



Small Group Curriculum – part 2





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OPEN

On Sunday, we talked about moral relativism and true justice. We also talked about how that applies to how we view personal economics and even economics on a national scale. Did anything jump out at you? What were your thoughts?



ABOUT RELATIVISM

The apologist Greg Koukl on the site STR.org reflects on a particular episode he watched on Larry King Live: There was a homosexual activist and a Christian on his show, who disagreed with the homosexual lifestyle. After a little discussion, Larry King said to the Christian, “Who is anyone, least of all the Christians, to judge someone else and to force their views on someone else?”

- How would you respond?
 - What does King’s question have to do with relativism?
 - Is there any way that relativism could be compatible with the Bible? Why or Why not?
- Review the statements from the Sunday Handout:
- “There is no absolute truth” is a statement assuming an absolute truth.
 - “You shouldn’t judge someone else’s moral choices” is a statement assuming that one is *morally* obligated not to judge.

ASK: Do you think you could walk others through this reasoning to help them understand that there is absolute truth and an absolute moral standard to which we’re all responsible?

- Respond to this example: Someone says to you, “It’s absolutely

arrogant of Christians to think that they alone have the exclusive claim to Truth.”

- Respond to this Example: A friend says to you, “We live in a pluralistic society in America, so we can’t legislate morality, we just have to let everyone follow their own truth.”
- In your personal life, are there things you rationalize away, as if they’re not really wrong? Like what? (example: “It’s not really against my diet if...” or “I haven’t divorced my wife, so I’m doing what the Bible says.” (even though the bible calls us to LOVE our wives as Christ loved the church, not just tolerate them.)
- Does this help you to understand why some people choose to believe in the impossibility of moral relativism?

OF JUSTICE AND ECONOMICS

Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions following them:

- Obadiah 15 || As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.
 - Exodus 20:15 || You shall not steal.
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 (especially v. 10 here printed) || If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.
 - 2 Corinthians 9:7 || Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
 - 1 John 3:17 || But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?
 - Hebrews 13:6 || Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
 - James 2:13 || For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
- How do we balance justice and mercy in our personal lives and as Christians influencing the way our business practices are handled, and how should this balance influence the way we view economics from a community level... governmental level?

- ▶ Does God expect everyone, Christian or non-Christian, to be productive members of society? Will we be judged by God for not being productive? What exceptions might there be and why?
- ▶ We, as Christ followers, are called to share our possessions and give to the poor. To what degree should poverty relief and welfare be provided by the church (even our church) or by the government? In what ways should Christians attempt to influence our government in these matters?
- ▶ What are the dangers of welfare and giving to the poor, in the wrong way?
- ▶ Since Christians are called to share, should we be working to enact a communist or socialist economy in our governments? Why or why not?
- ▶ Since the Old Testament values personal property and forbids forced seizure of another's property; and the Bible values hard work and giving each according to his labor; should Christians be fighting for a capitalist economy in our government?
- ▶ How should Christians work to help the poor, fight for fair wages, encourage people to work hard, and seek a just economic system within government. What about in our personal lives?
- ▶ Are there any personal attitudes, criminal justice agendas, or economic movements that Christians should stand against, either personally or governmentally.

THE CALL

Consider how you and our church together can make a difference to help God's justice and mercy to be exemplified in our personal lives and in our community. Are there any action steps you should take to change the way you spend your time, money, or influence?

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March 6 – Don't Show Favoritism

OPEN

Think about your life experiences: In what ways have you noticed preferential treatment, or maybe discriminatory treatment, toward yourself or others?

On what basis were people acting preferential or discriminatory? (Think about such categories as: Ideology? External Appearances? Class? Race? Character issues?)



FAVORITISM, PARTIALITY, & DISCRIMINATING AMONG YOURSELVES

READ James 2:1-9

- ▶ James gives us a hypothetical situation here. What two types of people does James describe and how are they treated differently?
- ▶ Why do you think people would treat the poor man and rich man differently? What would motivate them?
- ▶ In vv. 8-9, James asserts that showing partiality is sin, and specifically breaking the law of love.
 - How is showing preferential treatment to the rich man over the poor man breaking the law of love?
- ▶ How might this same passage and principle of “loving equally

without regard to a person's situation in life," specifically apply (or not apply) to how you should treat:

- People you personally find attractive vs. people you find unattractive?
- People who are socially awkward vs people who are socially charismatic?
- People of different social standings in society: Community leaders vs. a relatively obscure individual?
- People of differently colored skin?
- Women vs. men?
- People with a persistently criminal background vs someone never convicted of a crime?
- Christians vs. non-Christians?

