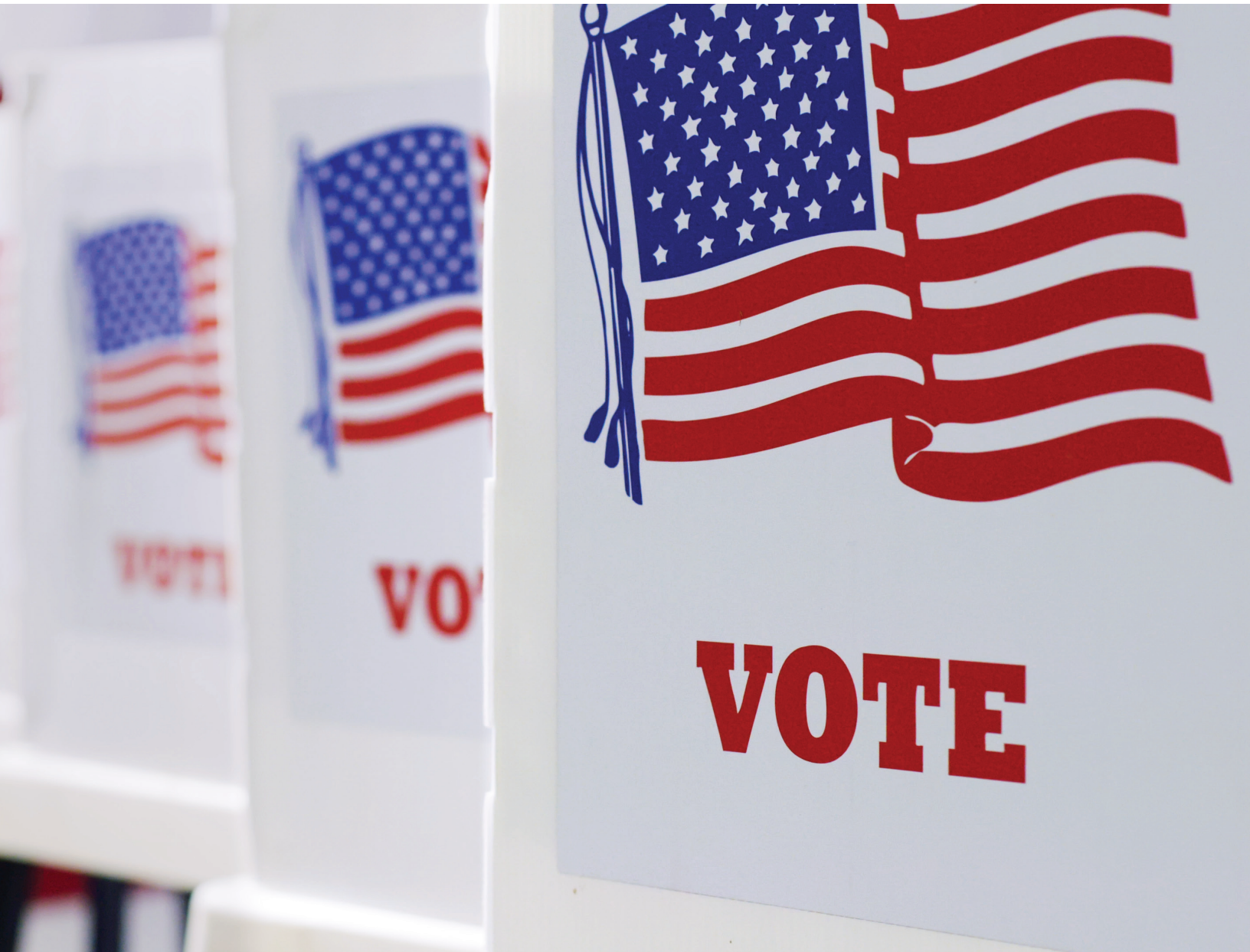


IPS PRINCIPLE PERSPECTIVE

A Journal from the Institute for Principle Studies

Fall 2022

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ELECTIONS & VOTING

THE INSTITUTE BEHIND THE JOURNAL

Founded in 2005 as a Christian para-church ministry, the Institute for Principle Studies (IPS) endeavors to reverse centuries of societal decay by returning civil government to its Biblically-prescribed role.

In order to do so, the body of Christ must articulate the Biblical case for the proper role of government to a principle-starved world. IPS stands ready to aid the church and provide this defense.

More than getting particular candidates elected or passing particular legislation, the battle for America first rages in the hearts and minds of her people. Therefore, instead of focusing on the next election, IPS is focused on teaching God’s design for government to the next generation. This is why IPS exists and why the work of IPS is central to building a society upon principle.

If this cause resonates with you, we invite you to join us on the battlefield of worldviews and teach others by visiting www.PrincipleStudies.org/Give.



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DIRECTOR'S LETTER



As we leave the tumultuous 2020 election season behind us and look ahead to the upcoming elections, it is healthy to take a break from rhetoric that generates more heat than light and look at voting and elections from a principled perspective.

Although this is our first journal without our Founder and dear friend, Mike Winther, you will notice that he had already written quite a bit regarding voting. We are grateful to be able to share these gems with you. Moreover, this journal before you is not meant to be a comprehensive work on elections but merely a place to start.

One of the greatest blessings we have as citizens of the United States is the authority to choose our leaders. Though not the only method of accountability, voting is one of the checks and balances built into our system of government.

Biblically speaking, the privilege of voting is seen as good for society in both the civil and ecclesiastical realms. Thus, God lays out guidelines for choosing civil leaders in Exodus 18 and in Deuteronomy 17. He also gives us direction on choosing our church leaders in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 for deacons, and 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 for elders. Voting is a gift from God. It is our duty as Christians to use this gift wisely.

From the start of our constitutional system, the most powerful branch of our national government, Congress (and specifically the House of Representatives), was directly accountable to the people with elections being held every two years. Until 1913 and the passing of the 17th Amendment, the states also had a “vote” in our constitutional order. Senators were appointed by, and therefore accountable to, the states they represented.

