

Monday, January 26, 2026

## God & Governance: Session Two

### Defining Roles and Responsibilities at the Intersection of Faith and Politics

What does it truly mean to live as faithful Christians in a nation that was never intended to be a Christian theocracy? This session challenges us to examine the intersection of our faith and civic responsibilities with fresh eyes. We discover that America's founding fathers deliberately created a separation between church and state—not to diminish faith, but to protect both religious liberty and governmental integrity. The First Amendment wasn't designed to silence believers but to prevent the corruption that historically occurs when religious institutions and political power become entangled. We're reminded of the Johnson Amendment, which protects churches from becoming political pawns, ensuring that pulpits remain focused on the gospel rather than endorsing candidates for financial gain. The session calls us back to our primary biblical mandate found in 1 Timothy 2:1-2—to pray for those in authority over us. This isn't optional or occasional; it's a foundational responsibility. We're challenged to move beyond complaining about leaders to actually interceding for them by name, from the president to local commissioners. Beyond prayer, we're encouraged to vote thoughtfully, communicate with elected officials, and speak against immorality—but with crucial discernment. The example of John the Baptist confronting Herod reminds us that prophetic witness sometimes comes at great cost, yet Jesus himself didn't always confront political leaders directly. This calls us to prayerful discernment about when and how to engage, always maintaining consistency in our moral standards regardless of political affiliation.

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## Homework Assignment: Engaging with Civic Responsibility

1. **Watch Session 1:** If you haven't already, watch Session 1 of "God and Governance" to ensure you have a complete understanding of the foundation laid in the first session. Access it through the church app or website as recommended.
2. **Pray for Government Leaders:** Dedicate time each day this week to pray for specific government officials at local, state, and national levels. Use the list mentioned in the session (e.g., President, Vice President, local mayor, senators) to guide your prayers, and ask for wisdom and integrity for these leaders.
3. **Engage with Scripture:** Reflect on and write a brief paragraph about what 1 Timothy 2:1-2 and Romans 13:1-7 mean for Christians living in today's political climate. Consider how these passages might guide your interactions and attitudes toward governance and political engagement.
4. **Reflect on Current Issues:** Identify one current political or social issue that you feel is relevant to your community or country. Research this issue, noting different perspectives and potential solutions. Reflect on where this issue might fall in the "Die, Divide, Debate, Decide" framework discussed in the session, and write a paragraph on how you think the church could constructively engage with this issue.
5. **Communicate with an Elected Official:** Think of an issue you are passionate about or concerned with. Draft a letter or email to an elected official at the local, state, or national level, expressing your views respectfully and suggest any changes or actions you believe should be taken. If you choose not to send it, reflect on the reasons why and what might change your action in the future.

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## Questions to Ponder

- How does the Johnson Amendment protect the integrity of the church's mission, and what dangers might arise if churches became platforms for political endorsements in exchange for financial support?

- When Jesus refused to become an earthly king and instead focused on spiritual transformation, what does this reveal about God's priorities for his people versus establishing Christian governments?
- How can Christians maintain consistency when speaking out against immorality in government leaders, regardless of whether those leaders align with their political preferences?
- What is the difference between the church's responsibility to make disciples and any perceived mandate to create a Christian nation, and why does this distinction matter?
- In what ways might elevating political issues to 'die-for' or 'divide-for' status damage Christian unity and distract from the essential truths of the gospel?
- How should Christians navigate the tension between voting for a candidate with strong moral character versus one whose policies might better restrain societal immorality?
- Why does Jesus direct his harshest criticism toward religious leaders rather than government officials, and what does this teach us about accountability within the church?
- How can praying regularly and specifically for elected officials at all levels transform both our hearts and our engagement with civic responsibilities?
- What does it mean practically to love fellow Christians more than our political opinions, especially when discussing contentious issues that threaten to divide congregations?
- How might the separation of church and state actually protect religious freedom and prevent both governmental tyranny and the corruption of the church's spiritual mission?

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## **5-Day Devotional: Defining Roles and Responsibilities at the Intersection of Faith and Politics**

### **Day 1: Praying for Those in Authority**

#### **Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-4**

Paul's urgent instruction to pray for those in authority isn't optional—it's foundational to Christian citizenship. When we pray for leaders, we acknowledge God's sovereignty over earthly powers while fulfilling our spiritual responsibility. Notice Paul doesn't qualify this command based on whether we agree with our leaders' policies or character. Prayer transforms both the situation and the one praying. As you intercede for presidents, governors, mayors, and commissioners, you participate in God's work of restraining evil and promoting good governance. This week, commit to praying specifically by name for one leader at each level—local, state, and national. Remember, your prayers matter more than your political preferences.

### **Day 2: The Kingdom Not of This World**

#### **Reading: John 18:33-37**

When Jesus stood before Pilate, He declared a truth that revolutionizes Christian political engagement: "My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus had every opportunity to establish an earthly political kingdom, yet He consistently refused. His mission was redemption, not reformation of government structures. This doesn't mean Christians withdraw from civic life, but it does mean we never confuse political victory with spiritual triumph. Our primary allegiance belongs to Christ's eternal kingdom, not any earthly nation or party. When political debates threaten to divide the body of Christ, return to this foundational truth: we are citizens of heaven first. Let this reality shape how you engage politically—with conviction but without idolatry.

