

Jan 10 | Sunday

**Facing Issues That Divide - Read Daniel 6:1-4
Practicing Politics While Keeping the Faith**



11 | Mon – Love your enemies | Read Matthew 5:21-24, 43-48

Jesus taught ideas that are radically unnatural. Love an enemy? Why would I even *want* to do that, let alone, be *able* to? Look at verse 45 for the ‘why’...because our Father in heaven does. If I claim to be His child, then I should act like Him. During this emotional election season, remind yourself often that God loves the people who see political issues differently than you do and, oddly enough, loves them just as much as He loves you.

12 | Tue – Treat others how? | Read Matthew 7:1-5, 12

How easy it is to see, and verbalize, what is wrong in others! This destructive tendency is hurtful in families or workplaces but seems to go to a higher level in the political arena during an election year. Jesus cautions that the same standards we use to judge others will be used to measure us; then He gives the practical goal found in verse 12. What people or situations make it hard for you to treat others the way you want to be treated?

13 | Wed – Quick to listen, slow to speak | Read James 1:19-20, 3:7-10

Sometimes we can be poor listeners but very quick to express our own opinions. Then there is the anger that can flare up when we do not like what we hear. James reminds us that man’s anger does not bring about what God desires. He describes the tongue as a source of both blessing and cursing. Let today be the day that your tongue is a blessing to everyone who hears you speak. Especially if you end up talking politics.

14 | Thu – The People’s Court | Read James 4:11-12

James, the brother of Jesus, echoes his brother’s warning against judging others and uses even stronger words. In today’s language, he might have said it this way: “Who do you think *YOU* are?! You put yourself in God’s chair when you speak against another. That is a dangerous place to be!” Ask the Holy Spirit to keep you out of that chair today.

15 | Fri – Live at peace | Read Romans 12:9-13:1, 1 Timothy 2:2-3

First century Rome was a lot like Washington DC - obsessed with political intrigue and maneuvers - so it is striking that Paul virtually ignored the power struggles. Instead he called the Christians there to live as Jesus did by overcoming evil with good. Paul also urges us to pray for those in authority. When was the last time you prayed for a political leader you strongly disagreed with instead of talking about what a poor leader (s)he is?

16 | Sat – Speak what is helpful | Read Ephesians 4:29-32

Jesus fearlessly challenged evil. But he did it by pointing to the truth, not by slandering reputations or sharing juicy tidbits of gossip. Before you forward that email or post that tart response in a blog, ask “Does this give grace? Does it build up? Can I picture Jesus sending this?” Ask God to help even your political conversations to reflect respect and to give grace to those who hear or read them.

January 17 | Sun – Facing Issues That Divide: Refugees/Undocumented Immigrants



Hastings United Methodist Church