

Your candidate isn't Jesus

If you've ever spent any time in politics, especially during caucus or primary season, you will quickly learn that there are many people of all political stripes and parties who practically worship their chosen candidate. It's truly disturbing.

You will also learn that if you question the stances of a person's candidate or, God help you, go against that candidate, doing much of anything to impede the chances for that candidate to secure the nomination, you will have probably made an enemy for life. If you think that's not the case, go get involved. It doesn't matter what party you sign up with, human nature and the deification of politicians will be there. And you will also learn that everything becomes very personal very quickly.

Perhaps that is just the nature of politics. It's almost always a necessary-though-nasty, sausage-making affair. But it seems that it is made far worse when so much of our lives revolves around the power of government. There is this expectation that the chosen candidate will somehow fix everything for us, ushering in a new era of prosperity and security, free of suffering and the troubles of life. Yes, the chosen candidate will surely be the new messiah, our political Jesus...

The reality is that political candidates of all stripes and parties are deeply flawed individuals. We are all flawed if we're honest. That imperfect nature especially carries over to politics, though. It is a place in which a person willingly and purposefully puts himself into the arena of public opinion believing that he is the best and can save the country or make things better. While there are a few saintly political figures in history, in general there is a certain amount of ego and hubris that is required to put yourself forward as the best.

Now, do we need good leaders? Of course. Are there problems that need fixing? Of course. But government and politicians can only do so much. We put too much faith in them these days while neglecting the culture and society that they reflect. Furthermore, we should be particularly alarmed that we live in a time in which government has so much power and influence that even minor changes to laws have such a personal impact on so many Americans.

While leaders can certainly improve the legal and cultural environment we live in, many of our personal problems will still be with us. Indeed, evils and injustices will always be here. Such is the nature of our existence. We must be realistic with our expectations.

As we enter into what will be a very heated political season, please keep in mind that all politicians are flawed individuals. Their powers are limited and they cannot usher in heaven on earth, worse they *can* create hell on earth. Critiquing them and their ideas is absolutely necessary for the health of our society. Be open to reasonable critiques of your candidate.

Again, do try to find the best person for the job, but always remember that most of your personal challenges, suffering, and anxieties will still be with you when that person leaves office. The environment in which we live may improve or worsen through various government actions, but it is ultimately our personal responsibility to find ways to improve our condition and that of our fellow man.

No politician is the messiah. If you want that, go to church.

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