

My Way or the Highway

The Better Way (Week 2)

LifeNotes

TALK IT OVER

Main Idea

When we make politics primary, hatred for the other replaces love for neighbor. We honor God with our politics when our highest value is worshipping the Lord in all we do.

Key Scriptures

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.
Matthew 22:15-22 ESV

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.
Romans 13:1-2 ESV

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 1 Peter 2:13 ESV

7 Flaws and Limitations of Politics

1. Politicians will often do whatever it takes to keep their power.
2. Politicians are good at telling people what they want to hear.
3. Every political ideology contains inherent flaws, some more than others.
4. We're easily swayed by the opinions of others.

5. At the core of most political struggle is a desire for power and money and comfort.
6. Intense political division is a sign of misplaced worship.
7. Only one Kingdom will last forever. Only one kingdom can transform nations.

What does it look like to honor God with our politics?

1. Dial back the dialogue
2. Love sacrificially
3. Exhibit self control

Start talking.

- What are your biggest pet peeves?
- If you could change one thing about our current political system, what would it be?

Start thinking.

- Why was Jesus so reluctant to engage in the political dialogue?
- Can you think of any political issues we make black-and-white, my-way-or-the-highway, where Jesus might offer a better approach?
- Read Romans 13:1-2 and 1 Peter 2:13. What does it look like to honor government authorities when you disagree with their decisions?
- How would our political conversations look different if we dialed back the dialogue and followed the example of Jesus by asking better questions?

Start sharing.

- Think for a minute about Jesus's unspoken question: "whose image is on you?" How would you live differently if you kept this question in mind?
- Where do you struggle the most with the current state of our political system and framework?
- What's your political bent? Are you loud and outspoken about politics? Or do you avoid the conversation totally? Somewhere in between?

Start doing.

- Who can you love sacrificially this week?
- Where's an area of your life that you'd like to have more self control?
- How do these two things, love and self control, help people to see the image of God in our lives?

Closing prayer.

Father, we thank you for this great country that we get to live in. We thank you for your son Jesus, who is our true king. Please help us to honor you in all that we do, particularly with our political beliefs and in our conversations with others. Help us to live every moment in honor and worship of you.