

Cultural Crossroads



Faith Covenant Church

Adult Discipleship

Spring 2024

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson Plan

Lesson	Date	Title
1	Sunday, April 28, 2024	Sexual Crossroad
2	Sunday, May 12, 2024	Addiction Crossroad
3	Sunday, May 19, 2024	Moral Crossroad
4	Sunday, May 26, 2024	Eternal Crossroad

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Introduction

Culture has shifted to the point where right and wrong are no longer measured by universal truth, but by popular opinion. The purpose of our study here is to find a scriptural perspective on the issues of our society and inspire us to take the crises of society to the infallible Word of God. The challenge for us is how do we respond to the rapidly changing culture we live in? Do we fall into the us versus them attitude or remember that Christianity was born into a culture of opposition over 2000 years ago? Understanding that Jesus is as alive today as He was then, do we retreat or stand on His eternal truth? Some of the issues we will investigate may seem difficult, or even controversial, but through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the discussion of the saints, we will work to come to the scriptural answers, and how we should respond, by building bridges and not walls, to the issues that have our culture at a crossroads. Though difficult conversations lay ahead over the next 4 weeks, we should be excited to hear and learn from the differing views of the generational, political, and economic mosaic that makes up the church of Jesus. This is a safe space to share, without fear of judgement, that we all may grow, not just in knowledge, but compassion and love for other disciples of our Lord Christ Jesus.

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 1

Sexual Crossroad

The opposite of homosexuality isn't heterosexuality; it's sexual purity. Having same-sex attraction is a temptation—only a sin when it's acted upon. People with same-sex attraction are tempted mightily by the devil in the area of their weakness just as people who struggle to control their temper are tempted to lash out either physically or verbally when under temptation. We are all tempted in different ways. Sexual purity means sex only under God's guidelines: between a man and a woman within marriage. Heterosexual people can violate sexual purity also. God asks us to be sexually pure.

Why is homosexuality a sin, if 2 people love each other?

Read Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:18-32, 1 Timothy 1:8-11

1. Why would God feel the way He does about homosexuality? Use any scripture to answer.

Ignores God's command in Genesis 1:28-God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. It models the marriage of Jesus and His church. Ephesians 5:32- This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

2. How does scripture say we should address sin with others?

Matthew 7:1-5 & Romans 3:23 (Check our own sin first), Colossians 3:12 (With compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.), James 4:1-2 (Not quarrelsome), James 4:12 (Not judging), 1 Peter 4:8 (In love)

3. What is keeping you from having meaningful conversations with the homosexual community?

Personal. Pride, fear, takes me out of my comfort zone

Lesson:

Like all sin, homosexuality may be forgiven. God's grace is not limited by this or any other sin.

Is abortion about women's health?

Read Exodus 20:13, Job 33:1-7, Psalm 100:3, 139:13-16, Proverbs 6:16-19, Galatians 1:15

4. Why is abortion an affront to God?

It fails to value the sanctity of human life that was created in the image of God, and it is the willful ending (murder) of a life created by God in the womb.

5. When does life begin? Use any scripture to support your answer.

At conception. Jeremiah 1:5- "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; Luke 1:39-44- Mary Visits Elizabeth & John the Baptist flips in her womb when she entered.

6. How might you get involved in the defense of the unborn? What is keeping you from it?

Personal. We all can pray. Write to government leaders expressing abortion must stop. work with ministries that seek to uphold the value of unborn life. Volunteer with a crisis pregnancy center.

Lesson:

Abortion has less to do with right to life versus one's right to choose and more to do with the gift of life and the divine Gift Giver.

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 1

Sexual Crossroad

How do we handle gender identity (Transgender)?

Read Genesis 1:26-28, Deuteronomy 22:5, Romans 1:18-32, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, 11:11-12

7. Who created mankind? Why did He create them? How many genders did He create?

God. for His good purposes. Two-Male & Female.

