

GO DEEPER: WHEN FAITH MEETS POLITICS

A Reflection Guide for "Can You Separate Faith from Politics? Here's Why I Don't Think So"

INTRODUCTION

In this thought-provoking episode, Adam Hamilton shares his experience navigating the intersection of faith and politics after receiving intense reactions to a social media post. Through biblical wisdom and personal reflection, he explores why the church must speak when political decisions become moral issues. Use this guide to examine your own relationship with faith, politics, and social responsibility.

3 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to consider what resonated most with you from this conversation:

1. Adam mentions that people often complain about pastors mixing politics and religion "usually because they don't like what the pastor said about something that disagreed with their politics." How do you react when religious leaders address political issues you disagree with versus those you support?
2. Think about the "four categories of people" Adam discusses from Hebrew scripture—widows, orphans, immigrants, and the poor. Who represents these marginalized groups in your community today, and how might your faith inform your response to their needs?
3. Adam describes his congregation as "40% Republican, 40% Democrat, and 20% independent." How comfortable are you engaging in conversations about faith and social issues with people who hold different political views than you?

2 KEY INSIGHTS

1. The Church's Moral Responsibility in Political Issues

"When political decisions become moral decisions, the church needs to speak and pastors need to speak and religious people need to speak."

Question: What distinguishes a political issue from a moral issue in your mind?

Reflection: Consider how Adam frames this distinction—not as partisan politics, but as questions of justice, compassion, and care for the vulnerable. Think about current issues in your community or nation. Which ones do you see as having clear moral dimensions that transcend party lines?

2. Scripture's Consistent Focus on Justice

"What does the Lord require of you? But to do justice and love kindness and walk humbly with God... In scripture, justice is being concerned for the people who are powerless."

Question: How does this biblical definition of justice challenge or affirm your understanding of what it means to live faithfully?

Reflection: Adam emphasizes that biblical justice focuses on those without power or voice. Consider your own spheres of influence—family, workplace, community. Where do you see opportunities to advocate for those who might otherwise be overlooked or marginalized?

1 PRACTICE EXERCISE

The "Vulnerable Populations" Awareness Exercise

Take 10 minutes for this reflection:

1. **Identify:** Think about your local community. Who are the "widows, orphans, immigrants, and poor" in today's context? This might include single parents, elderly neighbors, refugees, people experiencing homelessness, or families struggling financially.
2. **Reflect:** Choose one specific group that comes to mind. What challenges do they face that others in your community might not fully understand?
3. **Consider:** Without necessarily taking political sides, what would "seeking justice" and "loving kindness" look like in practical terms for this group?
4. **Act:** Identify one small, concrete step you could take this week to better understand their situation or show care—perhaps volunteering, having a conversation, or simply paying attention to their experiences.
5. **Pray or Meditate:** Spend a few minutes in prayer or quiet reflection, asking for wisdom about how your faith might inform your response to the needs you've identified.

QUOTES TO CONSIDER

"If the church is not shaping our ethics and our morality, our sense of what's right and wrong, our sense of compassion and mercy, and how we look at the people who are marginalized... then who is?"

"I think the people should be shaping the morals and values of the Republican and Democratic parties. And so who's shaping the morals and values of the people? Well, I think if you're a Christian, it should be Christ."

"Jesus said at the last judgment, if you haven't cared about the poor and the hungry, and the thirsty and the naked and the stranger, then you didn't care about me and you're in deep trouble."

CLOSING REFLECTION

The tension between faith and politics isn't meant to be resolved easily—it's meant to be navigated thoughtfully and humbly. As Adam demonstrates, engaging with these questions doesn't require having all the answers or taking partisan positions. Instead, it requires wrestling with how our deepest values inform our response to the world around us. Consider how you might approach future conversations about faith and social issues with both conviction and humility, always keeping the most vulnerable in mind.

This reflection guide was created to accompany the Making Sense of Faith podcast episode "Can You Separate Faith from Politics? Here's Why I Don't Think So." For more resources like this, visit makingsenseoffaith.com.