In order for a voting system to be trusted by its citizens, it must be a trustworthy system. Our current methods (at least in some states) leave room for questioning. As witnessed during the last two presidential election cycles, the party that loses tends to believe the other party somehow stole the election—Clinton in 2016 and Trump in 2020. However, in the article titled, “Election Controversies,” you will see that this is nothing new in our nation’s history. This does not mean, however, that we can’t make our system better. There are ways to do so. In fact, we’ve laid out some principles and ideas for achieving an honest voting system.

In the end, it is important to remember what Mike Winther continually stressed to his audiences: the goal isn’t more voters, but more educated principled voters. We have the leaders we deserve--perhaps even better than we deserve—as elections reflect society. Our goal should be to conform our thinking to God’s revealed will in Scripture—and then share that with our fellow man. God has set limits on civil governments. He has given us a framework for evaluating potential leaders. Voting is one tool God has given us to make sure our leaders submit themselves to His rule. No man has absolute authority, only Jesus. May the Lord give us grace as we labor to regain liberty and uphold justice—one election cycle at a time.

In Christ,

Brian Eschen
Executive Director

IS VOTER TURNOUT THE SOLUTION?

By Michael Winther, Founder

We frequently see public service messages telling people to “get out and vote”. It is not at all uncommon to hear radio talk show hosts tell us that the problems in our country are the result of voter apathy. Admonishing non-voters to vote sounds noble, but is it actually good policy? Do our nation’s problems really stem from electoral non-participation?

Let’s start by identifying the ultimate goal of our electoral process. Is our ultimate goal to achieve broad participation—or is our goal to make good decisions? If widespread participation in voting is the ultimate goal, then we could mandate citizen participation in every election, but I seriously doubt this would improve our government one bit. I would suggest that quality decisions are more important than the level of participation by voters. Therefore, widespread participation is, at best, secondary to our ultimate goal of good decision-making.

In general, there is little, if any, correlation between the number of decision makers and the quality of a decision. If you are very sick and need a medical diagnosis and appropriate treatment, would you prefer the diagnosis and treatment be decided by a majority vote of 100 average people, or would you prefer the diagnosis and treatment

“It is a misnomer that our greatest duty as citizens is to vote. Our first and greatest duty is to be principled and informed. Our second duty, voting, is only virtuous if it has been preceded by the first duty.”

to come from one skilled and trained physician? Of course, most people would choose the skilled physician. The committee of 100 may have the best of intentions, but without good training and experience they are a poor decision-making body.



Given a choice between quantity and quality, most people would choose quality. Should political decision-making be any different?

Over the last 50 to 75 years, Americans have been conditioned to place their political trust in the concept of democracy. We are constantly told that democracy is the best form of government and that the quality of our political decisions improves as we become more democratic. But this was clearly not the prevailing view at the founding of our nation.

It is a misnomer that our greatest duty as citizens is to vote. Our first and greatest duty is to be principled and informed. Our second duty, voting, is only virtuous if it has been preceded by the first duty. We see numerous media campaigns that tell us how important it is that we vote, but when was the last time you saw a campaign that stressed the importance of being an informed and principled voter? The truth is rarely politically correct. In fact, we are so conditioned by mindless, feel-good public relations that the truth often sounds unpalatable. Perhaps our public service messages should sound like this instead:

Are you confused about the issues? Are you unsure of where the candidates stand?

THEN DON'T VOTE....STAY HOME!

CAMPAIGN REFORM

By Michael Winther, Founder

As dissatisfaction with our government and our lawmakers increases, people begin to take a closer look at our campaign and election systems. As with every issue, it is important that we are careful not to attempt “solutions” until we have identified the root causes of the problem.

What are some of the possible causes of poor decision-making on the part of our elected officials? Some observers blame lobbying by special interests, others accuse politicians of political corruption, some point to the lure of power, and others just blame incumbency. It is easy to get mired in an evaluation of the whole political process – in fact, entire libraries are devoted to these issues – but the real issue is much simpler. We want lawmakers who follow God’s laws and who abide by the Constitution. Simple enough?

How do we achieve this? The answer is also relatively simple: by re-electing those who meet the standard and by un-electing those who do not. The real blame must rest squarely with the voters, not the politicians. No electoral system will succeed if the voters do not do their job. This is an important point that must be emphasized: NO ELECTORAL SYSTEM WILL SUCCEED IF THE VOTERS DO NOT DO THEIR JOB. Lobbying restrictions will fail, spending limits will fail, term limits will fail, public financing of campaigns will fail, and every other attempt to “tweak” the system will fail unless the voters do their job.

Do some elected officials lack character? Yes. Do most elected officials lack understanding of right and wrong? Yes. Unfortunately, the same can be said of our electorate and our population in general. We don’t want to admit it, but the ugly side of our elected officials may just be a reflection of us.

Now that we have better identified the source of our problem, many of the arguments for some popular campaign and election reform ideas may lose their merit.

“No electoral system will succeed if the voters do not do their job.”



As other proposals for reform might surface, let’s evaluate such proposals based on principled criteria, remembering that it is first and foremost the job of the electorate to be properly informed and make decisions based on principle

“We don’t want to admit it, but the ugly side of our elected officials may just be a reflection of us.”

and not pragmatism. Finally, we must also remember that it is important that we reject any “solution” that violates an individual’s God-given rights.

For example, here are a few questions we might ask about campaign reform issues, specifically regarding attempts to limit campaign spending:

Does a citizen have a right to express their opinion? Does this citizen have a right to spend as much of their money as they desire to communicate their opinion? Does a candidate for public office surrender these rights just because he or she is seeking such a position?

CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED?

By Brian Eschen, Executive Director

It is not uncommon to hear a recently elected politician declare that his victory in the last election cycle is a mandate from the people to accomplish some stated agenda. This idea seems to match a phrase found in our Declaration of Independence which states, “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”

Do rulers receive their powers from the people? Should an election be considered a mandate from the people to the elected official to accomplish what the people desire? What is it we are actually tasked with doing in an election? It will be helpful for us to look at these questions from both a biblical and constitutional perspective.

