

The Christian in Modern Politics - Our Struggle Is Not Against Flesh and Blood

In times of political tension, we are quick to assume that the true enemy is the person who votes differently, speaks differently, or stands on the other side of an issue. But Scripture confronts this false assumption head-on. *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood”* (Ephesians 6:12). When we treat people as enemies, we are fighting the wrong battle.



The real adversary is spiritual evil—*“the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”* (Ephesians 6:12). This verse reframes every political and cultural conflict. Human beings are not the ultimate enemy. The true battle is spiritual—against evil that seeks to distort truth, corrupt justice, destroy faith and divide communities.

Spiritual Forces of Evil attempt to create discord, influence believers and destroy faith

Scripture repeatedly warns that evil seeks to influence earthly systems. John writes, *“The whole world lies in the power of the evil one”* (1 John 5:19). Peter adds, *“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). These verses remind believers that the chaos of public life is not random. There is a spiritual enemy who delights in stirring anger, fear, and hatred.

Jesus warns us that this spiritual darkness goes even deeper - it also lurks within us. Jesus teaches, *“Out of the heart come evil thoughts... hatred, discord, jealousy”* (Matthew 15:19; Galatians 5:20). Political anger often exposes our own pride, fear, and desire for control. When we treat people as enemies, we are fighting the wrong battle.

Throughout the Bible, God repeatedly warns His people not to misidentify their opponents. Jesus teaches, *“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”* (Matthew 5:44). This command only makes sense if the real enemy is not the person standing in front of us, but the evil influencing hearts, systems, and societies. Likewise, Paul urges believers to *“overcome evil with good”* (Romans 12:21), not by destroying people but by resisting the spiritual darkness that works through human weakness and naivety.

The Believer’s place in the civic realm – The “salt of the earth”

The Christian’s purpose is not to make our nation a “Christian” nation (Jesus says *“My kingdom is not of this world”*). However, God works through earthly structures to preserve order and protect the neighbor. Scripture teaches that governing authorities are part of His design:

- *“There is no authority except that which God has established”* (Romans 13:1). This does not make earthly institutions perfect, but it does make civic participation important.
- *“Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s”* (Matthew 22:21). This shows that the Christian does have a civic responsibility.
- *“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city...pray to the Lord for it”* (Jeremiah 29:7). Voting, serving, advocating for justice, and seeking the common good are ways believers live out their calling in the world. These actions are not attempts to usher in a perfect kingdom. Christ alone does that—but they are faithful expressions of stewardship.

- *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”* (Romans 12:21). Christians recognize the dangers of evil and their responsibility to stand against the powers of darkness wherever they appear.

Christians participate in public life not to simply offer different opinions, but to restrain harm, promote justice, stand against evil, and reflect God’s care for the world. Jesus describes this as being *“the salt of the earth”* (Matthew 5:13). We recognize that although this is a spiritual battle, civic life is where the battle is being fought. Meanwhile, the Christian places their ultimate hope not in rulers, but in the crucified and risen King whose kingdom is not of this world.

Our Weapons against the Spiritual Forces of Evil

When God’s people see the powers of spiritual darkness influencing people in the world, especially other believers, they are called to engage with courage and righteousness. Paul urges believers to *“put on the full armor of God”* (Ephesians 6:11) and to fight with spiritual weapons: *“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world”* (2 Corinthians 10:4). Truth, prayer, integrity, justice, and sacrificial love are the tools God gives His people to confront evil.

Christians should not ignore the spiritual forces of evil in public life. They are called to combat it with clarity and courage, knowing the deeper battle at work. They stand for truth because Christ is truth. They defend the vulnerable because Christ defended them. They guard the reputations and names of others because Christ has given us His name. They pursue justice because Christ is just. They respond to Jesus’ call *“You are the salt of the earth”* (Matthew 5:13), knowing that only through their witness will the world be preserved from the spiritual forces of evil. They take Jesus’ words seriously: *“You are the light of the world”* (Matthew 6:14)

In this battle, Christians must speak truth boldly—*“Speak the truth in love”* (Ephesians 4:15)—while refusing to demonize those made in God’s image. They must pursue justice—*“Let justice roll down like waters”* (Amos 5:24)—without losing sight of mercy and humility—*“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?”* (Micah 6:8).

Jesus’ command to *“love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”* (Matthew 5:44) gives civic responsibility its distinctive Christian character. Even in disagreement, believers refuse to dehumanize others. Even in conflict, they refuse to treat people as the enemy. Even in disappointment, they refuse to place their hope in earthly rulers. Their allegiance is to Christ, and their conduct reflects His kingdom.

When Christians remember that the real struggle is spiritual, they engage public life with clarity and compassion. They stand for truth without hatred, pursue justice without vengeance, and participate in civic life without losing sight of the eternal. In a world eager to divide, they are steady, prayerful, and faithful, serving in the earthly kingdom while placing their hope in the heavenly one. They work for the good of their communities and nation while trusting the Lord who reigns over all. And they remember that the struggle is not against flesh and blood—but against spiritual evil itself.