



GOD & CULTURE

Study Guide



SUMMIT VIEW CHURCH



INTRODUCTION

For the next four weeks, we will be diving into our sermon series titled “God & Culture”. Within this series, we will be looking at three specific institutions: Family, Government, and Church. Our desire and goal through this series are to realign biblically with what their design and function look like, and how to flourish in each area. This week is a kickoff introduction to help set the table for where we will be going; primarily calling us to root our views of these three institutions firmly in the truth of the Gospel.

PERSONAL APPLICATION/ REFLECTION

Of the three institutions, which do you see the greatest need for growth in your life?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q. At Summit View, our mission is to equip and empower the body of Christ to lead and impact every sphere of life with Gospel-Centered Living. With that in mind, why would it make sense for us to take the next month to look at the institutions of Family, Government, and Church?

Q. In the sermon, we were reminded of how the Gospel brings about transformation to individuals. Part of this truth is recognizing the nature of God, the offense of our sin, and that Christ as our only hope. Of these three, which one do you think is most misunderstood today?

READ & DISCUSS

In the sermon, Michael spoke of the need to develop three things: Biblical Convictions, Christ Motivated Compassion, and Kingdom-Oriented Courage.

BIBLICAL CONVICTIONS / [JOHN 17:17-19](#)

In this passage, Jesus is praying for the disciples and those who would become His disciples.

Q. Why is Biblical truth so important to the Christian life?

Q. Are there certain non-negotiables? If so, what are they?

CHRIST-MOTIVATED COMPASSION / [MATTHEW 9:36](#)

Q. In your own words, what does it look like to have compassion for people?

Follow Up: When looking at our neighborhood, city, state, nation, is it compassion you have for the people or something else?

Follow Up: Part of what Pastor Michael spoke about is an understanding of one individual call and passion when expressing compassion. While some are passionate about racial reconciliation, some are passionate about adop-

READ & DISCUSS, cont.

tion, and others are passionate about combating the horrors of sex-trafficking. Why is it important to understand one's calling and passion without placing expectations on others? What can that do to a small group or church without properly understanding this?

KINGDOM-ORIENTED COURAGE / [MATTHEW 10:32-33;38-39](#)

Q. If we have Biblical convictions and we express Christ-motivated compassion, it will most likely lead us out of our comfort zones. Is this something that brings excitement or trepidation?

Q. How do Jesus' words here bring challenge, comfort, or encouragement to you?

Follow Up: Can you think of a time where you or someone you know, exhibited Kingdom-oriented courage? Share the story.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

ARTICLE / Don't Let Coronavirus Divide
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/church-dont-let-coronavirus-divide/>

While this article is speaking to the debate that is currently taking place regarding the coronavirus and the church's response, the application applies to many more debates and how we engage in conversation that honors God.

ARTICLE & VIDEO / The Secularization Hypothesis is Fundamentally Flawed
<https://www.crossway.org/articles/why-the-secularization-hypothesis-is-fundamentally-flawed/>

If we look at the best projections from now until 2060, we see that Christianity will continue to be the world's largest global worldview.

ARTICLE / The Collapse of the Secularization Hypothesis
<https://www.crossway.org/articles/the-collapse-of-the-secularization-hypothesis/>

While some have been arguing the demise of religion, and Christianity in particular, the facts simply don't support this truth. As societies have grown more modern, they have not become less religious. This is evident by the rise of Christianity on a global scale.

VIDEO / The Limits of Secularization with Tim Keller and Anthony Kronman
<https://youtu.be/gGK7lJDu8XM>

Secularism says do no harm and do good. The problem is we all have different definitions of harm and good. Secularization limits our ability to truly live into what is true, beautiful, and good, set by a standard outside of ourselves.

ARTICLE / Is Your Church Ready for the Future; Sharing Good News in a Changing Culture
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/is-your-church-ready-for-the-future/>

It is not simply how the leaders and church at large are ready for future engagement with the world, but also its members. If we are to bring the gospel with us everywhere, we go, are we readily equipped to do so?



INTRODUCTION

This week we are turning our attention to the Gospel and how it interacts with marriage and the family. In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His disciples to take the Gospel to all nations. But before the Gospel travels to the end of the earth, it starts at home with us.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q. We understand that not everyone is married and not everyone is going to be married. So why is it important for all of us to take time to study marriage and family regardless of our marital and family status?

READ & DISCUSS

MARRIAGE / [GENESIS 2:18-25](#)

Q. This week we spent time discussing marriage and family. In your own words, how would you define marriage?

Follow Up: Pastor Michael described it as: “One Man, One Woman, One Lifetime”. Why would one see this statement as controversial in our society?

Q. In verse 18, this is the first time in all of the creation account in Genesis that something is referred to as “not good.” What is it?

Follow Up: Consider that it was God who brought up the fact Adam was alone (instead of Adam). Does that impact the way we see the importance of community, friendship, and companionship?

Q. The statement made in verse 24 is one that is repeated throughout Scripture (see Matthew 19:4-6 and Ephesians 5:31-32). What does this statement help communicate about the nature and design of marriage?