Biblical Perspective

For Christians, any discussion of authority and power must begin with the source of all authority – the triune God of the Bible. When Christ gives the “Great Commission” to the disciples, He prefaces that task with the fact that He has all authority in heaven and on earth (see Matthew 28:18). Paul also reminds us in Ephesians 1 that Christ has been seated far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion. Since all authority and power reside in Christ, all earthly power and authority must be delegated from Him. If this is indeed the case, then human rulers can only exercise power and authority that has been granted to them from God.

“Only God can define the role of the civil government, and He has done so in the Bible (see Romans 13:1-7). Any just powers residing in civil government, therefore, come not from the consent of the governed, but from the Word of Almighty God. Elections merely appoint individuals to use those powers to accomplish their God-given tasks.”



This is equally true in the case of family government, church government, or civil government. Thus, Christ can be described as the “king of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15) and the “ruler of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5). All civil leaders are accountable to Him based on the authority that He has granted. If ever a ruler steps outside his God-given authority, he is subject to God’s judgment.

King Uzziah in the Old Testament is a perfect illustration of this truth (see 2 Chronicles 26). An otherwise good king, Uzziah became “proud” when he tasted military success at home and abroad. As his fame spread, he got in his head that he could use his power to burn incense in the temple – something that only the priests were given authority to do. Azariah, the priest, warned the king not to overstep his authority: “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests...Go out of the sanctuary for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God.” Sadly, the king ignored this warning to his own destruction. For his rebellion, God struck him with leprosy and he lived out his remaining days in isolation – away from people and the House of the Lord.

While God had given authority to men to burn incense in His temple, it was not given to the civil leaders but to the church leaders. When King Uzziah decided to step outside his God-ordained limits, he was judged for that rebellion. The fact that he was popular and loved by the people for his other leadership traits made no difference to the Lord. God has given a specific role to civil leaders. That role cannot change without God’s specific instruction,

“When a politician claims he has a mandate from the people to do something not granted by God or the Constitution, you know that person will do more harm than good.”

not even if the people want it to change. Only God can define the role of the civil government, and He has done so in the Bible (see Romans 13:1-7). Any just powers residing in civil government, therefore, come not from the consent of the governed, but from the Word of Almighty God. Elections merely appoint individuals to use those powers to accomplish their God-given tasks. As Mike Winther would often remind us, “The source determines the use.”

Constitutional Perspective

At the start of our nation, we as a people rejected democracy as a form of government. It was widely recognized as a tyrannical system with the majority tyrannizing the minority. For some, this comes as a surprise. After all, don't we vote?

The distinction between democracy and our republican form of government is made evident in the purpose of voting. First of all, it is worth noticing that of the four offices listed in the Constitution (Representatives, Senators, President, and Justices) only one of those offices was directly elected by the people. This created an environment where competing interests held the others in check. Most notably, the states had recourse to hold the federal government in check in their appointment of Senators and electors in the

Electoral College. Judges were appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate and held accountable by Congress. The original purpose of voting was less about the governed mandating the actions of the elected than it was about holding those in power accountable.

Even now, though we have moved towards a more democratic form of government, with the direct election of Senators and the popular election of electors, those elected to office still are not granted power to accomplish the will of the people. The powers granted to our federal office holders are expressly stated in the Constitution. Our Constitution is referred to as an “enumerated powers” document. In other words, only those powers listed in the Constitution are granted to the federal government. All other powers are reserved to the people or the states respectively (see the 9th and 10th Amendments). For this reason, John Adams reminded his generation that our republic is a “government of laws, not of men.” Voting, then, does not confer any new power on the person elected. We are a nation founded on the rule of law, not the rule of the majority.

Conclusion

What then do the people grant by voting? Voting is for the purpose of appointing an individual to an office that already has predetermined powers. Those powers are ultimately set by God (the highest authority), and in the context of the United States, by the Constitution (a subordinate authority). When a politician claims he has a mandate from the people to do something not granted by God or the Constitution, you know that person will do more harm than good. Remind him of his duty before God and the people, and if needed, vote him out.



VOTING IN THE BIBLE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

God allowed voting for:

- Having God as our King
- Choosing Civil Leaders
- Separating from Political Alliances
- Adopting Laws
- Choosing Church Leaders

Scripture references:

- Exodus 19:4-8; 1 Samuel 8:7; 10:18-19
- Exodus 18:17-27 with Deuteronomy 1:12-18; 1 Samuel 8:4-22; 12:12-13; Joshua 18:4; Judges 11:11; Deuteronomy 17:14-15
- 1 Kings 12:16-24
- Exodus 19:7-8; 24:3-7; Deuteronomy 5:27-29
- Acts 1:23; 6:5-6; 14:23*

*Note that the Greek word translated “ordained” or “appointed” in Acts 14:23 in our English Bibles literally means to select by the raising of hands.

IS VOTING A RIGHT?

By Michael Winther, Founder

When we evaluate the concept of rights, it is important that we understand that any “right” must be understood in light of a relationship.

In a contract, for example, two business partners may outline the rights and responsibilities of each partner. They may each have responsibility for contributing half of the startup capital and doing half of the business’s work. In return, they each have a “right” to one-half of the business’s profits. This right to half of the profit must be understood only in the context of that business—and the contract that they both signed. We cannot say that either of the partners has a right to one-half of the profits from some other business.

If partner A in our example fulfills his contractual obligations, he is entitled to half of the profit from that business. If Partner B were to prevent partner A from receiving his half of the profit, we would say that there was a violation of the rights bestowed by the contract. The rights, in this case, come from the contract.

“The source of a people’s civil rights is a fundamental question in the study of political science. The source of these rights determines the use of the rights.”

When we speak of rights in the context of civil government, we often call them “civil rights”. These are the rights that I want to discuss.

The source of a people’s civil rights is a fundamental question in the study of political science. The source of these rights determines the use of the rights. If God grants our civil rights, then government cannot legitimately infringe these rights. These God-given rights are not a product of citizenship, but rather they apply equally to all people regardless of geography or citizenship. Only God can limit a God-given right.



In the civil sphere, there are two kinds of rights: God-given rights and government-given rights.

Humans have a God-given right to any ethical actions (and perhaps, even some unethical actions) that do not violate the rights of others. These inalienable rights are broad and far-reaching. They include, but are not limited to, freedom of speech, religion, assembly, travel, and property.

