

Bay Area Community Church

Guiding Biblical Principles for Navigating Cultural Issues

The leadership of Bay Area is, first and foremost, deeply committed to glorifying God, while fulfilling our Biblical mission. We believe it is imperative that Bay Area be united around the vision, mission, values and core beliefs we hold. We also believe it is vital that we be responsible and conscientious citizens in the country and community that God has given us as our mission field.

Considering these commitments, the following principles must be held together in tension as we navigate difficult social, moral and political issues.

- **Those who follow Christ should submit all aspects of their worldview to the authority of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17).** No matter the consequences, we must be firmly planted in the truth and implications of God's Word (Psalm 1).
- **Christ followers ought to obey God rather than people (Acts 5:29).** Whenever a choice must be made between honoring God and the government, our loyalty must be to Christ.
- **The Bible teaches that all those in governmental authority have been given that authority by God (Romans 13:1-7),** thus submission to their authority is the natural first response of the believer.
- **Jesus calls us to prioritize unity in the body (John 17:21)** while allowing for diversity in areas of conviction, preference and some aspects of social/political issues. (i.e. 1 Corinthians 8).
- **Our citizenship is foremost in heaven (Phil. 3:20), but also in the United States.** Therefore, it is appropriate for us to exercise our rights as American citizens to their full extent (Acts 22:25-28), but always under the constraints of being first a follower of Jesus (Matthew 6:33).
- **Believers must seek to make clear distinctions between policies or issues which are *personally objectionable* (or as an American citizen) versus *biblically immoral*.** Without that distinction, the ability to maintain the unity of the church and to dialogue with other believers, who hold valid, differing views on government policy without vilifying them is destroyed. Therefore:
 - As **Americans** it is appropriate for believers to utilize all available legal recourse to ensure that what they believe to be correct public policy is enacted.
 - As **Christians**, it is vital that we strongly oppose (to the point of disobedience) any civil law or order which violates the teaching of Scripture. Examples of policies which rise to the level of requiring opposition, or civil disobedience include:
 - Orders which require believers to comply with or support (whether overtly or by non-action) an unbiblical action or belief
 - Direct threats to religious freedom or expression of religious beliefs
 - If the order will produce an outcome for a portion of society which the Bible would define as injustice
 - For further thought, see Bay Area's statements on
 - Biblical Marriage
 - Abortion
 - The Equality Act

- Mask Mandates

It is our desire that those who call Bay Area home would be able to dialogue from a place of agreement with THESE PRINCIPLES, as our biblical starting place, for all contentious issues. We recognize that not all believers will agree on the *implications* and *application* of these principles relative to actual social, moral or political issues. However, without clarity about our foundational assumptions, there is little hope for healthy, gracious and patient dialogue, while maintaining biblical unity in the Bay Area family.

Final Thoughts

- The leadership of Bay Area will seek to consistently apply these principles to the complex issues that emerge and help the Bay Area family do the same.
- These principles will inform and shape our specific teaching, actions and policies.
- In accord with our Biblical resolve, we commit to courageously stand against any policy which would require us to violate any portion of God's Word.