

GO DEEPER: A Reflection Guide for "The Dangerous Myth That Faith and Politics Don't Mix"

INTRODUCTION

In this powerful episode of Making Sense of Faith, Adam Hamilton challenges the common assumption that faith and politics should remain separate. Through personal stories, biblical wisdom, and candid reflections on a controversial sermon, Adam invites us to consider how our deepest values should shape our engagement with the world around us. As you reflect on this conversation, use this guide to explore your own relationship between faith and civic life, and consider how you might bring empathy and courage to our divided times.

3 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to consider what stood out to you most from this episode:

1. Adam shares the story of Isaac Pagan, a 42-year-old American citizen living in fear in his own country. How did that letter impact you? What fears or concerns do your neighbors—regardless of their political views—carry that you might not fully understand?
2. Think about how you currently engage with political issues. Do you bring your faith and values to bear on these questions, or do you keep them separate? What would it look like to let your deepest convictions shape your political engagement?
3. Adam says, "Leadership is the art of disappointing people at a rate they can handle." When have you had to take a stand that disappointed some people in order to remain true to your values? How did you navigate that tension?

2 KEY INSIGHTS

1. Jesus is Lord—not any political leader

"If you're a follower of Jesus, what you said is Jesus is Lord. Donald Trump is not Lord. Joe Biden wasn't Lord. Jesus is Lord. And if Jesus is Lord, what that means is that he's the highest authority in your life."

Question: What would change in your political engagement if you consistently asked, "What does Jesus require of me?" before forming opinions or taking action?

Reflection: Consider a current political issue that concerns you. What does the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of Jesus, or the call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God" suggest about how you might approach this issue?

2. How you engage matters as much as what you stand for

"If you're protesting, how you protest is as important as what you protest. How you protest says as much about, or maybe more about your character than the fact that you're protesting."

Question: When you speak up about issues that matter to you—whether online, in conversation, or in public—does your manner of engagement reflect the love, compassion, and grace you say you believe in?

Reflection: Think of a recent conversation or social media interaction about a political issue. Did your approach build bridges or create walls? What might you do differently next time to maintain both your convictions and your compassion?

1 PRACTICE EXERCISE

The Empathy Walk

This week, intentionally seek to understand someone whose political views differ from yours.

- Identify someone you know (friend, family member, coworker, neighbor) who sees things differently
- Rather than debating or convincing, ask genuine questions: "Help me understand why this matters to you" or "What experiences have shaped your perspective on this?"
- Practice listening without formulating counterarguments
- Look for the values beneath their positions—often we share similar values but disagree on how to live them out
- After the conversation, spend five minutes in prayer or reflection asking: "What did I learn? How does seeing through their eyes expand my understanding?"

Remember: The goal isn't to change your mind or theirs, but to practice the radical empathy that Jesus modeled.

QUOTES TO CONSIDER

"Silence feeds the status quo. And if the default outcome of silence is that the powerful win, then silence helps power. Silence is complicit in the misuse of power."

"We are meant to bring our faith to bear on what's happening in the world around us. We are meant not simply to pray, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' But to work towards that."

"Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9)

"What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8)

CLOSING REFLECTION

Bringing faith into politics doesn't mean baptizing one party's platform or assuming God endorses our every opinion. It means allowing the radical ethics of Jesus—love of neighbor and enemy, concern for the vulnerable, the call to justice and mercy—to challenge and shape how we think about power, policy, and the common good. It means having the courage to speak up when we see injustice, while maintaining the humility to recognize we might be wrong. And it means cultivating communities where people who disagree politically can still worship, serve, and care for one another—because that kind of bridge-building witness might be exactly what our divided world needs most.

This reflection guide was created to accompany the Making Sense of Faith podcast episode "The Dangerous Myth That Faith and Politics Don't Mix." For more resources like this, visit makiningsenseoffaith.com.