

Sunday, May 3, 2026

## **God & Governance Session 9: Discerning False Teachers at the Intersection of Faith and Politics**

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### **Class Summary**

This teaching session addresses the critical need for Christians to identify false teachers and prophets, particularly those operating at the intersection of faith and politics. The pastors emphasize that while Christians have one true enemy—Satan and his spiritual forces—false teachers sow division within the church by misusing Scripture, promoting anger and fear, and normalizing marginal Christianity. The session provides specific criteria for identifying false teaching, including misrepresenting Jesus and the gospel, manipulating Scripture for personal agendas, and endorsing other known false teachers. The pastors call for church unity above political divisions while maintaining biblical discernment, correcting opponents with gentleness in hope of their repentance, and protecting the witness of the church to the world.

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### **Key Points**

- Christians must remember their true enemy is Satan and spiritual forces, not other people or political parties
- False teachers mix truth with lies, making their deception more dangerous and harder to detect
- Anger that persists gives the devil an opportunity and does not bring about the righteous life God desires
- Marginal Christianity (claiming faith without fellowship, accountability, Bible reading, or obedience) is damaging the church's witness
- Six criteria for identifying false teachers: misrepresenting Jesus/salvation, manipulating Scripture, misrepresenting Christian life, misusing Scripture for personal agenda, and endorsing other false teachers
- Public figures using Scripture to advance political or military agendas without proper theological context constitute false teaching

- The normalization of Christian nationalism conflates the Great Commission with establishing political power
- Church unity must transcend political divisions and voting preferences
- Correction should be done with gentleness, hoping for repentance rather than condemnation
- The church's witness to the world is damaged when Christians are divided over political issues

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### **Scripture References**

- Ephesians 4:25-27 (Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger; do not give the devil an opportunity)
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26 (The Lord's servant must not quarrel but be kind, correcting opponents with gentleness)
- James (Anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires)
- Matthew 18 (Going to your brother privately first)
- John 17 (Jesus' prayer for unity)
- Mark 8:34 (Whoever loses his life for Christ's sake will save it)
- 2 Chronicles 7:14 (If my people humble themselves and pray - discussed as commonly misapplied to America)
- Exodus/Ezekiel passages (Misquoted regarding God's vengeance)

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### **Discussion Questions**

- How can we discern between righteous anger that leads to action and sinful anger that gives the devil an opportunity, especially in our current political climate?
- What safeguards can we put in place to ensure we are evaluating teachers and leaders based on Scripture rather than our personal political preferences?
- How do we balance standing firm on biblical truth while maintaining unity with believers who interpret certain passages differently than we do?

- In what ways might we be guilty of taking Old Testament promises made specifically to Israel and inappropriately applying them to America today?
- How can we identify when someone is using Scripture to advance a personal or political agenda rather than faithfully teaching God's Word?
- What does it mean practically to recognize that our true enemy is Satan and spiritual forces rather than people with different political views?
- How has the normalization of marginal Christianity—people who claim faith but lack fellowship, accountability, and biblical engagement—affected the witness of the church?
- When should we publicly call out false teaching versus privately approaching someone in the spirit of Matthew 18, especially when dealing with public figures?
- How can we pray for our nation and leaders in a way that aligns with New Testament teaching rather than inappropriately claiming Old Testament promises?
- What responsibility do we have to correct fellow believers who are being influenced by false teachers, and how can we do this with gentleness while maintaining relationship?

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## **God & Governance – Session 8 Homework**

### **Homework: Practicing Discernment & Guarding Unity**

Use this week to both sharpen your discernment and strengthen your love for Christ's body. Here's a simple assignment in three parts:

#### **1. Bible Study: Anger, Division, and False Teaching**

Read and reflect on these passages:

- Ephesians 4:25–32
- James 1:19–20
- 2 Timothy 2:22–26
- Matthew 7:15–20

For each passage, briefly answer in a notebook or journal:

- What does this text say about:
  - Anger?
  - How we talk to/argue with others?
  - False teachers or false prophets?
- What specific warning or instruction is most relevant to our current political climate?
- What is one concrete change the Holy Spirit might be inviting you to make (in speech, media intake, social media posting, or how you think about “the other side”)?

## **2. Practice the “3 Boxes / 4 Ds / F-O-F” on One Public Figure**

Pick one public Christian voice (pastor, commentator, politician, or “spiritual advisor”) you regularly hear. Don’t pick an extreme example; pick someone you’re actually inclined to trust.

Then do this:

### **A. Listen/Watch/Read (15–20 minutes)**

Find:

A short sermon, interview, article, or social media thread where they talk about faith and public issues.

### **B. Apply the 3 Boxes**

For the main claims they make, ask:

#### **Box 1 – Direct Bible:**

Do they quote or clearly teach something the Bible says explicitly?

