

Christ & Culture (7 of 7)

Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the [recent sermons page](#) at our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, October 23rd, 2022



Series Focus: As followers of Jesus, we are called to embrace his teachings and example, proclaim the truth of the gospel, and engage the world around us by embodying the good news. What does that look like today? As we read the Bible, we can see that it takes a mixed view of all human cultures. While many elements of culture can be affirmed, we must avoid uncritically accepting aspects of culture without first examining them in light of Christ and the gospel. Therefore, we must learn to contextualize the gospel and use cultural discernment as we live in the world as faithful disciples. In this 7-part sermon series—*Christ & Culture*—disciples of Jesus are invited to apply the gospel to every area of life as we seek to follow him in a fallen world.

Sermon Title: Sharing the Gospel in American Culture

Scripture Reading: Acts 17:16-34; Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Sermon Focus: The story of the Apostle Paul sharing the good news about Jesus with the Athenian philosophers is a powerful representation of how cultural fluency enables Christians to enter the culture sympathetically and respectfully, confront and challenge its idols and darkness, and then appeal to our listeners with a relevant message and compelling vision of God's good future for the world. In the final message of our series, Pastor David invites us to do the same as we share the gospel in American culture.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group in person or by video call. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Read Acts 17:16-34 together. What did you find most helpful about Pastor David's background and exposition of this passage? What was something new that you learned or that jumped out at you about Paul preaching in Athens?
2. Notice how Paul models a Kingdom approach to culture:
 - Paul **enters culture and affirms** his listeners by saying, "I see that you are very religious..." (v.22) and shows his *cultural fluency*, "As some of your own poets have said..." (v.28); he doesn't quote the Bible or shame them in anger.
 - Paul **challenges their idols and darkness** by saying, "He is the God who made the world" and "we shouldn't think of God as an idol made by humans" and "God commands everyone to repent of their sins" (vs. 24-27, 29-30).
 - Paul **appeals to his listeners** by sharing some of the gospel story and inviting them to reimagine God, themselves, the world, and the future (vs. 31-34).

As you reflect on the example of Paul, why do you think it's so important to follow this order of sharing the gospel? Do you think it's accurate to say that many of us grew up in the church only hearing one of these? Which one?

3. If Paul came to an American city and shared the gospel in American culture, here are some "objects of worship" (idols) he might address:
 - "I see that you are very **sexual** and seeking fulfillment"
 - "I see that you're all about **human autonomy and self-expression**"
 - "I see that you are very concerned about **human rights** and justice"
 - "I see that you create **technology, art, entertainment, sports**, etc."
 - "I see that you long for a sense of **identity, self-worth, and purpose**"

Pastor David said that these can be "access points" to sharing the gospel today, depending on the person. He said that it's important to show how American culture's answers are *self-defeating* and insufficient because only Christ and the gospel can meet our needs and lead us to freedom, wholeness, justice, etc.

As a group, discuss how we might respond to each of the points above by: (1) entering culture and affirming what we can about it; (2) challenging how our culture has gone to extremes and made it an idol; and (3) sharing what Christ, the Scriptures, and the gospel says about the matter.

4. Luke told us that Paul was "provoked in the spirit" about Athenian culture. What provokes you in the spirit about American culture? How is the Spirit inviting you to respond through the relationships and influence God has given you?