

Cultivate Reflection Guide

ELECTION

Week of November 29, 2020 – Finding Spiritual Strength During Political Chaos

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

Kindly Note: It's the final week in our Election series. As we finish well, make time to reflect on how you've changed and grown as you've purposed to see politics through the eyes of God. Whether in community or through personal reflection, respond to one or more of the questions below. If you don't have time to complete this in group, process through them throughout the week, giving God room to move and speak to you.

1. Reflect: To say 2020 has been unusual is an understatement. However, the bible is full of stories of God using the unusual to achieve His purposes. As you reflect on our Election series and what you've learned about politics from Joshua and the Israelites, how have you experienced growth or change – either personally, spiritually, emotionally or relationally?

2. But God: When we invite growth and change into our lives, we often find ourselves challenged or discouraged. That can make it hard to find the bright side in the battle, but when we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and trust Him, we can believe we will eventually see it.

"We've been surrounded and battered by troubles, *but we're not demoralized*; we're not sure what to do, *but we know that God knows what to do*; we've been spiritually terrorized, *but God hasn't left our side*; we've been thrown down, *but we haven't broken*. What they did to Jesus, they do to us—trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us—he lives!" 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 MSG (*emphasis added*)

Keeping in mind the growth or change you reflected on in question #1...

- What kind of troubles or challenges have you faced along the way?
- In the face of your battles, what "but God" moments have you experienced?
- Jesus endured and overcame; He lives! How does that give you hope that He's able to work in your life? How does it challenge you to not give up and fight for your faith?

Dig Deeper: Read all of 2 Corinthians 4 and be encouraged to not lose heart. Our God of grace was, is and always will be working out His best in our lives. It's with Him at our side that we fight for faith!

3. Spiritual strength is found when we...

- a) turn our mind to God [not everything else]
- b) find and follow a spiritual leader [not everyone else]
- c) accept that discomfort and even suffering help us grow [vs. taking the easy way out]
- d) trust that God has us in this season for a reason [vs fighting for our own way]
 - In which of these areas do you need to pursue strength?
 - What is a first step you could take? Is there something you need to start or stop doing?
 - Pastor Matt challenged us that we fail to experience God in great ways because we don't ask God to do great things. Ask God today to have His way with you, then stand with Him in courage, commitment and obedience as He works in and through you.

Cultivate Community: If rather than looking to the things of God for spiritual strength, you find you are turning toward anything or anyone that is unhealthy, distracting or chaotic, humble yourself and confess to God. Ask Him to give you courage to overcome, then reach out to others to help you stay strong – whether a Christian friend, trusted community or the church. We're here to help at sandalschurch.com/next.

4. Power Play: In a year with so much change and unpredictability, it's normal to grow weary and worn out. When we're running on empty, we'll never generate enough power to sustain us. Today, simply turn your eyes to God and remember that your Maker and Creator is your ample and ever present supply of help, strength and power. Do not underestimate His ability or willingness to be your all in all.

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1-2 NIV