Are we to discriminate in any way concerning beliefs or character? In what ways is some form of 'judgment,' or 'distinction,' or 'discrimination' applicable to internal character, as opposed to external circumstance?

READ Romans 2:6-11

- This passage speaks of God showing no partiality, yet he gives to some people eternal life and to others he gives wrath and fury. How is this compatible with not showing favoritism or partiality?
- On what does God base his decision to give some wrath and some eternal life? How might this affect the way we understand the

command according to God's law of love, not to show partiality? Are there certain ways we can or even should treat people differently based on their character of actions, as opposed to their external characteristics or situation in life?

READ Acts 17:26 || And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

- ▶ The common ancestry of all mankind can be traced to Adam in the Garden of Eden. How does this historical truth apply to racial and ethnic divisions among us?
- ▶ Why do you think God created so many diverse nations and peoples that often look so differently, if we all came from one 'grandfather?'

Application to Contemporary Race Issues

How should biblically-informed Christians think about the following common phrases and ideas in our culture?

- "All whites are racist."
- "All blacks are oppressed, and cannot succeed in our society."
- "Math is a white construct." ... "Meritocracy is Racist."
 - [Note: Meritocracy (Definition): "A system in which advancement is based on individual ability or achievement."]

- “I’m shopping there, because I want to support a Latino-owned business.”
- “Because of your skin color, you are incapable of understanding my life struggles, or seeing the real problems of our society”
- Intersectionality: “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.”
(Oxford Dictionaries)

Should we as Christians idly allow ourselves or others to be defined in terms of their external characteristics or situations, or should we insist that we begin identifying an individual according to their internal character, no matter what obstacles an individual may face, as a reformation of today’s cultural conceptions?

If there are no laws to be fought that discriminate against various skin tones, then how can we best defeat racial discrimination? Should we encourage our society to identify people by their appearance and/or life situation, or should we identify them by their character? Which is more productive/unproductive? Why?

What about the history of discrimination in the United States? Should that play a role in how we identify people today, whether by character or by color?

CLOSE

Reflect On How Christ Has Chosen To Unite Us In Our New Identity In Him, A New Kingdom That Transcends Our Differences, And Gives Us All Equal Standing Before God.

Colossians 3:9b-11 || “... You have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.”

OPEN

? Remember June Cleaver, the mom in the 50's sitcom, "Leave it to Beaver?" Suppose June asked you today in 2022 to explain to her how ideas of sexuality have changed since her day. What would you say? How do you think she would react? What is better or worse about the dramatic changes in sexual culture and ideology that have occurred since the "Leave it to Beaver" days of American culture?



What does this passage say about the way God designed sex to function? (Consider the underlined portions of this full and rich passage to help guide some of the discussion.)

📖 Mark 10:6-9 || But from the beginning of creation, '**God made them male and female.**'⁷ 'Therefore a man shall **leave his father and mother** and **hold fast to his wife**, and the **two shall become one flesh.**' So they are **no longer two but one flesh.** What therefore **God has joined together, let not man separate.**"

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and describe some of the ways that people go astray from God's design? (Please, cite the words of the passage to demonstrate what the bible actually says about sexual sins.)

📖 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 || Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the **sexually immoral**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor **men who**

practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- ▶ According to these passages, how seriously does God treat His design for sexuality, and the breaking of that design?
- ▶ According to these passages, should sexual sins to be treated with more contempt than, say, greed or drunkenness? Do we treat sexual sins differently? Do people treat sexual sins as greater or lesser sins, in our times?
- ▶ Why do you think, in the very creation of sexuality in Eden, God said that the man and woman must, “leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife?”
 - Note: Point in the direction of family structures and parent-child nurture in the family structure. Family will be the primary topic under consideration for next week.
 - Note: Sex is not merely about ‘me,’ and my desires. Sex is a blessed part of human family structures, that even create new life, and stable marriages create an excellent structure for the raising of the next generations.