8. How does societal culture view gender identity? What is the age-appropriate time to discuss this with children?

Feelings determine your gender. The world feels there are 72 different genders, as of February 1, 2023. Not determined by God at conception. Possibly kindergarten, to get ahead of society, this topic taught in school now, to emphasize biblical truth over personal feelings, feelings change.

9. How can you discuss gender identity with someone who is confused?

They are accepted in Jesus Christ. They must identify who they truly are-Colossians 3:1-3, a child of God, not identified by what we do or have done. As light to darkness-arguments & judging doesn't work! Changed heart, not head, only in identity in Christ. Show grace & compassion to all sinners. Ephesians 4:32

Lesson: _____

A person's priority in life should be identity in Christ, not affirming their gender.

What is the problem with sex outside of marriage?

Read Genesis 2:24, Exodus 22:16-17, 1 Corinthians 7:1-3, 8-9, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, Hebrews 13:4

10. Is it wrong for a couple to live together before marriage? Use scripture to support your answer. What should a couple do who are living like this?

Yes. See 1 Corinthians 7:1-3, 8-9, and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7. You may cause others to stumble-Romans 14:19-21. Find separate living quarters or get married now.

11. How does adultery or polygamy go against God's plan for marriage? Why is this important? one man & one woman, husband & wife, united by God (Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:7-9). Forbidden by the seventh commandment. (Exodus 20:14). Polygamy is not technically adultery, although it does adulterate God's original plan for marriage, by bringing additional people into the marriage.

12. What encouragement can you give to someone not married, but tempted by lust?

Turn your focus to Jesus and seek His love, Let Jesus be your example. He was sacrificially self-disciplined. Remove yourself from situations that cause you to lust-Matthew 5:27-29.

Personal.

Lesson: _____

Sex is a gift God gave humanity, to be enjoyed only between a man and his wife.

Challenge: How will you act as light to a dark world this week?

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 2

Addiction Crossroad

Last week we began our cultural crossroads study by talking about the sexual crisis in our culture. This morning, we will be looking at just a few of the addictions that are at crisis point for our society. We will be discussing the addictions of drugs & alcohol, phones & social media, pornography, and gambling.

What problems do drugs & alcohol cause?

Read Proverbs 20:1, 21:17, 23:19-21, 29-35, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:15-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8, 1 Peter 5:8

1. Is drinking alcohol a sin? Why or why not? Use scripture to answer.

No, unless it causes someone who has a problem with alcohol to stumble (Matthew 18:6; Romans 14:21) or leads to drunkenness. God has given "wine to gladden the heart of man" (Psalm 104:14-15; Ecclesiastes 9:7). Wine has medicinal purposes (1 Timothy 5:23)

2. Drug use is not directly condemned in scripture; does that mean it is ok to use drugs, even marijuana, which is now legal in Ohio? Use any scripture to support your answer.

Obey the laws (Ecclesiastes 8:2-5; Matthew 22:21; 23:2-3; Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17). Live above reproach for the sake of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 10:32; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 6:3; Titus 2:1-8; 2 Peter 3:14). Our bodies are not our own. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 1:17-19). Addiction is an enslavement of the mind (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13).

3. What can you do to help someone who may be struggling with addiction to drugs or alcohol? Seek God (Psalm 139:23-24). Help them with confession and repentance (1 John 1:9, Psalm 51:2, 10), the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2), provide accountability and support (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10), In prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29), & encourage to seek professional Christian help.

Lesson:

Jesus gives us new life; we no longer have to live in fear of sin.

How do our phones & social media cause issues?

Read Genesis 11:1-8, Proverbs 18:1-8, 1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:31, Colossians 1:15-20, 3:23

4. How might the use of phones, and social media become an addiction?

When we check our social networks compulsively throughout the day, having a negative influence on our lives, creating habits that are largely unchecked, undisciplined, and unhealthy.

5. How does social media addiction disrupt Christian relationships?

Embodied relationships cannot be replaced by online friendships. Our closest relationships cannot flourish in remote connections. We engage in social media at the expense of those physically around us.

6. One of the most radical things we can do as Christians right now is face-to-face communication, who do you need to meet with? How will you make that happen this week?