In contrast to these unalienable rights to which we often refer, there are some rights that are granted by government. A government employee, for example, has rights and responsibilities: responsibilities to do certain work and a right to collect pay for that work. This right is a government-granted right, granted to the employee when they were hired for the job.

We need to be very careful in distinguishing between God-given rights and government-given rights. There is a tendency for governments (and people) to allow certain human actions (liberties) that are actually God-given rights to be re-classified as government-granted rights. We need to be careful, even jealous, to protect the status of our fundamental liberties as God-given rights.

I would suggest that voting may be a government-granted right. If this is accurate, then governments can legitimately

regulate the exercise of this right. These government regulations of the right might include: limiting the right to only those who are citizens or limiting the age of suffrage.

If voting is a God-given right, then it would be illegitimate for any government to limit the right to those who are citizens. If, however, voting is a government-granted right, then government can limit the vote to those who meet citizenship standards.

My position here may seem strange to some, and I don't want to be misunderstood. I do believe that voting is important, but the questions and controversies over who should be allowed to vote are far less important than the task of restraining government to its proper role. If I had a choice between proper government with no vote or improper government with a vote, I would always choose the former.

In some circumstances, voting may be a tool to limit the improper expansion of government, but with equal (or perhaps greater) frequency, voting can be a tool that allows the inappropriate expansion of government.

In his classic work *The Law*, Frederic Bastiat devotes several pages to the concept of voting (also referred to as “suffrage” or “the franchise”). I would encourage my reader to study Bastiat’s entire work—it is only about 65 pages long. I have captured two paragraphs out of this section because I believe they are thought-provoking.

I wish merely to observe here that this controversy over universal suffrage (as well as most other political questions) which agitates, excites, and overthrows nations, would lose

“My position here may seem strange to some, and I don't want to be misunderstood. I do believe that voting is important, but the questions and controversies over who should be allowed to vote are far less important than the task of restraining government to its proper role.”

“...voting is just one among many tools for keeping government in check, and it is only an effective tool if those who hold the voting franchise actually understand the proper role of government and the need to restrain government to that proper role.”

nearly all of its importance if the law had always been what it ought to be. In fact, if law were restricted to protecting all persons, all liberties, and all properties; if law were nothing more than the organized combination of the individual's right to self defense; if law were the obstacle, the check, the punisher of all oppression and plunder — is it likely that we citizens would then argue much about the extent of the franchise?

Under these circumstances, is it likely that the extent of the right to vote would endanger that supreme good, the public peace? Is it likely that the excluded classes would refuse to peaceably await the coming of their right to vote? Is it likely that those who had the right to vote would jealously defend their privilege? If the law were confined to its proper functions, everyone's interest in the law would be the same. Is it not clear that, under these circumstances, those who voted could not inconvenience those who did not vote?

I do believe that the purpose of voting is to hold our elected officials accountable. I don't ever want unaccountable officials, so I would never establish a system of government without this important accountability system. But voting is just one tool among many for keeping government in check, and it is only an effective tool if those who hold the voting franchise actually understand the proper role of government and the need to restrain government to that proper role. Voters must be philosophically sound in their politics – and most importantly, they must have the ethical fortitude to stand for this philosophy at the ballot box.

While I don't see voting itself as a God-given right, I do see it as a method of accountability. Therefore, it is a tool, however imperfect, for the preservation of our God-given rights.

WHY CONSERVATIVES AND CHRISTIANS LOSE ELECTIONS

By Michael Winther, Founder

(Although this article was written after a previous election, its content is still applicable today!)

The 2006 elections are over. Conservatives, Christians, and those with traditional values won a few races, but lost many, many more. There were many hotly-contested races—races in which Christians and conservatives invested fortunes of time and money... but still lost. Was this time and money wasted? Not necessarily, but in most cases, it does mean that conservative Christians are not in touch with the voters. That’s right, conservative Christians are the ones that are out of touch with voters. This is because Christians live outside the norms of modern society. More and more, it is true that the voter’s worldview and understanding of the issues conforms more closely to a liberal or atheist candidate than it does to a conservative or Christian candidate.

“More and more, it is true that the voter’s worldview and understanding of the issues conforms more closely to a liberal or atheist candidate than it does to a conservative or Christian candidate.”



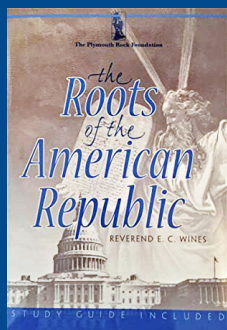
Campaigns decided in advance

Many of the election results, whether for candidates or initiatives, were not really decided by the recent campaign. These contests were decided 5, 10, and even 20 years ago, by the education of our citizens. Effective education, on any side of the political spectrum, can make even the most sophisticated and frequently-repeated campaign messages useless. Once a person’s worldview is well constructed and reinforced, every message is filtered through that worldview. If the worldview is comprehensive and consistent (regardless of whether it is right or wrong), it is very difficult to alter any opinion held by that person.

The vast majority of education in America, whether formal or informal, is directed by people with an atheist, socialist, or relativist worldview. Public schools, colleges, universities,

Our System of Voting was Modeled After the Hebrew Republic

For an explanation of this and the origins behind the American system of government, we recommend *The Roots of the American Republic* by Reverend E. C. Wines



The true origins of the American Republic have been largely forgotten, obscured...or denied. It is essential now that we recognize and reclaim our heritage. That is why this book—originally titled *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews* (1853), then republished as *The Hebrew Republic* (1980) and now as *The Roots of the American Republic*—is so important.

It is the grand theme of this work by Reverend E. C. Wines that the origin of the American Republic lies ultimately in the laws of Moses and thus in divine wisdom based on eternal Biblical principles of truth, justice and the sovereignty of God.

