believers, we need to be praying for families and encouraging families to unite. This is a matter that is very near and dear to my heart.



# JOIN DR. YOUSSEF IN PRAYER FOR AMERICA

Lord Jesus Christ, it is Your sovereign hand that raised this great nation. You are the one who brought faithful, persecuted people across the ocean to ultimately birth the United States of America. And You are the one who encouraged them to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this land. It was You who made sure that all our foundational documents were based on Biblical Truth. But like Israel of old, who began to worship idols after You had saved them from slavery in Egypt, this nation has departed from You.

I thank You for the faithful remnant living in this nation—those who are praying and seeking You with all their heart. Father, I unite with them now and pray that You would bring peace and joy to our nation—taking the hatred out of our discourse so that we can live peaceably with one another, even though we may disagree politically. And Father, I pray for America. I pray You would bless America and, more importantly, that You would save America. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



## AWAKE AMERICA

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[AwakeAmerica.com](http://AwakeAmerica.com) and on social media.





Michael Youssef, PhD, is the Founder and President of *Leading The Way with Dr. Michael Youssef*. Dr. Youssef was born under a socialist dictatorship in Egypt and lived in Lebanon and Australia before moving to the United States. In 1984, he fulfilled his childhood dream of becoming an American citizen. His unique Middle Eastern heritage, his degrees in Theology and Social Anthropology, and his decades of traveling around the world sharing the Gospel and meeting with heads of state have equipped him with a thorough understanding of sociological trends and Biblical worldview issues. He has authored more than 50 books, including popular titles *Saving Christianity?*, *The Hidden Enemy*, *Life-Changing Prayers*, *Heaven Awaits*, and *How to Read the Bible*. He and his wife reside in Atlanta.



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