Personal.

Lesson:

Anything that we put before God is an idol, and your phone might be an idol for you.

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 2

Addiction Crossroad

Why is pornography addicting?

Read Proverbs 6:25-28, 2 Samuel 11:1-27, Matthew 5:27-28, James 1:14-15, 1 John 2:16, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

7. How does pornography hurt people/ Christians?

It treats people like objects for pleasure. It gives the person who watches it a skewed vision of the true nature of sexuality. It leads to unhealthy desires, unhealthy attitudes about a sexual partner. It immerses people in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense against God.

8. How do secular approaches to breaking pornography addiction differ from Christian approaches?

Secular approaches involve Psychotherapy, focused on how the brain works, and 12-step programs, which are generic in nature. Christian disciplines focus on inner transformation and maturity, and often sees sexual sin as idolatry that must be met with repentance.

9. How might a person tempted by pornography fight this struggle? Use scripture to answer. Submit to God in humility (James 4:1-10); Do spiritual warfare in confession & prayer (James 5:16, Mark 11:22-24); Lean on the strength of Jesus, not self (Philippians 4:13, Ephesians 6:10-18)

Lesson: _____

Pornography addiction is a true epidemic, not just for those outside of the church.

What is wrong with gambling if I can afford it?

Read Proverbs 13:11, Matthew 6:19-24, 1 Timothy 6:10, Hebrews 13:5

10. What is the definition of gambling? What is the appeal of gambling to Christians?

To play games of chance for money, to bet on an uncertain outcome. Some for thrills & excitement, because they have a greedy & covetous attitude about money, out of a false belief in luck. All are wrong for the Christian; they are all self-centered and materialistic

11. Is it appropriate for a Christian to gamble in any form? Use scripture to answer.

No. Christian life expresses faith in loving care and provision of God, not in chance or luck (Matthew 6:33). avoid every form of greed and covetousness and to be content with what he has (Hebrews 13:5), abstain from all appearance of evil' (1 Thessalonians 5:22), we are to be faithful stewards (Psalm 24:1, 1 Peter 4:10, Luke 16:10-13)

12. How can you explain the dangers of gambling to someone?

It risks something of value upon the outcome of a contest of chance or a future contingent event not under his control or influence. People can get into financial trouble with all types of gambling, from sports betting to the lottery, from bingo to casino games. You risk addiction as you "chase" losses, trying to recover money you lost.

Lesson: _____

Christians need to ask do I trust in God as my source, or do I trust Lady Luck before gambling.

Challenge: How will you seek to honor God, and not idols this week?

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 3

Moral Crossroad

We have discussed sexual and addiction crossroads over the past two weeks, and today we are going to get into the moral crossroad our culture is currently at. We are going to be digging into the issues of racism, divorce, tattoos, and the hot button issue of politics.

Why is racism still a problem in modern society?

Read Genesis 1:26-27, 1 Samuel 16:7, John 7:24, Acts 17:26, Romans 2:11, 10:12, 1 Corinthians 12:13, James 2:1-9, Revelation 7:9

1. How would you define racism? How does your definition differ from what scripture says should be true of all people?

The belief or practice of valuing one race over another. Hate another based on race or ethnicity. All are created in God's image (Genesis), from 1 man He made all nations (Acts 17:26), He does not look at outward appearance, but judges the heart (1 Samuel, John), God does not show favoritism, there is no difference, (Romans), All tribes will be in Heaven (Revelation)

2. What responsibility do people of faith have to work to correct the sin of racism?

Love, as Jesus teaches and does, is action, as well as attitude. It seeks the good, well-being, and welfare of others. "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life." (Pope Francis)

3. How would taking a stand against racism take you out of your comfort zone? Will you take that stand?

Calling out a friend/ family member about racist behaviors, or beliefs. Join in social justice ministries. "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must take it because his conscience tells him it is right." (Martin Luther King Jr.)

Lesson: _____

Racism is a sin the church cannot afford to ignore or stand idly by and allow to occur.

What is wrong with divorce?