Available online at www.PlymRock.org/Bookstore

“It is time for “traditional values” voters to think long term and begin teaching the worldviews that will win elections 10, 15, and 20 years from now. ”

trade associations, professional associations, think tanks, and the media are dominated by these worldviews. Who pays for the propagation of these perspectives? Because many of these institutions are publicly funded, everyone pays—including those who disagree. A conservative Christian who tithes ten percent to his church but also contributes \$500 or \$1000 dollars every other year to a political candidate is outspending himself in favor of relativism, atheism, and socialism through his tax dollars and media purchases.

The need to think long-term

It is time for “traditional values” voters to think long-term and begin teaching the worldviews that will win elections 10, 15, and 20 years from now. Those who oppose limited government and biblical moral standards have worked their long-term plans for decades—while Christians too often only work one election at a time. It is supreme

irony that our opponent’s strategies come, in large part, from Scripture. Whether they know it or not, those with opposing worldviews often use biblical strategy to promote unbiblical agendas.

One of these biblical strategies is the importance of laying a strong foundation. The foundation determines the tilt of the structure—will the structure be “true”, or will it lean one direction or the other. Unfortunately, the all-important foundation is often ignored in favor of attempts to repair the exterior of the structure. Conservatives and Christians will readily invest in a political campaign because it is visible, it is immediate, and it seems so urgent. Fixing a foundation, however, is not visible, not immediate, and never seems all that urgent...but it is!

CONCLUSION

The Institute for Principle Studies exists to teach biblically-based principles and strategies to the church and society. These principles are the foundation repairs that will straighten our societal structures. These foundations create the worldviews through which all Americans will filter messages from schools, media, and political campaigns. Even though the results are not immediate, let’s invest in the long-term plan that will really make a difference.

PLAN NOW TO CHANGE THE FUTURE

Include IPS in Your Will or Trust

The battle to return civil government to its biblically-prescribed role is a long-term fight. As such, the cause will outlast most of us. But there is a way to contribute toward the end goal now and leave a legacy of liberty for your posterity.

The simplest way is by leaving a charitable bequest to IPS in your will or trust. This can be as simple as modifying your will or living trust to include the Institute for Principle Studies. Just include our name, a dollar amount or percentage, and our Federal Tax ID# 20-3366904. That’s it.

Of course, there are many other planned giving options beyond including IPS in your will or trust. We encourage you to consult with your tax advisor, attorney, or financial planner. There may be a better option that fits well in your specific circumstances while maximizing the benefit to IPS and minimizing taxes.

Most importantly, we’re all capable of leaving the world a better place than we found it. With some forethought and planning, the difference can be remarkable. The next time you consider your legacy, we hope you’ll consider IPS as well. The cause of biblically-based government is both worthy and noble.



ELECTION CONTROVERSIES

By Sherwin Heyboer, Christian School Civics Teacher

Following the presidential election in 2016, for the fifth time in U.S. history, the president elect lost the popular vote. In the ensuing four years which were plagued with greater than usual partisan vitriol, the losing party's candidate consistently claimed the election was stolen. Come election 2020, which for the first time saw mass mail-in voting due to fears of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, Donald Trump, while having a comfortable lead at the late hours of Election Day saw that lead wane upon waking the next morning. As the days marched forth and mailed in ballots were still being counted, what appeared to be a victory for the incumbent on Election Day was looking increasingly like an inevitable defeat.

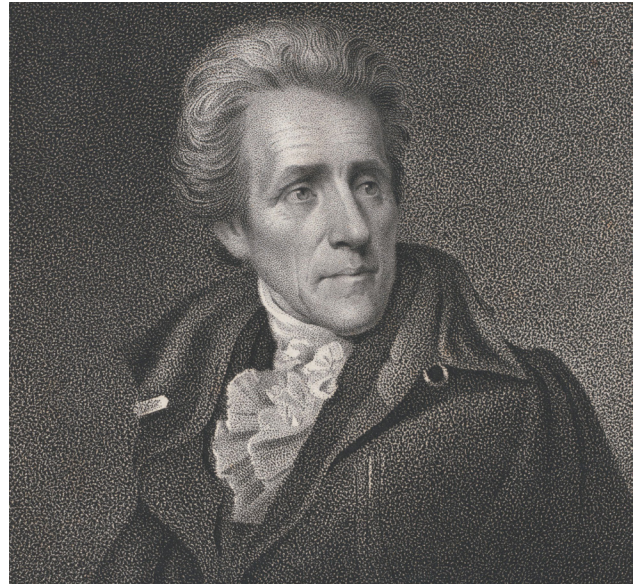
Cries of fraud, corruption, and cheating came from the President and his supporters. The evidence to support these claims was to be presented on January 6, 2021, the day the election results were to be certified as some members of Congress pledged to challenge the outcome. Instead, a rally of supporters for President Trump was followed by a riot at the Capitol causing the certification process to be disrupted and then continued later during the very late evening hours of January 6 and early morning hours of January 7.

The events of that day took the air out of any real challenge to the election results in the swing-states, and Joe Biden was certified as the president elect. The events of those two months disheartened Americans as they saw the people of their country and the politicians of their government more disunited than ever. Many expressed concerns over our nation's disunity and fear of impending chronic political violence in the future.

This crisis, however, is only one of numerous election controversies from past U.S. elections. And like the others, it offers us some lessons. Let's look at a few.

1800:

Already in 1800, the young United States experienced its first election crisis when Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr received the same number of Electoral College votes. This was the first and (so far) only Electoral College tie in American history. Thankfully the Constitution anticipated this possibility and laid out in Article II, Section I that in such cases the House of Representatives would choose the



Andrew Jackson

President. To prevent another such tie in the future, the 12th Amendment was adopted.

More important than the election crisis of 1800, however, was the context of that particular presidential election. The years prior saw the beginnings of two political parties taking shape over foreign and political-economic policy differences. The climax of tension between the two developing political parties were the Alien and Sedition Acts, both of which were blatantly unconstitutional and threatened the founding principles of the nascent Republic. The fact that both Jefferson and Burr easily received a majority of Electoral College votes led the eventual president-elect, Thomas Jefferson, to declare "a return to the principles of the Revolution." In this case, those who were part of the Electoral College used their vote to remove elected officials who abused their authority.

