

**Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Communications – Cissie Graham Lynch
Fearless – Ep 116 – Who Are You Following To The Ballot Box?
Final Transcript**

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:02 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:00:22 Recently, there's been two kinds of people: those who love that Taylor Swift has become an NFL fan and those who are so tired of it, tired of turning on the TV and their social media and it's all about Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce. But this weekend were the Grammys and she just won two more Grammys to add to her collection. But I think she made *a lot* of headlines last week when an article came out saying she could sway the next presidential election. And, that sent a lot of people in a frenzy, and we're going to unpack that on today's episode of *Fearless*.

But recently, I was just coming back from Israel—I went on a trip with my dad and next week's episode will be a special episode from Israel where I interviewed a dear friend of mine who lives there in Israel, so make sure you don't miss that. But on the way back from this trip, a colleague and I were talking about the 2024 presidential election and we had some agreements; we had some disagreements, all the fun, but we were both in agreement that this election is about survival—and that's the survival of this country as we know it. We have constantly seen a downward decline in so many areas, and we have seen growing hostility and tension on the rise.

That we are also in agreement that many of the American voters have become like sheep. Both Democrats and Republicans have all become sheep, and they're following what a select few say, and they're following that *all* the way to the ballot box. And I've seen a couple of good explanations for this, and it said if a group of people are like sheep, they all behave in the same way, or, all behave as they are told, and cannot or will not act independently. And this refers to people who have a herd mentality, who do not think for themselves, but follow whatever the crowd is doing, wrong or right.

You know, a great example in our culture is right now this cup right here. I'm going to say the most unpopular thing I've probably ever said, the most controversial thing I've said on *Fearless* podcast—which I've said a lot—are these Stanley cups. I bought mine like four years ago before they even became popular, and I've maybe I've used it four or five times. They are not worth the money, but we see these people, these women going nuts, like in the Target line and trampling over one another, just to get the Stanley cup. I don't think they're worth the money. I don't use mine. Actually gave it to my daughter and she uses it because the girls at school tell her it's popular. But that just shows our culture: that we think this cup is so popular that we would go crazy and running in stores, trampling over people. Why? Because influencers have told us that they are popular and we see influencers on social media posting cute pictures. And I will say, I have been a victim of being sold the snake oil on social media way too many times.

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But getting back to the point is, I often say that during President Trump's four years in office, his greatest strength was making the American people think for themselves. And that's why he was a threat to the Washington elites and to the mass media and some of the great institutions of this country. He challenged the American people to think for themselves and not be like sheep, what they had been told for years and years and just kind of going along with it. But he challenged the American people to stop it and to think for themselves and to challenge what they were being told.

And for so long, the Democratic Party and the elite have thought so little of their base, that they think their base is so uneducated, that they know they can persuade voters like it's a high school prom voting for king and queen. That they think they're uneducated, so shallow, that all it takes to win an election would be their stance when it came down to social issues and handing out loan forgiveness like candy, just to get more votes. And sadly, it was true and it has worked for many years. The Democrats think they know *better* than you when it comes to your business, when it comes to your money, when it comes to your bodies, when it comes to your children and teaching your children. They think, 'We are the government; we are the experts, that you are the parents. You need to trust us. You need us to make the decisions for *your* children and for your families.'

But fast forward to 2024. And I think the same has become true for the Republican base. The Republican base is starting to believe what a select few conservative talk show hosts tell them and what they say. And I think that this is a dangerous place for a political party to be. If you need an example, just look what happened to Vice President Mike Pence, the one who was so loyal and true when so many people were not in those early years of President Trump. And that the *entire* Republican base turned against him so quickly and so fast—but that's just one example. There's been many.

But I believe we the American people are smarter and we are more capable than that. That we cannot be controlled by a few men and women who want to manipulate their own agenda through us, that we can do our own research, and we are capable of thinking for ourselves.

So, back to Taylor Swift. A recent article that many of you might have read and heard is that she has the ability to sway the U.S. election this year. That's a little scary to think about. I'm by no means a Swiftie, but I do love her. I love her music, I love her style, but that's where it ends—and, side note, I'm pulling for the 49ers, not the Kansas City Chiefs—but, I don't need her opinion on who she thinks would be the best candidate to lead this country while we're facing huge national security issues; while we're facing inflation; while our borders are in shambles; our education system has been a mess; morality has been down in our nation; our military is being undermined from an ideology from within—all while our enemies around the world see it and they're loving it. So, all of this with Taylor Swift, it has sent the Republicans in a frenzy, which has been quite comical to start listening to all the conspiracy theories about it all. And they have kind of led them into a war with the Swifties, and I would just say that's probably not a great, or a smart, campaign strategy for the Republican Party.

