

## Christ & Culture (1 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 11th, 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:** In the World but Not of It

**Scripture Reading:** John 17:15-19; Ephesians 5:8-16; Colossians 1:15-20

**Sermon Focus:** The Bible makes a clear distinction between the people of God and the rest of the world. It's important for "us" to see that, while also recognizing how Jesus reveals that God's posture toward "them" is loving, reconciling, and redemptive. And this has implications for how we enter and engage society and culture today. In the first message of our series, Pastor David shares how disciples of Jesus are called to be in the world, but not of it—to be fully present as wise and discerning children of the light.

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 John 17:15-19 together. It's in Jesus' prayer for his disciples that he says his followers are "not of this world" just as he wasn't of the world. His disciples are to be "holy" and set apart from the world according to God's truth and for his purposes. How do you understand what Jesus is saying? Why do you think it is so important that we believe this? What is lost if we don't believe it?
2. Now read 1 Peter 1:14-16 and 1 Peter 2:9 together. Clearly, we are called to be holy and set apart from the world. If we are to be "in the world, but not of it" (as Jesus said), what should this look like? Give some unhealthy examples, but also discuss what it looks like today to live a holy life in a broken world.
3. Ken Myers (Christian cultural critic) said that culture is: "What human beings make of the world -- in both senses."
  - The things we make (e.g., art, music, literature, clothing, food, architecture, roads, etc.)
  - The meaning we make (We ask questions like: Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going? What is my purpose? What is truth?)

We communicate meaning by the things we make, and then the culture reflects the dominate worldview, beliefs, values, etc. So, when you look at the American culture in which we live, what do the things we make say about meaning?

4. Pastor David shared four unhealthy postures that we can have toward the culture(s) in which we live. Think of some real-life examples of each of these. Also, share which one you have seen or experienced the most in your life?
  - **Condemn** culture (withdraw or war against it)
  - **Critique** culture (only discuss & debate ideas)
  - **Copy** culture (offer cheap imitations & alternatives)
  - **Consume** culture (mostly mindless conformity)
5. Read Ephesians 5:8-11, 15-17 together. Paul calls us to be wise, discerning children of the light. What should discernment look like in the church? What are the challenges? Why do you think Christians often aren't more discerning? How might the Spirit be inviting you to be more discerning of what is good and evil?