1824:

A more serious election crisis occurred in 1824. This competition for the White House saw four nominees, came during a time when an increasing number of states (18 out of 24) chose their electors by popular vote, and thus, was the first to track the popular vote. After the votes were counted, Andrew Jackson won 99 Electoral College votes and 43.1% of the popular vote. The next closest was John Q. Adams,

who earned 84 Electoral College votes and 30.5% of the popular vote. William Crawford came in third and Henry Clay in fourth, both with substantially fewer votes. Although Jackson won most of the Electoral College votes, he did not have the required majority. Per the recently-passed 12th Amendment, the House of Representatives would choose among the top three. That eliminated Henry Clay from becoming president, but, as Speaker of the House, he used his influence to get John Q. Adams elected. This made Andrew Jackson the only person to win a plurality of the Electoral College and popular votes but not also win the presidency. Later, when President Adams appointed Henry Clay as Secretary of State, a position that had been a stepping-stone to the presidency for the previous four executives, Jackson supporters denounced the whole affair as a “Corrupt Bargain.” The basic interpretation is stated succinctly by the editors at UShistory.org: “To Jacksonians the Adams-Clay deal symbolized a corrupt system where elite insiders pursued their own interests without heeding the will of the people.” During the next presidential election, Jackson supporters routed Adams, punishing the incumbents for the perceived corruption four years prior.

1830s – 1892:

Over a period of decades, states opened up the voting franchise to all white males and, at the same time, shifted from state legislatures to a popular vote system when choosing electors. This change made the United States increasingly democratic. As a result, political candidates began to campaign for votes by making various promises, voters became more loyal to their party than the Constitution, and Election Day became a raucous holiday as voters were treated to BBQs, parades, and copious amounts of alcohol. Mix that with the fact that ballots at the time were not secret, and voters had to literally be willing to fight for their candidate. Voter fraud and corruption were not uncommon during these years. Supporters were encouraged to “vote early and vote often”, party loyalists were hired to intimidate and beat up opponents, and bosses and landlords threatened employees and tenants with expulsion should they not vote the “right” way. It wasn’t until the Australian (secret) ballot was adopted that this violence and corruption was mitigated.

“These few (among many) examples of election controversies demonstrate the importance of an election system that fosters honesty, accountability, and trust.”



1860:

The presidential election of 1860 took on crisis proportions because it saw the victory of a candidate from a purely sectional party. There had been decades of struggle between the agricultural South and the increasingly industrial North over the role the federal government would play in the Republic’s political-economy. In 1860, seven States seceded following the election of Abraham Lincoln, whose political party platform stood for practically everything an entire section of the Union opposed. Once Lincoln was inaugurated and called for 75,000 soldiers to force the seceded States back into the union, four more States left. Soon the broken Union would be at war. Several factors help to explain the growing divide that would lead to the breakup of the United States. One thing, however, is clear: people with starkly different views on the government’s proper role find it increasingly difficult to stay united the more they fear that their opponents will use political power against them.

1864:

During the War Between the States, the president instructed his military commanders to grant registered Republicans a leave of absence so they could vote, but to keep Democrats and any others in the field so they could not. In the border state of Maryland, where opposition to the war was great, federal soldiers were sent into the cities and told to vote, even though they were not residents of those states. Federal soldiers were also sent to polling stations to intimidate voters into voting Republican. The Republican Congress was so worried about the pervasive antiwar sentiment, they even created three new states – Kansas, West Virginia, and Nevada – to reelect the president in 1864.

1876:

Eleven years after the Civil War, Democratic presidential candidate Samuel Tilden won 184 Electoral College votes to Rutherford B. Hayes' 164, leaving him one vote shy of the presidency and Hayes short twenty. As it turned out, however, there were 20 Electoral College votes in dispute: nineteen in the three southern states still living under Reconstruction and one in the state of Oregon. In order to decide who would get the twenty disputed Electoral College votes, Congress established a 15-member commission consisting of eight Republicans and seven Democrats. After votes were cast along party lines, the commission awarded the twenty Electoral Votes to Hayes making him the next president. Democrats threatened to filibuster and block the official vote counting in response, which led to negotiations establishing the Compromise of 1877. For the next four years, opponents of President Hayes referred to him as "His Fraudulency".

1930s:

During the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt took advantage of a new kind of patronage through many of his New Deal programs. In addition to the usual understanding of patronage – awarding loyal political supporters with traditional jobs in the government bureaucracy – FDR found ways to manipulate the newly-created jobs in the federal programs of the New Deal to his political benefit. Both loyal supporters and "on the fence" voters were rewarded with New Deal programs, with an influx of federal spending just in time to be felt before an election. This tactic ensured party loyalty and pushed undecided voters towards the Democratic ticket. Even relief spending shied away from solidly Republican and Democratic areas so it could be sent to more politically strategic locations. Recipients who needed the most aid took a backseat to those who were more politically expedient.

1948:

Most election controversies that people focus on are general elections and at the federal level. Lyndon B. Johnson's primary victory in 1948 over Texas Governor Coke Stevenson can't be ignored, though, since LBJ would later find himself as

“History shows us that whenever there are vast concentrations of power, there is far greater potential for evil to flourish.”



John F. Kennedy's vice-presidential running mate and, eventually, president after Kennedy's assassination. The contest between Johnson and Stevenson initially ended in a run-off. The morning after the run-off Stevenson was leading by 854 votes. However, it was discovered that returns from a particular county had not yet been counted, a county which happened to overwhelmingly favor Johnson. Two days later, more returns came in from the Rio Grande Valley, but still, the State Election Bureau announced that Stevenson had won by 349 votes. However, by Friday, precincts in the Rio Grande Valley made corrections to their tallies narrowing Stevenson's margin of victory to 157. Also on that Friday, Jim Wells County filed amended returns that gave Johnson another 200 votes. This made him the winner by a difference of 87 votes. It was later discovered that a man working for a powerful South Texas rancher changed the total for Johnson from 765 to 965 by curling the 7 into a 9. Those extra 200 votes happened to be written in a different color ink than all the others, the names were in alphabetical order, and were all in the same handwriting. All attempts by Stevenson to rectify the situation failed. The Democratic executive committee declared Johnson to be the winner. Years later, Luis Salas, an election judge in Jim Wells County, acknowledged the fraud and his role in it.