Read the following passages and consider the questions:

- **For what purpose did God create marriage?**
 - **IS marriage simply an end in itself, or does it point to something higher? What?**
- ▶ Revelation 19:6-9
 - ▶ Ephesians 5:25-32

Do you regularly think of marriage as pointing to Christ, perhaps even

as picturing in ways the God who created marriage? How would thinking about sexuality and marriage in this way change the way you value sex and marriage? How should this biblical way of thinking change the way people live out their marital life?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-4-7 and Mark 8:34-35

- What do people mean by the popular slogan ‘Love is love?’ What are they trying to promote?
 - Note: The “Love is love” slogan is often found on signs and used to advocate for the positive acceptance of anyone’s choice of sexual acts.
- How do these passages speak against the hyper-individualistic, self-centered application of that slogan toward sex with anyone, and sex in any way they choose?
 - Note: We are not to live for self, but for others. That is the central goal of the true love of God, His ‘Hesed’ love in the Hebrew, and His ‘Agape’ love in Greek. The “Love is love” slogan says, “My feelings for what I personally desire are the highest good.” Biblical love, however, insists that one give up oneself for God first, and sacrifices my desires for the good of others, second. This applies to adultery, fornication, homosexual practices against the design of God, and choosing a ‘felt gender’ that God did not create. All of these sexual distortions choose personal desire as the higher goal, instead of God and others.

THE CALL

How can you be transformed personally by this biblical view of sexuality, whether single or married, in heart, mind, and action? Are there any areas where you need to change? How can you minister to those who are being caught in some of the many dangerous lies concerning sexuality that are swirling throughout our world?

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OPEN

? What have your experiences with your own family been like? How were they good, how could they have been better?



GOD'S DESIGN FOR FAMILY

► Read the following passages and discuss, from each passage: “What are God’s intentions for families, their structures and purposes; and how do families often go astray from God’s purposes? What are the blessings of God’s designs for families? What are the negative consequences for straying from God’s design?”

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 2:18-25
- Malachi 2:13-16
- 1 Peter 3:1-7
- Ephesians 5:22-33

A GOD'S EYE VIEW OF CHILDREN

- What do the above passages have to say about God’s view of children?
- READ Psalm 127:1-5. How does this view of children as blessing differ from the way people talk about children today?
- How does this passage speak to the common practice of putting off having children for financial or career reasons?

- How does this verse speak to the way we as parents often speak negatively about our own parenting experiences and even negative words about our own children? How can this passage help us correct this common bad practice?
- What about those who long to have children, but cannot? How can these people value children, even if they cannot have their own biological children? How can we as a church care for, empower, and properly value those in our congregation who are single, or who cannot have children?

THE FIGHT FOR THE CHILD IN THE WOMB

God's Word is incontrovertible for the life of the child in the womb. Read the following passages and discuss the issue of abortion with respect to these passages:

- Psalm 139:13-16
- Psalm 51:5
- Exodus 21:22-25
- Amos 1:13
- Luke 1:41-45

We have to Stand Tall in our culture and demonstrate the need to protect innocent lives from abortion, and mother's from being swayed by the lie that abortion is not the killing of a human child. We must do this with grace, first from Scripture, but also from reason, since all of God's Word is consistent with reason.

Consider the following arguments, discuss these arguments against abortion, and attempt to learn to use this logical argument in

discussion, maybe even role play it. The goal is to be able to stand tall and defend the truth of life, in order to protect unborn lives.

- Killing a human is a greater evil than the abrogation of a human's right to live in a chosen manner.
- If the unborn fetus is human, then the killing of the unborn human baby is a greater wrong than the abrogation of a woman's choice to live as if she were not pregnant.
- The unborn fetus is human.
 - At fertilization, a totipotent zygote is formed with the fully complete DNA of a human individual.
 - All differences between this living human and humans outside the womb are not sufficient to justify the killing of the human in the womb: Size (smaller humans are not less valuable); Level of Development (we don't kill less developed children, or those in states of reversible unconsciousness); Environment (the place a human occupies does not change inherent value); Degree of Dependence (The need of a human for special care should not justify the human's murder).
- Therefore, the killing of the unborn human baby is a greater wrong than the abrogation of a woman's choice to live as if she were not pregnant.