Read Malachi 2:10-16, Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:1-12, Mark 10:2-12

4. How does scripture's teaching on divorce challenge societal norms around marriage and divorce?

Divorce as a way out when marriage is irretrievably broken, due to any reason including unreasonable behavior & Impotence. In scripture marriage is a covenant witnessed by God, only permissible for infidelity.

5. How can we uphold the sanctity of marriage in a culture with differing views on commitment and divorce?

Live out the truth we know, not just chastise, or talk about the importance of marriage to God. Commit ourselves to our spouse in love, for all to see.

6. What hope would you offer a wife, or husband, who is disappointed in their spouse, and is considering divorce?

Personal. Did not go well before I knew Jesus, told friend to go for it. Now, would recommend Christian counselling, prayer, humility, anything to save the marriage.

Lesson: _____

God hates divorce, that is all we need to know to seek to preserve the marriage covenant.

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 3

Moral Crossroad

Are tattoos a sin?

Read Leviticus 19:28, Deuteronomy 14:1-2, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20, 1 Peter 3:3-4

7. Why Have Christians Often Seen Tattoos as Sinful?

Leviticus 19:28-Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord. Scriptures remind us to be in the world but not of the world, God calls us to be different. To be holy. To be sanctified. Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and honor God with our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). They do not honor God; but alter God's creation.

8. Do you know any positive reasons for tattoos? Is there a line that should not be crossed?

The motivation for anything we do should be to glorify God. It can be a way to express one's faith or to share the gospel with others. There is a point at which the increase of tattoos on one body ceases to be art and starts becoming sinful mutilation.

9. What advice would you give to someone considering getting tattooed?

Personal. If a Christian chooses to get a tattoo, it should never be for superstitious reasons or to promote worldly philosophy. It should be guided by biblical principles and rooted in love.

Lesson:

Faith is not defined by outward appearances, but by the condition of one's heart.

Should politics control our faith?

Read Romans 13:1-7, Mark 12:13-17, 1 Peter 2:9-23, Hebrews 13:7, Deuteronomy 1:9-18

10. What mistakes do Christians make today regarding politics?

That it is the job of politicians to defend, to advance, and to guard biblical truths and Christian values. Our mission lies not in changing the nation through political reform, but in changing hearts through the Word of God. Our mandate is to spread the gospel of Christ and to preach against the sins of our time.

11. What should our approach towards politics be?

Regardless of who is in "power" Jesus is still King, and He will always prevail. His rule is a rule of love, not coercion or force. It is a rule of sacrifice, truth, and justice, unlike any kingdom on Earth. Government is not the answer to every societal ill. God places government in place, (Romans 13:1)

12. How does your faith inform your actions & attitudes towards those who don't vote like you do?

Personal.

Do you name call, or judge them as knuckleheads, or honor & respect their opinions as Christ followers, and listen to them rather than argue with them? Are you passionate, or mean-spirited? Micah 6:8-He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Lesson:

Politics should be an expression of our relationship with Christ.

Challenge: Who will you share the good news of God's power with this week?

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 4

Eternal Crossroad

Over the past three weeks we have discussed the sexual, addiction, and moral crossroads that we find ourselves at currently, as a church, and culture. This morning we will look into the future, eternal crossroad our society is facing. We will talk about what happens after believers die, suicide, Hell, and we will finish our study with eternal Heaven.

What happens after a believer's death?

Read Luke 16:19-31, 23:42-43, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Philippians 1:20-23, Ecclesiastes 12:7

1. When a believer dies does their spirit remain on Earth? How do you know?

The spirit of the believer enters into Christ's presence. ((Luke 23:43), (2 Corinthians 5:1,2,8), (Philippians 1:23), The spirits of departed believers are with the Lord. (Ecclesiastes 12:7). They do not remain to be ghosts.

