

# life matters

## Pro-life voting & BEYOND

Vol. 16, No. 3

a publication of

**Life Matters**  
WORLDWIDE

P.O. Box 3158

Grand Rapids, MI 49501

(616) 257-6800

1-800-968-6086

[www.lifemattersww.org](http://www.lifemattersww.org)

[staff@lifemattersww.org](mailto:staff@lifemattersww.org)

In every election, Christians have a duty to vote in support of the pro-life cause at every level of government. But that's not all that should be done. We must back up votes with action. We must show regard for the people around us, because they're made in God's image and because He loves them. How?

**1. Be a brother-keeper.** The first murderer shirked his duty to keep a brother alive. He asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—hoping God would excuse him from that duty, and knowing he'd been the cause of his brother's demise.

There are many ways short of murder in which we can fail as brother-keepers. The Bible names these shortcomings and shows us how to do better. For examples, see references to "brothers," "relatives," or "countrymen" in Deuteronomy 15:1-18 and 24:6-22.

The principle is carried into the New Testament in passages such as Matthew 5:22, James 2:15-16, and 1 John 3:17. In addition to caring for physical needs, it's watching out for another person's spiritual health.<sup>1</sup>

Who's my brother? People in my family? Yes, but also those with whom we worship. Christ called them *His* brothers and sisters.<sup>2</sup> In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus instructed

followers to reach beyond relatives (and wealthy neighbors) to include people living with poverty and infirmity.

**2. Love your neighbor.** This is concern for people outside your family and fellowship group—

friends, people living nearby, members of one's community.

A lawyer asked Jesus, "Who's my neighbor?"<sup>3</sup> Again, it sounded as though he hoped to shirk responsibility. But rather than limiting neighborliness to people of the man's tribe or nation, Jesus turned the discussion toward how *he* could become a better neighbor!

Voting for candidates and policies that do good rather than harm is one aspect of loving our neighbors.<sup>4</sup> So is hands-on ministry. The bad neighbors in Jesus' parable were not only the ones who beat and robbed the traveler, but also those who left him to die. The priest and Levite silently aided the thieves by not aiding their victim.

**3. Love your enemy.** In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus said it isn't enough for us to love brothers and neighbors. We must go out of our way to love people who believe differently from us. According to Scripture, love means doing good to persecutors, praying for them, lending to them with no expectation of return, blessing them.<sup>5</sup> It means loving the haters . . . as God so loved *us*.

Who's eligible for this kind of love? Political opponents, members of the

media, members of groups that are openly antagonistic to the truths of God's word. We must never help them do evil, but neither should we strike back at them.<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 24:17-18 doesn't even allow us to rejoice over an enemy's downfall!

American Christians have largely been shielded from the persecution that believers in other places and times have endured, but we will no doubt face our share in the future. How will we respond?

**WE ARE PRO-LIFE** because everyone bears God's image—born and unborn, strong and weak, young and old.

Christians also bear the likeness of Jesus Christ. And as we grow in our resemblance to Him, we'll become better brother-keepers, and love enemies as well as neighbors.<sup>7</sup>

Such love fulfills God's law.<sup>8</sup> Beyond taking seriously our responsibilities as law-abiding citizens—voting, upholding laws, and perhaps even participating in government—this is what we must do.

As you vote, remember that living out the biblical pro-life ethic will do more to protect life than any elected official or court decision.

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:** 1/ Matthew 18; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 6:41-42, 17:3, 22:32; Romans 12:10, 14:1-21; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; James 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:20-21. 2/ Mt. 25:40; Mk. 3:33-35. 3/ Leviticus 19:18; Lk. 10:25-37. 4/ Jeremiah 18:8, 29:7. 5/ Exodus 23:4-5; Lk. 6:27-36; Rom. 5:6-10. 6/ 2 Chronicles 19:2; Rom. 12:14-21. 7/ Rom. 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10. 8/ Rom. 13:8-10.

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