

## Character On the Campaign Trail

The Presidential election is almost 14 months away but candidates are already telling us what they think we want to hear. Candidates travel the country, attempting to appeal to voters and demographics from that region.

Some political candidates are relentless, seeking every opportunity to catch a rival doing something wrong. Statements may be taken out of context to make an opponent look bad. Laws regarding slanderous and inflammatory statements give lots of latitude to political campaigns. You can almost say anything you want if there is some shred of truth in a broad statement. If you have ever taken photos of an expressive person you know how it is easy to get unflattering still pictures of someone. Those pictures are sometimes superimposed somewhere else to paint a negative view of a candidate. Perception is reality.



It is all part of the political campaign process. As a result, many people are turned off. We don't know who to believe. In the end we want to "throw our hands up in the air" because no candidate seems trustworthy.

Satan's efforts are far worse than the most contemptuous political campaign. Satan tells half-truths to influence our thinking. He convinces people to make derogatory statements about people of faith, to discourage others from following Jesus Christ. He takes things out of context, and changes his story to trick people. Knowing that no one is perfect, Satan attacks a person's imperfections, seizing the opportunity when a person is vulnerable. Like the serpent in the Garden of Eden he tries to make people second guess a righteous choice, and then have to rationalize why they did what they knew was wrong. Satan teaches us to blame others for our problems. He wants to wear us down so we don't know what to believe. His hope is that doubt and uncertainty will cause us to stay on the sidelines, rather than stand up for Jesus.

The leader we should follow is not a candidate for office. He is the Creator with an eternal term. His message is clear and unchanging. God is not after your vote -- He wants your heart. He wants you to be informed of His platform, so you can separate lies from truth. God wants you active on the campaign path of faith, to show your faith through acts of service.

Political candidates "promise you the moon" but often fail to deliver once in office. God *created* the moon and He is true to his word. God doesn't tell you what you want to hear, but instead tells you what you *need* to hear. God doesn't just represent the people -- He created them.

I love the scene in the movie The American President, when fictional President Andrew Shepherd addressed a press conference about accusations made by his political opponent, Bob Rumsen. Rumsen is known for ending his own campaign speeches by enthusiastically saying, "I'm Bob Rumsen. I'm running for President of the United States." In Shepherd's response, after a particularly emotional statement, says "Being President of this country is entirely about character." Shepherd closes the press conference by saying, "I'm Andrew Shepherd, and I *am* the President." Satan takes pot shots "from the cheap seats" to try and win your vote. But, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is in charge. Following God is entirely about character.

Don't be discouraged by attacks on your Christian character. Instead, worship the God that speaks truth, love and compassion. Let your character reflect and demonstrate your faith as you serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Scripture:** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).*

**Question:** How do you withstand attacks on your faith and show God's character in you?

**Prayer:** Lord. We pray that we can be true to our faith in spite of attempts to separate us from you. Amen.