FAMILY / [PSALM 78:1-8](#)

Q. According to these verses, what are the reasons parents are to teach their children about God?

Follow Up: What are “the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders he has done” that we must teach about to the coming generation?



Q. In this instruction, it starts with telling the story and character of God before teaching commandments and morals. Why is it so important to remember the proper order of this?

Q. In the sermon, Pastor Michael mentioned that we must be careful not to exalt the family and ignore the church. Yet we must also be careful not to exalt the church and ignore the family. How does one go about having a healthy balance, giving each area the proper time, attention, and resources?

PERSONAL APPLICATION/REFLECTION

As mentioned in the service, and most likely in your discussion time over the subject matter, it is pretty clear that there are a lot of opinions and influences on what marriage and family should be or could be. Not only that, the evil one would love to bring about confusion and discouragement. Spend some time in prayer for the health and holiness of your marriage, family, as well as the marriages and families of Summit View. Pray that the marriages of Summit View would be the picture of Christ's love for the Church, as marriage was intended to be.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

PODCAST / How to Prioritize Family Discipleship

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/gospelbound/how-to-prioritize-family-discipleship/>

Collin Hansen talks with Matt Chandler about his book "Family Discipleship: Leading Your Home Through Time, Moments, and Milestones", co-authored with Adam Griffin.

ARTICLE / What Family Discipleship Is and Is Not

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-family-discipleship-is-and-is-not/>

Put simply, family discipleship is leading your home by doing whatever you can whenever you can to help your family become friends and followers of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE / 5 Myths about Marriage

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/5-myths-about-marriage/>

People are susceptible to believing all sorts of misconceptions about the purposes and practices of marriage. In this article, Paul David Tripp helps point us to the goal and meaning behind marriage.

VIDEO / Marriage in Light of God's Glory, with Francis Chan

<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/1213?episode=1>

Francis Chan and his wife speak about how one can create a Christ-centered, eternity-minded marriage.



INTRODUCTION

Augustine wrote “The City of God” to rebut the idea that Christianity makes a nation weak, to console Christians who might be confused and who were under attack from their countrymen. The primary way Augustine did this was by contrasting the earthly kingdom with the heavenly kingdom—what he called the City of Man versus the City of God. He wrote, for instance, that “Incomparably more glorious than Rome, is that heavenly city in which for victory you have truth; for dignity, holiness; for peace, felicity; for life, eternity.”

This week, we turn our attention to another institution that God has implemented: the government. Often you hear that there are really only three topics that churches are supposed to avoid: sex, money, government. Unfortunately, this mindset has hindered us and allowed a deficiency to take place within our discipleship. It has left a vacuum for television and radio pundits to fill in the gaps, rather than the Scriptures and our fellow believers. If it's not within the safety and acceptance of our church family, where else can we have conversations about this?

Our ability to engage in this conversation, while remaining civil and striving to maintain unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ will help reveal whether our hearts and minds are more closely aligned to the City of Man or to the City of God.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

All things exist under the sovereignty of God and serve not only the good of people but also God's ultimate purpose to bring glory to His name ([Psalm 115:1-2](#); [Proverbs 16:4](#); [Isaiah 42:8](#)).

Government, too, has been instituted by God; not only for the good of humanity but also for the glory of His own name.

Follow Up: What might give you pause as you answer that question?

READ & DISCUSS

READ [1 PETER 2:13-17](#)

Q. What is the purpose of government as Peter describes it here?

Q. What does it mean to be subject to another human authority?

Follow Up: What might “For the Lord's sake” mean? Why do you think Peter anchors his command with this statement?

Q. What does Peter mean when he says our obedience, honor, and good deeds silence claims of the foolish?

Q. According to Peter, how are Christians to use their freedom?

READ & DISCUSS, cont.

READ [ROMANS 13:1-7](#)

Q. According to verses one and six, what are two things God has instructed Christians to do?

Follow Up: What is the motivation Paul gives in v. 5?

Q. According to [Acts 5:29](#), [Daniel 3:4](#) and [6:8-14](#), when is it appropriate for Christians to participate in civil disobedience? **Hint:** It may be worth taking time to watch the resource video: “When Should Christians Engage in Civil Disobedience?”

Q. In light of what we have looked at in the verses above, where do you find it easy or difficult to live in alignment with what the Scriptures call us to?

PERSONAL APPLICATION/ REFLECTION

Let’s be honest—the conversation surrounding politics and government is one that brings tension, whether its within our family, in our life group, or even inside of ourselves. Yet one thing remains true. Our leaders on the local, state, and national level will eventually change, as will the policy they usher in and attempt to govern by. But one thing also remains true, that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever ([Hebrews 13:13](#)). We can pray and give thanks to God that He is in control and knows every detail about what will take place. Take some time bringing your anxiety, fears, frustrations, and apathy to the One who is still reigning and ruling today.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

VIDEO / [Secret Church: God, Government & the Gospel](#)

VIDEO / [When Should Christians Engage in Civil Disobedience?](#)

ARTICLE / [The Purpose and Role of Government](#)

ESSAY / [The Relationship between Church and State](#)

VIDEO / [The Way of Exile](#)

ARTICLE / [Loving Others Through Political Difference](#)

BOOKS:

Saint Augustine. [City of God](#).