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But when we reflect over the last four years, it's hard to comprehend the significant decline of this country. The impact of the last four years on the American family has been devastating. From trying to pay bills to expensive trips to the grocery store—I know each of us have all been affected by that—to shutting down schools and businesses, which crushed our economy and that was wounding our children's education, spiking mental illness. We look at education all across the country and kids are behind due to what happened in 2020. And all the pushing tolerant lifestyles on the American families and onto our children and our education system, which is contrary to God's Word.

And I want to pause here for a moment. Here on *Fearless*, I've always challenged people to know what they believe and why they believe it. That also applies to the information we take that affect us, not just in our faith, but here in our culture, in our country. So, I ask a question: Where do you get your news from? Where do you listen when you're doing your research? Who are you listening to? And if your answer is social media, your friends or family, or only one major news source, I would just challenge you to do more research, to go into other resources. In my show notes, there's going to be a link to the media bias chart that shows where certain outlets lean. And I'd encourage you to select several to start reading to gain information, but also look to sources like FactCheck.org and experts on specific topics. And my go-to for Biblically based information that's happening in our culture is *Decision* magazine, which has been a ministry of my grandfather for a long time. It is truly where I get a lot of my resources when it comes to these issues and what's happening around the world.

But this takes me back to the sheep, and how we, the American people, the American voter, have become like sheep and blindly following the voices of influencers. And it makes me think of my son's recent Bible verse that he memorized from Isaiah 53, and it says, "*We [are] all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*" In the New Living Translation it says, "*All of us, [are] like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's path to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.*"

And, it's been funny, recently, this last week, our family devotions has all been about Jesus being the Shepherd and teaching my children that what does that truly mean? What does it mean that Jesus is our Shepherd? That He protects us, He guides us, He leads us, He takes care of us. But we are all called to be the sheep who follow the one and only true Shepherd of Jesus. And trying to teach my children what does that mean? And we have to know His voice to be able to follow it. And how do we know His voice? And that comes through studying His Scripture, spending time in prayer with Him. Sometimes we can be in such a rush that we're saying quick prayers if we're spending time in prayer, but to spend *a lot of time* just praying with Him, seeking Him, so that we will know His voice when He calls and guides us, to be able to give us wisdom.

But like I said earlier, this election this year comes down to survival. And who are we going to follow to the ballot box? So my question is, who are you following to the ballot box? First, have you been following celebrities? I know people, just like the

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story said, or the article said, last week, about those who will vote whoever Taylor Swift is. I know people like that in my life. *She* can get more people to vote with one Instagram post than anyone in history of the modern voter registration systems. Or, are we following people like her boyfriend, Travis Kelce, who, you know, if you think about it, he came out with an ad with Pfizer. He was a partner with Pfizer to get your COVID booster shot. And we have to be careful that we're not following people who get paid. And just a little bit of research that I researched, I believe he got paid \$20 million with a contract with Pfizer. So we're really going to trust and *believe* people who get paid millions of dollars to tell you one thing, because that doesn't mean that they're doing it in their own personal lives. So we *have* to be careful, whether it's with a vaccine or voting or whatever it is, people get paid. It's a business to tell you something and we, once again, we are *smarter* than that.

And the same comes for political commentators. Have you been following political commentators and influencers all the way to the ballot box? The far-left *and* the far-right wing media stars all have the same tactics. They just have different messaging. They get paid with the viewership that they get. We live in a time period where people feel like they have to be like outrageous; they have to say something so crazy that gets views. They have to stick out from the crowd and so they're saying all kinds of wild things on the left and on the right so it can entertain their base, that it can gain viewership from that base. So we have to be very careful. They can say some truth in some of the things that they say, but to be careful where we're getting all of that media and following them and believing everything. Because once again, we cannot be like sheep. We have to be wise enough to be able to navigate through what we're being told and what influencers want us to believe. We have to be able to find truth.

Or thirdly, have you been following no one? And I encourage you, we cannot afford to sit out. We say this every election and it amazes me when the numbers come out every year or after every presidential election of how many people, especially evangelical Christians, have sat out. And this isn't a choice that we get to make. There's too much at stake in this 2024 election. We will vote people into positions all over the country, starting locally all the way up to our president, into positions who will decide how we live our life now and what is pushed on our children for *decades* to come. And I often remind people that it isn't about politics. If you don't like politics, if that annoys you, it's not about politics. But think of it of governance. Who is going to govern over *you*? Who is going to make those choices of your daily life? Over your business? Over your children? You're voting into that and you actually get the privilege and the honor to be a part of that. But each person who is in office will come with their *own* ideology and that will have an impact on our children's lives. So if we want to love our neighbor, we have to be engaged because we have to be engaged to all of us—that's part of loving our neighbor.

