

God Hates When Christian Politicians Lie. We Should Too.

-Joe Carter, The Gospel Coalition

Would you vote for a political candidate who is an atheist? Would you vote for one who is Muslim? What about if they are gay or lesbian?

A [recent poll by Gallup](#) finds that most Americans will vote for a presidential candidate who is atheist (60 percent), a Muslim (66 percent), or gay/lesbian (76 percent). They'll even vote for an evangelical (80 percent). The only group that can't seem to garner a majority of support is socialists (47 percent).

Would the percentages change if the candidate also claimed to be a Christian? Obviously, someone who said they were both Christian and an atheist or Muslim would be confused about what they believed. And many Christians would say you cannot—or at least should not—identify as both gay and Christian.

Yet there is another category that is as incompatible with Christianity as being gay, an atheist, or a Muslim—being a habitual liar.

God Hates Lying. We Should Too.

God has made his attitude about lying clear throughout the Bible. Here are but a few examples:

[Leviticus 19:11](#) — “Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.”

[Psalm 119:163](#) — “I hate and detest falsehood.”

[Proverbs 12:22](#) — “The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.”

[Proverbs 13:5](#) — “The righteous hate what is false.”

[Colossians 3:9](#) — “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.”

Non-believers should never be able to say that Christians are liars, that we are deceptive people, or that we are oath-breakers. This should be a basic standard for all Christians.

Most Christians, of course, would nod in agreement. We's say we're committed to the truth and to being truth-tellers. So why aren't we consistent about it when it comes to politics?

Imagine you go to a car mechanic who says she's a fellow Christian. You hire her to change the brakes on your car but find out she lied to you—she never replaced the faulty brakes with new

ones. You later find out she does this all the time, and that she has a reputation for lying. Would you hire her to fix your car again? Would you trust the safety of your family to her work?

Or imagine you tell a Christian baker your child is allergic to peanuts and they lie to you about their bread not having peanuts when it does. Or imagine you go to a Christian doctor for surgery and they lied about the procedure they performed. Imagine just about any occupation where someone tells you they are a fellow Christian, they repeatedly lie to your face, and yet you continue to trust them to do their job.

Can you think of any jobs like that? I can think of only one: the vocation of politician.

God Doesn't Give Political Exemptions

What do we do when we hear a politician tell us they are a follower of Christ and yet they also repeatedly lie to us? Most of the time we just shrug. Politicians—even Christian politicians—are dishonest. Lying is part of their job, isn't it? What are you gonna do?

The Bible is clear about what we *should* do. If someone claims to be a Christian then you hold them to the same standard you do all other Christians. You should do to the Christian politician who lies to you what you'd do to the mechanic and the baker and the doctor who lied to you. You don't use their services. You don't support them. You don't give them your trust.

Does that mean you shouldn't vote for a Christian politician who habitually lies?

To answer that question we should ask ourselves: Does it promote the common good to elect politicians who habitually lie? Does it bring dishonor to the name of Jesus to elect people who habitually lie and yet claim to be citizens of Christ's kingdom?

Search all of Scripture and you won't find an exemption for Christian politicians when it comes to lying. In fact, there is not a single principle, rule, law, or command in the Bible that is applicable to Christians for which Christian politicians get a pass. There is no verse that says just because a Christian is running for a secular office that they are exempt from the ethical standards of being a disciple.

God expects all Christians—including politicians who claim to be Christians—to follow the standard he's set before us in his Word. His standard is clear as Scripture tells us that habitual liars will be consigned to hell ([Rev. 21:8](#)). Why then do we give politicians a special exemption to sin? Why do we encourage or overlook behavior that threatens their soul with damnation? There are two primary reasons.

The first reason is that our approach to politics is more frequently more shaped by Machiavelli than by Christ. Is the political party I support dishonest? Well, the other party is worse. Does the politician I support lack integrity? Well, the other candidate is bad too. Head down that path and you'll find you can justify anything. What started as a commitment to promoting the good soon becomes an exercise in the ends justifying the means.

The second reason is that we have a naïve view of “realism.” We think that when it comes to politics there are certain realities—such as they politicians lie—we have to accept. But that isn’t realism; it’s mere pretext. The God who created all of reality determines what is “realistic.” If he says those who follow him should not lie, then that is the only reality we should accept.

When it comes to politics, Christians in America have become adept at making excuses for why they can overlook what God forbids. We seem to take solace in the idea that since other Americans—including other Christians—are doing it too that God will give us a pass. He will not.

Pledge Allegiance to the King

If a politician claims to be a follower of Christ then they are to be judged by the same standard that we judge all Christians. If they sin, we lovingly rebuke them. If they confess, we forgive. If they repent, we seek restoration. But if we’re committed to following Christ we won’t overlook their sin, even if it advances our preferred political causes.

To believe in Jesus—to really believe, not just give some mental assent to the *idea* of Jesus—requires taking up our cross and following him. At worst it means we may have to suffer and die because of our commitment to King Jesus. At best it means that we have to be out of sync with the rest of society and doing things that make other people—including our fellow political partisans—despise us.

If our first and true allegiance is to King Jesus, then we should be more concerned when his name is being sullied by the actions of his followers. And if we’re more concerned about politics than we are about the reputation of Jesus then we have our priorities in disorder. We should prefer to see our political institutions crumble and our nation reduced to ashes rather than do that which brings shame to our King. It would be better for us to lose elections than to overlook behavior that could cause someone to lose their soul.