#### **Box 2 – Biblical Principle / Implication:**

Are they drawing reasonable principles from Scripture and applying them to today (even if the Bible doesn’t address the issue directly)?

#### **Box 3 – Scripture is Silent / Personal Opinion:**

Are they talking about issues the Bible doesn’t clearly address, but presenting their view as “what God says”?

Write down 2–3 statements they make and label which box each fits in, and why.

### C. Apply the 4 Ds

Of the main issues they're speaking about, which ones are:

**Die-for** (core gospel/orthodoxy issues)

**Divide-for** (serious doctrine where churches might separate)

**Debate-for** (Christians can disagree and still be in close fellowship)

**Don't-care** (preferences, strategy, or style)?

Write:

1 example you believe is a **die-for** issue they mention (if any).

1–2 issues that are **debate-for** but often get treated like die-for/divide-for.

### D. Distinguish Facts, Opinions, Feelings (F–O–F)

Take 3 key sentences from what they said and label:

**F – Fact:** verifiable reality.

**O – Opinion:** their interpretation or judgment.

**F – Feeling:** fear, outrage, hope, excitement, etc.

Then ask:

- Are they using **fear or anger** to motivate?
- Are their **feelings** being presented as if they were **facts** or “God’s truth”?

### 3. Unity Exercise: One Brave Conversation

Before next week, choose **one Christian you disagree with politically** (in this church or in your life) and:

Pray for them by name at least twice this week.

Reach out (call, coffee, or email) and say something like:

“I value our unity in Christ more than politics. Could we talk about how to keep loving each other even when we see things differently?”

In that conversation, practice:

- Asking them questions instead of trying to win an argument.

- Clarifying: “Is that a fact, an opinion, or a feeling?”—about your own words too, not just theirs.
- Refusing to treat political differences as **die-for** or **divide-for** issues.

Afterward, jot down:

- What went well?
- Where did you feel anger or fear?
- How might Ephesians 4:26–27 or 2 Timothy 2:24–25 apply to that interaction?

Bring notes or reflections next time (you don’t need to share specifics or names) so we can talk about what you learned—about Scripture, about public voices, and about your own heart.

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### **Extra Credit Assignment: Test a “Popular Quote” with Scripture**

This is for those who want to go a bit deeper in discernment and Bible handling.

#### **Step 1: Find a Popular “Christian” Quote in the Wild**

This week, look for **one** of the following:

- A “Christian” meme/quote on social media
- A short clip of a pastor / Christian commentator / politician talking about God, America, or “what the Bible says”
- A line from a Christian book, podcast, or interview that sounds strong, patriotic, or very comforting/challenging

Write the quote down *exactly*, and note:

- Who said it (if known)

- Where you saw it (platform, show, etc.)

## **Step 2: Ask 4 Discernment Questions**

For that one quote, answer these in writing:

### **1. Where in the Bible?**

- Do they reference a specific verse or passage?
- If yes, read that passage in context (at least 5 verses before and after).
- Does the quote really match what the text is saying?

### **2. Which of our 6 Warning Signs might apply?**

Does this quote:

- Misrepresent Jesus?
- Misrepresent the cross / salvation / the gospel?
- Misrepresent the Christian life (morality/ethics)?
- Manipulate Scripture for a point that's not really there?
- Misuse or misquote Scripture for a **personal or political agenda**?
- Endorse or echo another known false teacher?

### **3. 3 Boxes:**

Is this:

- Box 1 – Direct Bible teaching?
- Box 2 – A principle or implication reasonably drawn from Scripture?
- Box 3 – Area where Scripture is basically silent, but they're speaking with "God says" authority?

### **4. Fact / Opinion / Feeling:**

- What is factual here?

- What is clearly their opinion or interpretation?
- What emotion is being invoked (fear, outrage, pride, shame, hope)?

### **Step 3: Rewrite It Faithfully**

Now, **rewrite the quote** in one sentence so that it:

- Is faithful to what the Bible actually teaches
- Makes clear when something is opinion or application rather than a direct promise from God
- Avoids fear-mongering or flattery

For example:

- Original: "If America repents, God has promised to heal our land."
- Faithful: "Scripture promises that when God's people repent, he is merciful; as American Christians, we should repent and pray, trusting his mercy without claiming promises he made to ancient Israel for our nation."

### **Step 4: Share with One Person**

Share your findings with:

- A friend in the class,
- Or a family member,
- Or write a short paragraph you'd be willing to share next week (no need to name the person you evaluated if that would be awkward).

Explain:

- What the quote said,
- How it misused or used Scripture,

- And how you rewrote it to be biblically faithful.

The goal of this extra credit:

Practice being **“wise as serpents and innocent as doves”**—able to spot when Scripture is being twisted, and able to speak a clearer, more faithful word in response.