“Certainly, elections can help us contain government and punish abuse, but without a biblical understanding of government’s legitimate authority, elections will make only a marginal difference.”

2000:

This election controversy was not too long ago. With just a few hundred votes separating George W. Bush and Al Gore in Florida, lawsuits, recounts, and heated arguments over “hanging chads” began in full force. In the end, the Supreme Court had the final word as it ended the recount, thus leaving Florida in Bush’s column. For the first time in 112 years, a candidate won the presidency without prevailing in the popular vote. The opposing party’s reaction was not subtle, with claims of a stolen election and even calls for abolishing the Electoral College. Having the Supreme Court decide Florida instead of the people of Florida left a sour taste in people’s mouths.

Lessons:

These few (among many) examples of election controversies demonstrate the importance of an election system that fosters honesty, accountability, and trust. Early in the Republic’s history, voters used elections to hold office holders accountable, as politicians who abused their authority were replaced. Over time, however, more and more decision-making has been taken from localities and other spheres of society, such as the family and the church, and concentrated into fewer and fewer hands at state and federal levels.

History shows us that whenever there are vast concentrations of power, there is far greater potential for evil to flourish. As a result, people’s ability to live together peacefully is weakened as citizens with competing worldviews fear political rivals will use the force of government to impose upon them controls they believe to be unjust. This fear and the resulting perception of “us vs them” is the natural consequence of expanding democracy within the context of a greater centralization of power. Incentives to control the election system increase as do incentives to cheat in order to protect yourself from your political opponents, or dare it be said, enemies.

Certainly, elections can help us contain government and punish abuse, but without a biblical understanding of government’s legitimate authority, elections will make only a marginal difference. If the United States are to preserve the liberty bestowed upon them by the biblical foundations that were laid in the beginning, then the American people will need to recover the wisdom of subsidiarity, federalism, and decentralization of power, along with a renewed belief in the worldview from whence they came.



PRINCIPLES OF A GOOD VOTING SYSTEM

- Value a secret ballot
- One man, one vote (no ballot stuffing)
- Limit to eligible voters
- Accountability
 - Ability for recount
 - Ability to detect fraud
- Public confidence
- Reasonably fast results
- Accurate tabulation

IDEAS FOR ACHIEVING THESE PRINCIPLES

- Advanced voter registration
- In-person voter registration
- Paper ballots – even if computers are used
- Keep a paper trail
- Unique identifier on each ballot
- Ability to check how your ballot was tabulated
- Require voter identification – signatures can change
- Voting done in one day
- Limit early and mail-in voting
- Frequent updates of voter rolls

TRAINING OUR CHILDREN TO BE CITIZENS

By Michael Winther, Founder

Proverbs 29:2: “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked rule, the people mourn.”

The right to vote is the right to choose to whom we will hand the reins of significant power: a power that impacts real people. How do we prepare our children for the great responsibilities of voting and of citizenship in general?

Human beings live in community. God designed us this way and He cares about the way we choose to live within our communities. As a means of helping us live together, God gave us institutions that bear real authority. Scripture identifies three of these God-ordained institutions: the family, the church, and the civil government. Because God designed these institutions for our good, it should not surprise us that the Bible has plenty to say about them, with ample instruction about what they should and should not do.

To equip our children to be God-honoring members and leaders in all three of these institutions, we must seek to immerse them in all that Scripture teaches about these spheres of authority. If we do this, they will know how to help promote righteousness at home, at church, and at the ballot box. But as election season looms in front of us, how should we be teaching our children about their roles as Christian citizens?

Develop a heart for renewal

Scripture commands us to pursue righteousness. Unfortunately, we often compartmentalize this objective and relegate it to a focus on personal and family righteousness. We're less interested in discovering what is right and wrong in the realm of civil government. But followers of Jesus should be bringers of transformation in

“The right to vote is the right to choose to whom we will hand the reins of significant power: a power that impacts real people.”



every sphere of life, including matters of public policy. These policy matters have a real world effect on many people who are cared for deeply by God, especially the weakest members of society.

Principles, principles, principles

When it comes to modern politics, the Bible might not seem a likely place to look for instruction. After all, what does Scripture have to say about modern issues like capital gains taxes, terrorism, poverty, immigration, deficits, or health care? To be sure, some of these terms will not be found in your Bible's concordance. But that doesn't mean that Scripture is silent on these important issues.

Much of the instruction we find in God's Word comes to us through principles. For example, the Bible might not explicitly tell us that it is wrong to steal a car, but we know that this behavior is wrong because the principle of not stealing is well-supported throughout Scripture.

You might be surprised to learn that each of the modern political issues mentioned above are also addressed in Scripture, either directly or by principle. Our responsibility is to diligently seek and find these biblical tools that will make us better citizens.

Learn along with your children

We as parents should not assume that we already have all of the answers. Additionally, it is hard to teach things

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that we never learned. Therefore, we need to be constantly learning more ourselves and then passing this knowledge on to our children, inviting them into this process of discovery and application alongside us.

SOME PRACTICAL STEPS

Have family discussions about how your family will vote. Let your kids see you researching an issue. Let them hear their parents discussing the candidates and issues, and especially let them hear you asking the question, “What does God’s Word say about this?”

Take your kids with you to vote

Let them “participate” in the process by going with you to vote. Participating in this way can make the process seem far more real and important.

Don’t put the cart before the horse

Elections are important, but before we can be good voters, we must know the biblical principles of proper government. Voting can actually be counterproductive if we vote unwisely. As fallen humans, we tend to be overconfident in our views, which is why we need the wisdom and discernment that comes from immersing ourselves in biblical principles

Don’t be “taken in” by the media circus

The media focuses almost exclusively on the campaign for President, to the exclusion of other “lesser” political races. Make sure that your children understand that media attention is not the measure of importance in any area of life, especially politics. From campaigns for House and Senate seats, to state and local races, all the way down to local city and school board elections, all of these political races are important and offer very practical places to teach our children the important role to which God has called us as citizens.

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THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: SIDE SHOW OR MAIN EVENT?