2. When a believer dies, do they become angels? Will they look down on loved ones? Use scripture to support your answer.

Galatians 4:7 and Romans 8:17 indicate believers are heirs with Jesus, and angels are created beings to serve God. 1 Corinthians 6:3 says believers will judge angels. God cares for mankind (Psalm 8:4-6). Matthew 22:30 says believers will be like angels w/ no marriage, but not angels. Maybe they can, but Psalm 16:11 says you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand, so that will likely be their focus.

3. What causes you fear about dying? How can you overcome this fear?

Fear of the unknown, Fear of loss of control, Fear for those left behind. Fear of the act of dying. Focus & meditate on scripture, and remember If we didn't die, we would have to live in a sinful world for all eternity.

Lesson: _____

To live is Christ, and to die is gain~ Philippians 1:21

Is suicide an unforgivable sin?

Read Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 30:11-20, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20, Acts 17:24-26

4. Why is suicide a sin? (Use any scripture to answer.) Is it unforgivable? Why or why not?

It is the unjustified killing of a human, so forbidden by Exodus 20:13- You shall not murder. Like all sin, except Matthew 12:31-And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Romans 8:38-39-Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Is a Christian's salvation dependent on repentance? Use scripture to support your answer.

Not dependent. John 10:28- I give them eternal life, & they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. Romans 8:1-There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:8-9

6. If you know someone who is struggling with thoughts of suicide, or depression, what is keeping you from reaching out to them? Why should you reach out to them?

Personal. Life can be tough. We must be alert, not just for our own states of mind but also for that of our brothers and sisters in Christ and for others. Pay attention. Be there for them — just to listen and pray with them. Carry each other's burdens, fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:2)

Lesson: _____

One dark moment in a Christian's life cannot undo what Christ did for us on the cross.

Cultural Crossroads

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. ~Romans 12:2

Lesson 4

Eternal Crossroad

Is Hell real?

Read Isaiah 47:12-14, Daniel 12:2, Matthew 8:12, 13:50, Luke 16:19-31, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, Jude 1:13, Revelation 14:9-11

7. What is Hell? What is it like according to scripture?

Eternal total, conscious, separation from God. unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43), eternal fire (Jude 1:7), lake that burns with fire & sulfur, (Revelation 21:8), shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2), darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 8:12), in torment, & agony (Luke 16:23-24), blackest darkness (Jude 13).

8. Who will be in Hell, according to scripture? Why would a “loving God” send people to Hell?

The cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars (Rev. 21:8), the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), anyone who worships the beast and its image (Rev. 14:9). God doesn't send people to hell. People march into it.

9. Why is it important for Christians to know about the reality of Hell?

Because Jesus taught about it more than all other Biblical authors put together, it unveils the seriousness and danger of living life for yourself, it is the only way to know how much Jesus loved us and how much he did for us.

Lesson:

Deleting Hell from Christian doctrine cheapens the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

What will eternal Heaven be like?

Read Revelation 4:1-11, 21:1-27, 22:1-5, Matthew 6:19-20, John 14:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

10. What will Heaven look like, according to scripture?

No longer any sea. (Rev 21:1), God's dwelling place with people. (Rev 21:3), No more death or mourning or crying or pain. (Rev 21:4), Physical description (Rev 21:11-21), God and the Lamb are its temple. The glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. (Rev 21:22-23), Nothing impure will ever enter it (Rev 21:27), Each side of river stood the tree of life, with 12 crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, the leaves of the tree heal the nations. Moths and vermin do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. (Matt 6:20), Many rooms (John 14:2)

11. Who will be in Heaven for eternity, and what will they be doing according to scripture?

John 3:16, 14:6-Those who believe in Jesus. Meaningful work in serving (Genesis 2:15; Isaiah 65:21-23, Revelation 22:3), Celebrate God's goodness (Matthew 8:11; Revelation 19:9), worship (Revelation 7:9, 19:5-7),

12. What are you looking forward to most about your eternal home in Heaven?

Personal. No more death or mourning or crying or pain. (Rev 21:4), No more sin (Rev 21:27)

Lesson:

Joy inexpressible, limitless peace, pure love, beauty beyond description—that's what Heaven is.

Challenge: How will you store up treasure in Heaven?