

## “God and Conscience”

*Romans 14:1-12*

### Introduction

You're likely familiar with the adage, Always let your conscience be your guide! Many can recall the catchy song and the cartoon cricket that repeated those words. That little refrain, echoed by countless children, holds a profound truth we all need to understand as we go into the final days of this election cycle. The conscience is your heart monitor, an internal signal built in by God to help discern right and wrong. Still, it can be confusing these days as to what is right or wrong, what issues matter most, and which candidates deserve our vote. Church circles haven't eased this confusion but rather stirred it up as divisions and factions within the people of God have created a recipe for disaster. Two professing followers of Christ can pray, read their Bible, do their due diligence in research and yet come to two opposing conclusions regarding who they marked on their ballot. How can we, as believers, move in such a way that honors the Lord and one another?

Of first importance is recognizing that no matter what, God is ultimately in control of this and every other election in history. As Proverbs 16:33 reminds us: man can cast lots, but God decides. His sovereignty reigns supreme, and while there are moments in which He conditionally invites us into His decision through prayer and obedience, in all instances, God will make the final rule whether or not we have done our part. Taking the opportunity to vote may not change the election in favor of our chosen candidate, but it will be a way in which God will transform our heart. No matter what the outcome, both trusting the sovereignty of God and doing our part in making our voice heard are important.

We live in what feels like the most polarized generation ever. Simple decisions about how to run and operate our communities are met with opposition and division. This disunity is not just seen in government but also in our culture, families, and churches. These hard lines drawn in the sand that keep believers on opposite sides result from an agenda straight from Hell. Christians have allowed government to keep them at odds with one another. This has kept the church from having the God-given power to help bring our country in alignment with God's principles rather than political agendas.

The truth is that we may not agree on everything as brothers and sisters in Christ. We may see from unique perspectives that focus our priorities on different issues championed by opposing parties. We may be at different points in our walk with the Lord, and the maturity that brings wisdom and discernment in all matters may not be as developed from person to person. But as we allow the Holy Spirit and God's Word to inform our conscience, we can turn away from arguing with those who arrive at a different conclusion. Scripture reminds us in Matthew 15:18, "But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and those things defile the person." Our words matter because they reflect our heart. How we speak to those with whom we disagree matters because it reflects where our trust is found.

As Kingdom Voters facing an election in a time when even Christians cannot agree, we must remember who is Lord. Just as Jesus brought together different sides of His day's political aisle, He can do it now as we choose to unite through Christ. As Kingdom Voters, we take the time to pray, allow Scripture to inform our decision-making, seek unity, look at both policy and person and always let our conscience be our guide.

### Getting Started

1. What do you think when you hear "conscience"? How do you know which way your conscience is leading you?
  2. What keeps you from hearing or listening to your conscience?
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**Let's Get Personal**

1. If you were being honest, how easily do you trust God's sovereignty, especially in areas like politics? What makes it difficult at times?
2. What walls have you witnessed Christians build against one another because of divisions caused by the government? How does this impact the church's witness to non-believers?
3. When have you found yourself in disagreement with another believer because you focus on different priorities and thus arrive at different conclusions?
4. How has social media impacted the division seen in culture, government and church? In what ways have you been part of that division? In what ways can you help bring unity and healing to that divide?

**Take the Next Step**

1. Use the chart below to list some issues that are priority for you. Based on this list, what are some of your conclusions? How can this help your decision on election day?

Priority Issue	Democratic Agenda	Republican Agenda	Kingdom Agenda (What does God's Word say?)

2. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Proverbs 16:4, 33; 21:1; Job 23:13; 42:2; Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 43:13; 45:7; Ephesians 1:11; 4:29; Romans 11:36; 13:1, 5; 14:1, 8-9, 22-23; 15:7; Revelation 19:6; Daniel 2:21; John 19:10-11; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Jeremiah 17:9; James 3:3, 9; 4:11; Matthew 15:18; and 1 Peter 3:15.

**Renew Your Mind**

*“But as for you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you as well, why do you regard your brother or sister with contempt? For we will all appear before the judgment seat of God.”*

*Romans 14:10*