By Michael Winther, Founder



During each four-year presidential cycle, much of America becomes completely enamored with the drama of the presidential election. We follow the media as they follow the presidential candidates; we become the paparazzi following the paparazzi. For many Americans, the presidential race is a hybridization of entertainment, drama, sport, and ultimately, distraction. Although the presidential election is certainly important, I believe that our current perspective on both the President and the presidential election is harmful to our efforts to produce positive change in America.

While we are enticed into being presidential paparazzi, our attention is being diverted away from dozens of more important issues. Here are five things that we need to consider:

1. Election outcomes are a measurement of how well we are disciplining the nation

If our elections don't turn out the way we want, it is because we have not captured the hearts and minds of our countrymen. We want to elect a "good" president without first producing a "good" population. We want a president who supports the Constitution without a citizenry that supports the Constitution. We want the fruit without first plowing, planting, weeding, and watering. Disciplining always comes first.

2. The Presidential campaign can distract us from other, more immediate, issues

Even during election seasons, we have a plethora of important and urgent issues that need attention. Abortion, forced immunizations, government managed healthcare, and unconstitutional government surveillance of our citizens are just a few of the urgent issues that should be receiving our attention. Some of these issues come with immediate opportunities that will be missed without immediate action. But some people who should be soldiers in these battles are instead hypnotically engrossed in daily doses of presidential campaign theater that takes place on their radios, TV's, and news magazines.

It is always easier to be a spectator than it is to be a participant. But Christians must be players and activists, not just spectators with a remote control in our hands.

3. The presidency is the least important federal office

This is true both constitutionally and practically. Constitutionalist and advocates of limited government understand that modern presidents are exercising illegitimate and unconstitutional powers. Unfortunately, we contribute to these practices when we place too much importance on the office and the person who holds it. The real way to counter the imperial presidency is to elect congressmen who will hold the Chief Executive accountable. Unfortunately, we tend to place all of our attention on the race for the White House and ignore the races for the House and Senate.

“Although the presidential election is certainly important, I believe that our current perspective on both the President and the presidential election is harmful to our efforts to produce positive change in America.”

4. Actions speak louder than words

Have you ever heard someone say, “If candidate X would just say Y, then I could support him”?

We spend too much time listening to the words of the candidates, but remember that the words of the campaign are carefully chosen as part of a larger strategy. These campaign “positions” almost always evolve during the course of a campaign. Republicans move “right” in the primary and “left” in the general election. Not surprisingly, Democrats tend to do the opposite. And no one can deny that a candidate's campaign statements have often been poor predictors of their actual policies once elected.

Instead of putting too much stock into campaign promises, why don't we focus on looking at a candidate's actions? Instead of saying that we would support a candidate if he would just take a stronger stand on this or that issue, we should say that we will support candidates who were taking the right action 3 years ago. Unfortunately, our media doesn't want to talk much about how a presidential candidate voted when they were governors, senators, or congressmen. To do so would make the next 12 months of pre-election coverage unnecessary. That's not good for ratings, but it would sure make our job as voters easier.

5. We want to believe

Every con man selling a bogus investment scheme knows that his best tool for emptying your pocket is "hope". As human beings, we need hope, and we want it so badly that we will believe the unbelievable in order to attain it. "A risk-free 25% annual return on my investment?" "I hope it is true." "I want it to be true."

The problem, however, is not "hope", but misplaced hope. For example, we should place our financial hope in savings and sound investments that grow gradually and steadily, not in a get-rich-quick scheme. There is a great parallel here to politics, government, and the culture wars: rather than being drawn into a get-rich-quick scheme, though, we are often sucked into a get-righteous-quick scheme. We want to believe that electing the "right" president will fix our political and social problems—even though most of know, intellectually, that one president cannot "fix" America. Perhaps there is a subconscious belief that electing the "right" president will somehow free us of our personal obligation as believers to change the culture. Maybe we hope that having the right person in the White House will save us from the necessity of using our time and money to disciple the nation.

Let me be clear that this "hope" problem is not unique to any single candidate. Just because "hope" was a theme for Barack Obama's campaigns, does not mean that this

“Real social and political change will not come from any presidential campaign. It can only come from changing hearts and minds.”



problem is unique to a single candidate or party. It is equally true in both major political parties.

Much of the modern church has failed to provide Christians with a plan for social and political change, which would be real hope. Using the investment example, we could say that the church does not have a gradual and steady plan for societal transformation. Without such a plan, many concerned believers will desperately follow any con man who shows up and offers them hope—even unreasonable hope.

IPS exists to teach the principles of good government and to offer this gradual and steady plan for positive change. This is the real hope that our world needs.

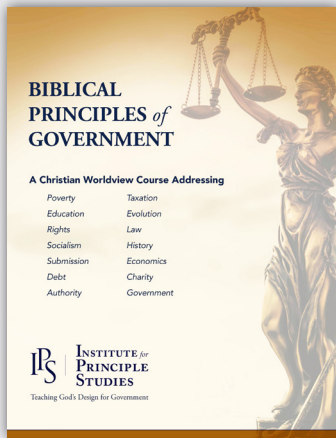
CONCLUSION

Yes, the presidency matters, but not as much as you might think. Real social and political change will not come from any presidential campaign. It can only come from changing hearts and minds. America (and the world) is in trouble because people with bad philosophy do have a gradual and steady strategy for advancing their beliefs. For over a century, these groups of people have committed their time and money to relentlessly advance their cause.

We need a gradual and steady strategy of our own, and we need to make sure that we are not entertained or diverted away from our most important work by the side-show of presidential campaign theater.

What is the Proper Role of Government?

This fundamental question lies at the heart of every political debate, whether spoken or unspoken.



It doesn't matter what the issue is. It could be fiscal policy, health care, abortion, foreign affairs, elections, voting, you name it. All government action hinges on the answer to this question.

Unfortunately, most Americans today think government is supposed to do far more than it was created to do. Thankfully, God's Word provides the right answer.

Taught by IPS Founder, Mike Winther, "Biblical Principles of Government" is a comprehensive worldview course exploring the biblical basis for the proper functions and limitations of government. Basically answering the question above. Tune-in to find out!

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