

# The Realistically Political Christian



In 68 days, on Tuesday, November 8, we will be electing a new POTUS, as well as Senators and Congressmen. For the next two months it will be pretty near impossible to avoid hearing about politics. As a Christian, whether you are into politics or not, you should care about the political process. And as Christians, we should try to think Christianly about the issues and candidates before us.

This can be tricky, because we tend to take one way or the other polar opposites and “run with it”.

**On the one hand**, it’s somewhat curious that some Christians think there is a specific Christian position on every single issue—as if the Bible determines the one and only God-honoring decision regarding rates of taxation or how to respond if Iran closes the Straits of Hormuz. **But on the other hand**, there’s this fear that other Christians are so loathe to seem partisan, or they consider politics so unclean, that they don’t dare bring Christian principles to bear on their political thinking. Both positions are mistakes. You don’t have to be a transformationalist or reconstructionist to believe that biblical principles ought to shape the way we look at the world (including politics) and how we understand the way things work.

The Bible is a big book. There’s a lot of things we could say in an effort to piece together a political worldview out of biblical principles. There’s a good book on the Christian and politics, like *Politics – According To The Bible* by Wayne Grudem. But this is a single lesson and not a book. So let’s take just one doctrinal area and tease out some possible implications.

**\*\* It seems, for a Christian, most important political considerations grow out a proper understanding of the HUMAN PERSON, or a BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY. And the goal is FLOURISHING as a nation.\*\***

The more our politicians and political institutions operate according to the way things actually are and the way *people...US!* actually are, the more we will flourish as a nation.

As you develop political convictions, consider these “people principles” as you develop political convictions:

## **1. ALL PEOPLE are the IMAGE of GOD (Gen. 1:26-27).**

*Cf also Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4 . . . two words for the government to remember:*

No matter how small or frail or old or impaired every human being has value and dignity. Government should **protect** human life and **punish** those who harm it ([Rom. 13:4](#); [Gen. 9:6](#)).

## **2. People are made to WORK (Gen. 2:15).**

*2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 . . . and a word about maximizing and removing.*

Work = guard and cultivate. We ought to maximize incentives for hard work and remove incentives that encourage laziness ([2 Thess. 3:6-12](#)).

Part of being human, as opposed to being God, is that:

### **3. We are SUBJECT to APPROPRIATE authorities (*Romans 13:1-7*).**

This includes subjection to government and the requirement to pay taxes ([Rom. 13:1-7](#)).  
Jesus and taxes (Matthew 22:15-22)

### **4. Humans are motivated by SELF-INTEREST (*Matthew 22:39*).**

*Cf Matthew 6:19-20; Mark 10:29-31*, with a warning, something about the Gospel, and what the best policies include.

Jesus understands this when he tells us to love our neighbors as we already love ourselves ([Matt. 22:39](#)). Self-interest is not automatically the same as greed or covetousness, which is why Jesus doesn't hesitate to motivate the disciples with the promise of being first or the guarantee of reward ([Matt. 6:19-20](#); [Mark 10:29-31](#)). Granted, our self-interest is not always virtuous. The work of the gospel is to teach people how their self-interest (joy) can square with God's interest (glory). But the best policies are those that can harness the power of self-interest for the greater good.

### **5. Humans are not just CONSUMERS on the planet; we are STEWARDS and GUARDIANS too.**

*Genesis 1:28*, what this world is, and what we have potential to do.

The physical world is a gift and a tool. We have the ability to spoil, but also the responsibility to subdue ([Gen. 1:28](#); [3:17-19](#)).

### **6. Because of ADAM'S SIN, the world is FALLEN (*Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12; 8:18-23*).**

*Cf also John 12:8*, and what good policies do.

Things are not the way they are supposed to be. Utopia is not possible. Therefore, political decisions must deal with trade-offs, weighing pros and cons of various policies. We cannot eliminate the realities of living in a fallen world ([John 12:8](#)), but good policies can help mitigate some of the worst of them.

### **7. Human nature is BENT toward EVIL (*Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:18*).**

What can we NOT count on?

This means we cannot count on the goodwill of others or of other nations, no matter how well-intentioned we may be or how much we may mind our own business. The question is not where war comes from. That is to be expected given our nature. The question is what institutions and policies are most effective at establishing peace and flourishing.

There is, of course, more we could say about the nature of freedom, the importance of justice, and the right of private property. All three are crucial biblical themes. But the seven principles above can help us start to make sense of the world, make decisions in the world, and elect politicians who understand the way the world works