

Christ & Culture (3 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, September 25th, 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: Confronting the Idols of Culture

Scripture Reading: Daniel 3:1-30; Romans 1:18-25, 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:11-12

Sermon Focus: The Bible tells us that God's people are exiles on the earth until Christ returns and brings the fullness of his Kingdom. In the meantime, we want to be faithful to Jesus as we embody the good news and navigate this present evil age. We enter the culture and affirm what we can, to be sure. But there will be times when we must resist dehumanizing beliefs and behaviors of the world. In the third message of our series, Pastor David calls us to confront the idols of culture with the gospel of Jesus.

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. Daniel chapters 1-6 tell *three* stories of faithfulness in Babylonian exile. Reflect on those stories together: (1) the young Jewish exiles abstain from eating meat to maintain their faith practice; (2) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to bow down to an idol and are thrown in a fiery furnace; and (3) Daniel practices his faith in defiance of the law and is thrown in the lion's den. God delivers them and blesses the exiles in each story. While the context is certainly different than our own, why are these stories so relevant for Christians today? Why do we need to hear these stories? How do they challenge and encourage us in our faith?
2. Pastor David listed some examples of idols we see in American culture: money/greed, success and fame, sports, individualism, sex/sexuality, entertainment, food, power, technology, consumerism, war & violence, nationalism, political ideologies, social activism, etc. Take some time to think about each of these and give some examples of how you see these "idols of the heart" at work in our culture. Also, are there others you would include?
3. Read Romans 12:1-2 and Matthew 22:36-40 together. Pastor David said that in order to resist the idols and secular liturgies of culture, we must embrace holy habits and religious practices that can help order our loves and aim our worship at Christ. God doesn't need our religious practices; we need it to be properly formed. Can you describe what "secular liturgies" look like in our culture? Give some examples. What are the "patterns" of the world that seek to shape us? What role does media play? Also, have you noticed how the lack of spiritual disciplines and religious routines have led to the malformation of disciples?
4. What do you think are some simple and obvious things that Christians should be doing to help us be properly formed in worship (in and outside the church)? Give some specific examples. What is working in your life? Also, how can we see these practices as life-giving, rather than obligatory and burdensome?
5. Tim Keller writes, "An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure" (Counterfeit Gods). Be honest with your group. What may be some idols in your own life? Also, how is the Spirit calling you to confront an idol of culture? After everyone shares, close your time together in prayer for each other and the church. Take some time confessing idols and then ask God to help you/us love and trust him more fully.