

# **FIRST-PERSON: Pursuing peace, perspective and patience following the election**

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We host one of our church's small groups in our home every week. As you might imagine, the election was a topic of discussion on Wednesday night. Our group is widely varied by age and gender. It includes several public school teachers and some students.

The conversation was interesting as I heard how students and teachers were reacting to the results of the election and how these fellow church members were interacting.

As I listened, I was reminded that not everyone sees the world as Christians do and sometimes, the way followers of Jesus see cultural events can differ.

In times of change and uncertainty there are three things we can cling to and graciously share with others.

## **Peace**

The Bible says that, if it is possible, we should live at peace with everyone. The command comes in Romans 12:18 toward the end of a long paragraph on Christian character.

Adrian Rogers said in a sermon, "We are ambassadors and agents of peace, called to share the hope of reconciliation with a world in turmoil."

Our ability to be ambassadors of peace is shaped by the individual relationship and circumstance so it may look different from place to place but we should be intentional

wherever we are. Your word of peace may be the only word of peace a person hears in a given day.

Ken Sande says real peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the presence of a unity of spirit and purpose.

But how can followers of Jesus find unity with those who do not follow Him? While the answer is more complex than one article could define, one way we can pursue peace is to show dignity to every person as someone made in the image of God and help others do the same. We can work to figure out what that means when it's fleshed out in small towns, big cities, families, schools and neighborhoods.

This is a valuable pursuit as it not only has the potential to bring peace and unity but it also moves the conversation away from demoralizing and hostile tones.

Hopefully, this approach will give believers an opportunity to share why they believe what they believe.

## **Perspective**

A Christian worldview teaches believers that government and public policy are important but they are not ends in themselves. The institution of government is most effective when citizens and leaders remember that they are tools to be used for the greater good of humanity and, believers will remember, for the glory of God.

As followers of Jesus, we are reminded of our perspective in Psalm 118:8-9, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes."

God gave the institution of government to protect the innocent and bring appropriate judgement on the wrongdoer, according to Romans 13.

For many Americans, though, government has become their god.

For various reasons, they have placed lofty expectations on political leaders. When a political agenda or public policy fails, the reaction can be one of deep despair and hopelessness.

That perspective does not lead to peace or unity because it elevates the creation above the Creator.

In 1994, when he was perhaps still more well known for his involvement in the Watergate scandal than his Christian apologetics ministry, Chuck Colson wrote, "The hope that each of us have is not in who governs us, or what laws are passed, or what great things that we do as a nation. Our hope is in the power of God working through the hearts of people, and that's where our hope is in this country; that's where our hope is in life."

God's people have the opportunity to help people remember there is more to life than politics. That is a sentence that is easier to type than to live out. I am not forgetting our Christian brothers and sisters praying for regime change around the world as they follow Christ through persecution on a regular basis.

## **Patience**

While we should be intentional to pursue peace and speak about our perspective, we must remember it takes time for people to consider a different viewpoint. How many of us believed the Gospel the first time we heard it? For most Christians, we heard the Good News multiple times before we relented to the Spirit's call to repent and believe.

Sharing your hope with someone should not be a one-time occurrence. It takes time, and that requires relationship. If that relationship is going to be preserved, you must pursue peace in the midst of conflict.

The political ads might be over for this election season but,

hopefully, your relationship with the person is not. Keep the big picture in mind as you journey through life with people who see the world like you and those who don't.