So, who *should* you follow to the ballot box? And let's be clear—once again, I'm going to say it again: We're in survival mode. And our voice should be a little bit less than a cheer for Taylor Swift right now and more like David, when we read in Psalm 28 and it says, "*Praise be to the Lord, for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.*" And, "*My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. The Lord is my strength of his people, a*

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fortress of salvation for his anointed one. Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever.” And in this season of survival, we should remind us of Israel’s survival and Joshua’s call for them to only follow the Lord. In Joshua 24, Joshua brings all the tribes of Israel together to remind them all that God has rescued them from. After this reminder, he calls for them to choose whom they will serve, and we’ve always remembered this: “*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*” And we have to do that starting in our own household, and then serving Him is also taking action. He has blessed us beyond imagination with a gift of freedom. And to whom much is given, much is expected. And with that freedom, much is expected of Christians to help serve in our community, to help make those decisions of who’s going to govern over us and who’s going to govern over our children and over our churches and make the decisions of shutting us down. We have to be a part of that.

So maybe you have struggled with that in the past and you think following God to the ballot box may not seem too clear, but it *can* be clear. To remember that God has mercifully established creational order. And in other words, He’s given us clear principles that we must follow and He set these up so that we could flourish as a human race and that we can also combat evil. So I encourage you, vote first based on this: based on the order that God gave us. And these are the issues of, like, protecting life; protecting our ability to worship; to disciple; to evangelize; to parent our children; when we protect traditional marriage and the responsible, like, spending that our nation is, we get to be part of the voice of choosing who’s going to be a part of that. Who’s going to help defend the citizens of our nation? Who’s going to help strengthen our economy that gives us all a chance to work and contribute and to take care of our loved ones and to help others around us?

But second is, God has given us freedoms to make secondary decisions based on what is best for our family, what is best for our community, and that beyond. So second is, I would encourage you to vote based on these: What does our country need to continue to *thrive* and to create an environment where we can share Jesus, freely? Have you ever thought about that? Because of the freedoms we have, we get to share Him freely. And I hear so many people that sit back and say that, you know, they don’t want to be a part of it, that the Gospel will still spread even under persecution—and yes, that’s true. We’ve seen that around the world—but like I said earlier, to whom much is given, much is expected. We’ve been given freedom; we are expected to act with that freedom and to use it wisely.

And third is loving our Lord is loving our neighbor. And that requires seeing the needs, to step in and to meet those needs, that love requires action, including selecting those who govern over us. Who’s going to govern our children and our grandchildren, our neighbors and our community, our state and our nation? And so I encourage you this year, that we cannot sit out, that we have to be careful. We can’t be like sheep. We can’t just follow what the select few, whether that’s in the left or the right, what they are telling us. We have to be smart enough for that. We have to do our own homework, and the Lord gives us wisdom to be able to decipher that, and so pray to the Holy Spirit that gives you wisdom to be able to decipher it, through

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all the noise and all the lies that come through in all of our different outlets that we're listening to and watching.

This is an *amazing* country that I love so dearly; and I love the politics, the good, the bad, and the ugly. And I know so many people, so many of you listening are weary of all of that, but the Lord will *guide* us and I pray that He will guide *you* from local to state to national elections, that give you wisdom when it goes to the ballot box this year. Remember, we are in survival mode and we can all play a part in this.

Sometimes you think you're just in your little corner that it doesn't really matter—it does matter. I just was talking to a friend, her husband, and a colleague. He was up at an international religious conference up in Washington, and I texted her what she was doing, and she was at training for early voting, which I'm like, Wow, good for you, because she'll be with *a lot* of liberals who don't believe that much, but she'll be keeping them accountable. And so, we can all play a part, even if it's part of being an early voter, and so thankful for people that, in our communities, that all play a part.

And once again, I know it can all be very confusing and seem overwhelming, but I encourage you, don't go weary this year when it comes to our elections. And I will be coming out here on *Fearless*, a *Fearless Family Voting Guide*, to help us all navigate through these issues and to see what Scripture has to say. But another great resource, I'll say it again, is *Decision* magazine. You can check it out at DecisionMagazine.org. I keep a lot of those to help me through some of these issues, especially as it gets closer to the election.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:18:47 Thank you for joining me on another episode of *Fearless*, and thank you for all of those who *share* these episodes. If this episode meant something to you, or spoke to you, challenged you for the year we face ahead, please share it with your friends or family or co-workers. And once again, thank you for all of those who send encouraging comments through social media and through the website. It means more than you'll ever know. Once again, thanks for joining me in another episode, keeping a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

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