### **Day 3: Judging Rightly Within the Church**

#### **Reading: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13**

Paul draws a striking distinction: we're called to judge those inside the church, not those outside. God judges the world; we're responsible for maintaining holiness within the body of Christ. This means holding Christian leaders—especially pastors and teachers—to biblical standards of character and doctrine. When church leaders promote policies or behaviors contrary to Scripture, speaking truth becomes our responsibility. Yet we must do so with humility, following Matthew 18's process. The

world's immorality shouldn't surprise us, but compromise within the church demands our attention. Before critiquing government officials, examine whether you're holding your church community accountable to God's Word. Are you participating in biblical church discipline when needed?

## **Day 4: Wisdom Over Polarization**

### **Reading: James 3:13-18**

James contrasts earthly wisdom—characterized by bitter envy and selfish ambition—with heavenly wisdom that is "pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason." Our current political climate thrives on polarization, forcing complex issues into simplistic either-or categories. But godly wisdom resists this pressure. It acknowledges nuance, wrestles with difficult questions, and prioritizes relationships over being right. When facing political decisions, ask: Am I seeking wisdom from above, or am I merely echoing partisan talking points? Heavenly wisdom doesn't demand you abandon convictions, but it does require humility, gentleness, and a willingness to listen. Practice having one political conversation this week where your goal is understanding, not winning.

## **Day 5: The Measure of Faithfulness**

### **Reading: Matthew 23:1-12, 23-28**

Jesus reserved His harshest words for religious leaders who burdened people with heavy loads while neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness. His warning echoes today when Christian leaders elevate political positions to the level of gospel essentials, dividing the church over "decide-for" or "debate-for" issues. The Pharisees were technically correct on many points, but they missed what mattered most. Similarly, we can be politically informed yet spiritually bankrupt if we sacrifice love for ideological purity. Before demanding others adopt your political views as a test of faithfulness, examine whether you're placing burdens Jesus never intended. Are you majoring in minors? Focus this week on the "weightier matters"—justice, mercy, faithfulness—in your political engagement.

**As you complete this devotional, remember: your primary calling is to glorify God and make disciples, not to establish a Christian nation through political power. Participate faithfully in civic life while keeping your ultimate allegiance clear.**

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## Scripture References

- **1 Timothy 2:1-2** - "First of all, then, I urge..." (Referenced regarding praying for those in authority)
- **Mark 6:16-20** - John the Baptist speaking out against Herod's immorality and being imprisoned
- **Matthew 23** - The seven woes Jesus pronounced against the Pharisees and teachers of the law
  - **Matthew 23:1-4** - Specifically read regarding the hypocrisy of religious leaders
- **John 2** - Jesus driving the money changers out of the temple
- **1 Corinthians 5:9-13** - Paul's instruction about judging those inside the church and not associating with immoral people who call themselves believers
- **Matthew 18** - Referenced regarding church discipline and confronting a brother in sin
- **John 17** - Jesus' prayer for unity among believers ("that we should be one")
- **James** (chapter not specified) - Warning that teachers will be judged more strictly

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## Elected Officials

President of the United States <b>Donald Trump</b>	Oregon Governor <b>Tina Kotek</b>	Klamath County Commissioners <b>Andy Nichols</b> <b>Kelley Minty</b> <b>Derrick DeGroot</b>
Vice President of the United States <b>JD Vance</b>	Oregon US Senator <b>Jeff Merkley</b>	Klamath County Sheriff <b>Shane Mitchell</b>
Speaker of the House <b>Mike Johnson</b>	Oregon US Senator <b>Ron Wyden</b>	Klamath Falls Mayor <b>Carol Westfall</b>
House Majority Leader <b>Steve Scalise</b>	US House Representative <b>Cliff Bentz</b>	Klamath Fall City Council <b>Phil Studenber</b> <b>Michael Angeli</b> <b>Terra Russo</b> <b>Abbie McClung</b> <b>Kelsey Mueller Wendt</b>
House Minority Leader <b>Hakeen Jeffries</b>	Oregon State Senator <b>Diane Linthicum</b>	Klamath Falls Police Chief <b>Rob Dentinger</b>
Senate Majority Leader <b>John Thune</b>	Oregon House Representative <b>E. Werner Reschke</b>	
Senate Minority Leader <b>Chuck Schumer</b>		

## The Founding Fathers Vision for America

- 1. Protect Liberty
- 2. Prevent Tyranny
- 3. Represent People



## First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

## The Church

- UNIVERSAL GLOBAL LOCAL
- COMPRISED OF CHRISTIANS
- “BORN AGAIN” (JN 3:3), “THE ELECT” (MT 24:22, ROM 11:7, COL 3:12), “NEW CREATION” (2 COR 5:17, GAL 6:15)
- UNITED CHURCH:  
LOVE MEND TRAIN SEND



## The Johnson Amendment

A provision in the U.S. tax code that prohibits religious institutions and other nonprofit organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates. In 1954, it was incorporated into the Internal Revenue Code, specifically in 501(c)(3).

## Christian-American Civil Responsibilities

- PRAY
- VOTE
- COMMUNICATE WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS
- SPEAK OUT AGAINST IMMORALITY



## Prayer

First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people, even for kings and all who are in authority...

1 Timothy 2:1-2

## Wise Council

Determining the Importance of Specific Issues

### The Four “D’s”

Die

Divide

Debate

Decide

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## **God & Governance Class Schedule**

Session 1: January 18

Session 2: January 25

Session 3: February 1

Session 4: February 8

Session 5: February 15

Session 6: March 1

Session 7: April 12

Session 8: April 19

Session 9: April 26

Session 10: May 3

Session 11: May 17

Session 12: May 31