Bacote, Vincent E. [The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life](#).

Benne, Robert D. [Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics](#).

Black, Amy E. and Gundry, Stanley N., Eds. [Five Views on the Church and Politics](#).

Dever, Mark. [God and Politics: Jesus’ Vision for Society, State and Government](#).

Emerson, Michael O. and Smith, Christian. [Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America](#).

Grudem, Wayne A. [Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture](#).

Innes, David C. [Christ and the Kingdoms of Men: Foundations of Political Life](#).

Koyzis, David T. [Political Visions and Illusions, 2nd ed.](#)

Leeman, Jonathan. [How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age](#).

Moore, Russell and Andrew T. Walker, eds. The Gospel for Life series (Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission): [The Gospel and Religious Liberty](#); [The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation](#); [The Gospel and Abortion](#); [The Gospel and Same-Sex Marriage](#).

Platt, David. [Counter Culture](#).



INTRODUCTION

“The church of Jesus Christ must always love as a people of the Book...Christ declared upon Peter’s confession he would build his church. Jesus promised nothing on earth, not even the gates of hell, will defeat Christ’s church so long as it stands upon the rock of Christ and his lordship. The lordship of Christ also demands that the church live out conviction and obey Christ in all his commands. Churches must stand for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” The Gathering Storm – Albert Mohler



CONVERSATION STARTER

Q. Depending on one’s background and previous experiences, we all come to the table with different expectations of the church. In your own words, how would you describe the role and purpose of the church?

READ & DISCUSS

Q. As mentioned in the sermon, the church is to be an embassy. Is this an analogy that you are familiar with? How does it compare with what you described earlier as the purpose of the church? (See [Ephesians 3:8-10](#).)

Follow Up: If the church is an embassy, that means we are ambassadors ([2 Corinthians 5:20](#)). We don’t often put the focus on our role as ambassadors because we just think about ourselves. Does your life accurately reflect the Gospel and the glory of God? Or does it do more to distort the image (like a broken mirror)?

Q. Jesus tells us that the world will know our allegiance and love for Him by the way we love one another ([John 13:35](#)). How well do you think you are doing in this?

Q. One of the final things Jesus prays for ([John 17:21-23](#)) is that His followers would be unified and allow God to be glorified in their unity. How are you in displaying and living in unity with others?

Follow Up: Are you allowing any differences to cause division?

Follow Up: Are you allowing something that is secondary (social issues, theology, etc.) to become primary and thus causing division?

PERSONAL APPLICATION/REFLECTION

This week, the church is a topic that will be on all our minds. Not only are we having this discussion and studying the church here, we are also getting ready for the church to resume its face-to-face gatherings. As you close, spend time praying for Summit View Church and your campus specifically. Pray that we would be unified, that we would be able to show the love of Christ to one another, those outside the church, and to our neighbors. Pray that God would allow us to be a city upon a hill, shining the light of Christ in the world that seems very dark right now.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

ARTICLE / The Church is an Embassy, Not a Social Club

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-church-is-an-embassy-not-a-social-club/>

As the Holy Spirit uses the Word to draw a church together and make it more like Jesus, He also makes us effective as an embassy of the High King—both to model to a rebellious world what life ought to be like, and also (and even through that life) to proclaim the good news of King Jesus's offer of mercy to that world.

VIDEO / What is the Church?

<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/294705?episode=1>

The church wasn't our idea—it was His. Jesus established the church as the natural arena for our spiritual growth, and our health depends on it. In this session, Dr. Mark Dever surveys the marks of a healthy church, where we are called to display God's glorious character in unity, holiness, and love. We can't do it alone.

ESSAY / The Church Gathered

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-church-gathered/>

The weekly gathering of a church is an expression of Jesus' greater heavenly gathering, or the universal church. It is an embassy of Christ's Kingdom. Churches don't gather merely for pragmatic or instrumental reasons—because it's a good thing to do or because it's beneficial. Churches gather because it's essential to a church being a church. It's essential to the church's mission of proclaiming the excellencies of God.

ARTICLE / Why the Church is Vitally Important for Every Christian

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/why-the-church-is-vitally-important-for-every-christian/>

God has ordained the church, a fellowship of the flawed, to carry out His purpose and will in the world. When we consider the biblical teaching on the church, we realize the church is vitally important for growing in Christ. Like a branch that grows because of its connection to the tree, we thrive when we stay connected to the church.

ARTICLE / What Your Church (and You) Need Most

<https://www.churchandculture.org/blog/2020/8/6/what-your-church-and-you-needs-most>

In light of everything that has happened, and is going to happen in 2020, this article serves as a great reminder and encouragement of what we need as Christians. It also provides us with a picture of what the church needs from us as we continue to call our local church home.