

Sunday, January 18, 2026

God & Governance: Session 1

At the heart of this transformative teaching lies a profound challenge: learning to navigate the turbulent waters of political and social disagreement without sacrificing the unity Christ calls us to embody. We're invited into a sacred space where difficult conversations become opportunities for spiritual growth rather than relationship destruction. The foundation rests on Colossians 3:1-17, which calls us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience—the very qualities we desperately need when discussing controversial topics. What makes this approach revolutionary is the recognition that our opinions about earthly governance need not be inseparably tied to our relationship with Jesus Christ. We're challenged to develop three critical frameworks: understanding what Scripture says directly, discerning how to apply biblical principles to modern situations, and navigating areas where the Bible remains silent. The fruit of the Spirit from Galatians becomes our conduct standard—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We're reminded that reconciliation often requires walking through difficult conversations rather than avoiding them, and that God works in ways beyond anything we can imagine. The ultimate goal isn't to prove ourselves right or others wrong, but to seek first to understand, then to be understood, always remembering that loving God and loving people remains our primary calling above all political positions.

Homework

Your homework for this week: Read Colossians 3:1-17 at least three times. Let these words sink deep into your heart as we prepare for the conversations ahead.

Questions to Ponder

- Pastor Chris shared how he and his father reconciled their political differences by separating opinions about political figures from their relationship with Jesus Christ. How might distinguishing between our political views and our core faith help us maintain unity with other believers?
- The class emphasizes seeking first to understand, then to be understood. What specific practices or disciplines could help us truly listen to perspectives we disagree with before responding?
- How does the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) challenge the way Christians typically engage in political discussions online and in person?
- The pastors distinguish between three boxes: directly biblical, applying biblical principles, and biblical silence. Why is it dangerous to treat a Box 2 or Box 3 issue as if it were a Box 1 issue?
- Colossians 1:9-14 was prayed over the class, emphasizing being filled with knowledge of God's will and bearing fruit in every good deed. How does this prayer reorient our priorities when engaging with controversial cultural and political topics?
- The class covenant requires participants to approach discussions with humility and willingness to consider alternate viewpoints. What would it look like practically to relax our grip on ingrained opinions while still maintaining biblical convictions?
- Pastor John noted that we cannot simply declare complex institutions like Hollywood, capitalism, or political parties as entirely good or evil. How does this nuanced approach challenge the way we typically evaluate cultural and political systems?
- The pastors emphasized that unity requires humility first. In what ways have pride and the need to be right damaged relationships within the church over political disagreements?

- James 1:27 defines pure religion as caring for orphans and widows, which the pastors used as a Box 2 principle to support helping single mothers. What other modern applications might flow from this principle that aren't explicitly stated in Scripture?
- The class aims to help Christians learn to communicate about difficult topics without destroying relationships. What fears or concerns might prevent us from having these hard conversations, and how does faith in God's reconciling power address those fears?

5-Day Devotional: Unity, Humility, and Biblical Wisdom

Day 1: The Foundation of Love

Reading: Colossians 3:1-17

Devotional: Before we can engage with difficult topics or controversial issues, we must establish our foundation: love. Paul reminds us that as people raised with Christ, we must clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. These are not optional accessories to our faith but the very fabric of Christian community. Notice how Paul emphasizes bearing with one another and forgiving as the Lord forgave you. When we approach conversations about politics, social issues, or even church matters, our first question should not be "Am I right?" but rather "Am I loving?" The unity Paul describes comes not from agreement on every detail, but from a shared commitment to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. Today, ask yourself: In my most recent disagreement, did I prioritize love or being right?

Day 2: Humility Opens the Door to Understanding

Reading: Proverbs 3:5-8; James 1:19-27

Devotional: The wisdom literature teaches us a counterintuitive truth: we grow not by asserting what we know, but by humbly acknowledging what we do not know. James instructs us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. This is profoundly difficult in our age of instant opinions and social media commentary. When we encounter viewpoints that challenge us, our natural response is defensiveness. But Scripture calls us to something higher. Proverbs tells us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding. This does not mean abandoning critical

thinking, but rather recognizing that our perspective is limited and God's is not. True religion, James reminds us, includes keeping ourselves unstained by the world's divisive, prideful patterns. Today, practice listening to understand rather than listening to respond. Seek first to understand someone else's perspective before making your own point.

Day 3: Wrestling with Biblical Application

Reading: Acts 17:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:15

Devotional: The Bereans received Paul's message with eagerness, but they did not stop there. They examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true. This is our model for engaging with any teaching, political claim, or cultural narrative that claims biblical support. We live in a time when Bible verses are frequently quoted out of context, applied incorrectly, or weaponized to support predetermined positions. Paul's instruction to Timothy remains vital: we must correctly handle the word of truth. This requires work, humility, and honesty. It means reading passages in their full context, understanding the original audience, and carefully considering how ancient wisdom applies to modern situations. Not every political position has direct biblical support, and that is acceptable. We must distinguish between what Scripture clearly teaches and where we are applying principles with wisdom. Today, take a verse you have heard used politically and read the entire chapter around it. What new insights emerge?

Day 4: Freedom and Wisdom in Biblical Silence

Reading: Romans 14:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

Devotional: Paul addresses a profound reality: not everything is clearly spelled out in Scripture, and believers will disagree on matters of conscience and application. His response is not to demand uniformity but to call for mutual respect and love. On issues where the Bible is silent or where principles must be carefully applied, we have freedom. But freedom is not license to do whatever we want or to judge those who disagree. Paul says that everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. Our guide in areas of freedom should be love for others and the building up of the body of Christ. Whether the issue is dietary laws in Paul's day or political positions in ours, the principle remains: do not let disputable matters destroy the unity for which Christ died. We will answer to God for our own choices, not for forcing others to conform to our convictions. Today, identify one issue where you have strong opinions but Scripture is

not explicit. How can you hold your conviction while extending grace to those who differ?

Day 5: Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Matthew 5:9

Devotional: Paul declares that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ, representing His heart to a watching world. This is our highest calling, transcending political affiliation, cultural identity, or national loyalty. Jesus pronounced a blessing on peacemakers, calling them children of God. Notice He did not say "peacekeepers" who avoid conflict, but "peacemakers" who actively work to bring reconciliation. This is costly work. It requires us to enter into difficult conversations, to sit with discomfort, to listen to painful stories, and to acknowledge where we or our communities have caused harm. Reconciliation does not mean pretending differences do not exist, but rather refusing to let those differences destroy relationship. As ambassadors, we plead with others to be reconciled to God and to one another. The world is watching how Christians treat each other amid disagreement. Will they see the love of Christ or the spirit of division? Today, pray for one relationship damaged by political or cultural disagreement. Ask God to show you a step toward reconciliation, then take it.

Reflection Question for the Week: How can I grow in my capacity to have difficult conversations without destroying relationships, recognizing that unity in Christ is more precious than uniformity of opinion?