

KNOWING & DOING

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Presidential Candidates vs. Me

Notes from the President

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10 Decade of DISCIPLESHIP

Who is the best candidate for President? What do we know about that candidate's beliefs, wisdom, intellect and actions? Do they practice what they preach? Are they the type of person who would make good decisions and look out for the best interests of our nation?

I've been convicted lately at how much time I spend appraising the moral character, integrity, words and actions of presidential candidates, as opposed to how rarely I use these same litmus tests to evaluate my own life.

Jesus was once asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" In other words, what is the best way to be assured that I am living in a way that is pleasing to God? Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Jesus is quoting and adapting Deuteronomy 6:5, which also included the idea that we should love God with all our strength.

Jesus makes it clear that in order to test the integrity of our love for God and neighbor that we must evaluate our lives from several different angles. There should be a consistency of love evidenced in our heart, which includes our soul and mind — our passions, our inner life, our words and thoughts — and our physical actions (strength). In theological terms, our love for God is tested by our orthodoxy (right belief and understanding of God's truth and doctrine), by our orthopathy (right passions and affections that are pure and in line with God's desires), and by our orthopraxy (right practice demonstrated through our actions and habits).

David prayed to the Lord, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart" (Psalm 26:2). This election season, I am going to continue to evaluate the presidential candidates and try to determine who would best serve our country. At the same time, I hope to be just as diligent in asking the Lord to examine me to see if my orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxy are demonstrating my love for God and neighbor. The good news is that I know that where I fall short, there is forgiveness to cleanse me, and grace to help me get it right the next time around. Hopefully the end result will be a daily, fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit that enables me to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. ■■

Joel



Joel Woodruff, President, C.S. Lewis Institute, has worked in higher education, “tent-making,” nonprofit administration, and pastoral ministries in Alaska, Israel, Hungary, France, and Northern Virginia. He served as Dean of Students, Chaplain, and Professor of Bible & Theology at European Bible Institute, where he helped train Europeans both for professional ministry and to be Christian leaders in the marketplace. Prior to joining the Institute, he was on the leadership team of Oakwood Services International, a nonprofit educational and humanitarian organization. He is a graduate of Wheaton College, earned his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and has a doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University.

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