

Journey CHURCH

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Session 7 Leader Guide

WATCH

I don't want to engage in politics in any kind of way that would cause me to be weaker as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We're talking about the saving message of salvation that comes through the substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ and makes it possible for sinners to be saved and given the gift of eternal life.

Our truths and convictions point to common principles, but our principles are clearer than our platform.

Christians are coming into the body of Christ from different places.

The Scripture will not endorse a candidate. The Scripture will show where there are common principles, but it will also show where the kingdom of God is different and unique.

When politics deals with allegiance and loyalty, there is nothing more fundamental about allegiance and loyalty than the claim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

If politics is ultimate to you, then Jesus Christ isn't Lord to you. If politics is unimportant to you, you're not obeying Christ when He says, "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself."

To be a follower of Jesus, I enter this conversation with empathy and charity.

The thing that has hurt Bible-believing Christianity the most regarding our unity has been a lack of sensitivity and indifference to the pain of others.

We can't expect to have a Christian political discussion without having Christ like people.

DISCUSSION

Being a gospel witness is more important than any political stand we take. When we enter political discussions, our primary concern should be to refrain from anything that would harm our witness for the gospel. Should we take an unpopular stand on moral issues? Absolutely, but our discourse and actions must be covered in grace.

- 1) What does it look like to disagree gracefully? Whom do you know who has modeled this skill? What opportunities do Christians have in a culture of perpetual outrage?**
- 2) Read Romans 12:18. How can we maintain a disposition of grace and humility when our stand on issues causes people to assume we're hateful or bigoted?**

As Kevin Smith said on the video, we want to share the gospel with sinners, so whenever possible, we don't want to alienate them through our political engagement. When we make the gospel foremost in our decision making, it not only drives the way we vote and advocate for positions but the manner in which we carry out those actions.

Although Scripture doesn't explicitly address many issues we face when engaging with our culture, it provides principles that can help equip us to make God-honoring decisions and respond redemptively to moral issues. No matter how we're perceived or received, we can respond with grace, whether the issue is one of striking moral clarity or one about which Christians of good conscience disagree.

- 3) How do biblical principles help shape our positions on issues that Scripture doesn't clearly address? What are some examples of these principles?**

The Bible advocates for many issues very clearly. We should care for the poor, advocate for the vulnerable, uphold the institution of marriage, protect children, and value the dignity of work, among other stances. Even if we passionately care about an issue, the way our passion translates into policy is often less clear. We get ourselves in trouble when we assume that our position on an issue is God's position on that issue.

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- 4) What did Albert Mohler mean on the video when he said we should be careful about using the word Christian as a modifier?
- 5) Why is It so easy for us to replace our Identity as followers of Jesus Christ with a political affiliation or position? How do we actively resist this temptation?

There's no single Christian policy for taxes, the economy, or foreign policy. Therefore, the word Christian can't adequately describe a policy; it describes who we are as the redeemed people of God. The gospel provides us with our ultimate identity. All other identities and loyalties are subservient to that. We don't have to look to any issue to provide us with identity or purpose. We find those in our designation as sons and daughters of God. Although we're free to engage with a variety of moral and social issues, they'll never become the ultimate identifiers of who we are as followers of Christ.

- 6) Read Jude 3; Philippians 3:14; Ephesians 4:3. How do these passages shape the way we relate to and consider one another, particularly in our politics?
- 7) How can we focus our energy on unity in Christ despite political differences?

The gospel guides our political engagement, and gospel-minded Christians can disagree on a variety of issues without compromising the gospel. Our witness to the gospel must come before every other priority.

- 8) Based on this session's teaching, what might it look like for Christians to be actively engaged in political and social issues today?
- 9) Do you need to reconsider the way you've approached politics?