**Respect**

The apostle Paul spoke of politics and religion, and was powerfully effective on both fronts. Why is this? Because Paul was respectful when he disagreed. This quality is lacking today. Paul taught against idolatry, and was effective enough that those who lived off this false religion began a shouting match for 2 hours, (Acts 19:34). These kinds of shouting matches have been going on at University campuses, and in public places. People disagree then disrespect others. In contrast, Paul never did this. He would disagree, but was able to do so without disrespect. Listen carefully to what the political officer had to say about Paul.

“After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, “Men of Ephesus… you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.

So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another. But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly.” (Acts 19:35-39).

1. Shouting over someone is disrespectful. If you have engaged in this type of behavior in the past, determine not to do so again. Carefully look at others who do so, it harms their position. They can’t control themselves, and they think they should control others?
2. Paul did not “blaspheme” the goddess, the idol. He was able to teach effectively against an idol, without any kind of smear campaign that would be considered “blaspheme”. Nor were Paul and his companions, “robbers of temples”.
3. The town clerk wanted peace and not a shouting match where tempers were hot. If they broke the law, then take them to the “courts”. Assembly dismissed.
4. Politics: “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.” (Romans 13:1-2).

People can be belligerent bullies. These are the kind of people who killed Jesus, “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;” (1Pet. 2:23). Jesus is our example on how to deal with belligerent people in politics or religion. Speak up, but do so respectfully even while disagreeing, as Peter says, “But Peter and the apostles answered, “ We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29).

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