



## **CULTURAL DRIFT & CHRISTIAN RESPONSE**

As we enter this election, it is obvious that our nation continues to drift further from God and one another. Today we begin this study to consider how Christians can make a difference in our divided culture.

### teachingnotes

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\* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise noted.

### **3 Responses to the Cultural Drift**

- 1) **ISOLATE** ourselves from our culture? The culture wouldn't pollute us, and we wouldn't influence people to follow Jesus. This is anti-Christian.
- 2) **COMPROMISE?** We can drift off with our culture resulting in earthly friends who will later face eternity without Jesus. Why would they follow Jesus if WE don't!?
- 3) **ENGAGE** the culture. We can live IN the culture, without allowing the culture to live in us. Instead of isolating or compromising, we will attempt to follow the example of Jesus & His disciples as we...

### **BIG TRUTH: Engage Culture without being Entangled by Culture**

Many secularists want Christians to stay out of politics or check their Biblical worldview at the door. Those who don't live like God exists want us to buy into the false idea that Christians' vote and voice must somehow *dissect the sacred from the secular* - that ancient texts like the Biblical Scriptures should never overrule modern contexts.

BUT that presents a real problem, because that's NOT what our Founding Fathers of this Democratic Republic thought, as evidenced by our **2 key founding documents**.

**The Declaration of Independence** explains *WHY we exist as a nation & mentions God 4 times*.

*When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of **Nature's God** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be **self-evident**, that **all men are created equal**, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

✓ The Declaration demonstrates that human rights were determined by God & not by king or country.

**The Constitution of the United States** explains *HOW our nation is to function*. The Constitution is built on the Declaration so the 2 documents stand together. The Constitution doesn't mention God until the end of the contract where it unashamedly states: "**This was done in the Year of Our Lord 1787.**"

❓ Could they have simply written "1787"? Of course. Yet they didn't. Instead, the Constitution is ratified in recognition that Jesus is Lord. *240 years later, the agenda to remove the mention of God and His authority from our society steadily gains ground.*

✘ Michael Newdow tried to remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. He also argued in 2019 that "In God We Trust" on currency was a government endorsement of religion and a violation of the First Amendment and should be removed.<sup>1</sup> The Supreme Court refused to hear his case, but this is not the last time we will hear from people like him.

<sup>1</sup> <https://secular.org/2019/07/supreme-court-rejects-case-to-remove-in-god-we-trust-from-us-currency/>

## 1) WHY should a Christian vote?

Exercise your right to decide the person & platform that represents us in government.

The first Christians in the Roman Empire were not able to vote for the next Emperor. But *Roman citizens had tremendous rights*. For example, although Paul was Jewish, he was also a Roman citizen who exercised his rights. After being beaten & imprisoned the Roman authorities were going to release him quietly.

**Acts 16:37** (CSB) But Paul said to them, "They beat us in public without a trial, although **we are Roman citizens**, and threw us in jail. And now are they going to send us away secretly? Certainly not! On the contrary, let them come themselves and escort us out."

Paul exercised his rights - **as a Roman citizen** who had been unjustly punished. Paul again points to his Roman rights when soldiers are about to punish him.

**Acts 22:25** As they stretched him out for the lash, Paul said to the centurion standing by, "Is it legal for you to scourge a man who is **a Roman citizen** and is uncondemned?"

When the commander found this out, there was great concern that they had treated a Roman citizen so poorly.

**Acts 22:29** So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately. The **commander** too was **alarmed** when he realized **Paul was a Roman citizen** and he had bound him.

**Paul appreciated & applied the rights God had given him as a Roman citizen.** We should do the same...as citizens of the United States of America. Unlike the early Christians, we have the privilege & responsibility to vote for the leaders who will represent us. After all, Christians have the same freedom & privileges as those with opposing views, to determine the direction of our society.

Some vote Democratic; others vote Republican; some might choose a 3rd party candidate, or choose not to vote at all. YOU and you alone are responsible for how you vote. But if you choose NOT to vote, don't complain about presidential policies enacted during the next 4 years.

**Future Supreme Court Justices will likely be appointed by whoever becomes President.**

- **The Supreme Court overrode states rights in ROE V. WADE in 1973.** The vote was 7-2 to allow human children to be killed in their mother's wombs.
- **In June 2015, the Supreme Court voted 5 to 4 to recognize same-sex marriage federally.**
- What's next? **1st amendment?**

### **Amendment I**

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.<sup>2</sup>*

- The Supreme Court now has virtually unchecked authority to determine the direction of our nation, so it is VITAL that these justices uphold constitutional & moral law.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript>

## 2) HOW should a Christian vote?

What should be the deciding factor in how we vote?

- ➡ **CANDIDATE'S CHARACTER** Both candidates are seriously lacking in character & integrity. Neither has proven to be a mature Christian. Both candidates have several strengths and glaring weaknesses. Go read their websites: [JoeBiden.com](http://JoeBiden.com) or [DonaldTrump.com](http://DonaldTrump.com)
- ➡ **PARTY'S PLATFORM** Sadly, very few people have read what these political parties point to as being most important to them. Many people are IGNORANT of the party they so strongly support. **Read** the **Democratic Platform** (91 pages) & **Republican Platform** (54 pages).
- ➡ **GOD'S GLORY** Christians should be much more committed to Jesus than any CANDIDATE or PARTY. Our ultimate goal should be to honor the God who made us. If you claim to follow Jesus, everything you do, say, & think - including how you vote, should be for **GOD'S GLORY**.

## 3) How Can Christians Make a Real Difference?

Jesus has called us to be salt and light in our culture, to influence others with our integrity to...

### **ENGAGE CULTURE WITHOUT BEING ENTANGLED BY CULTURE.**

Jesus didn't dodge people and ISOLATE Himself from the culture. He certainly didn't COMPROMISE by applauding or participating in sin. He **ENGAGED** culture and treating many like prisoners of war instead of enemies. He called those people to follow Him.

**John 8:12** [Jesus] ...**"I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."**

Those who follow **the light of the world** (Jesus), **will never walk in darkness** (sin, purposelessness), but in **light** (purity, purpose, & in HIM)! And Jesus calls His disciples to follow His lead, not to ISOLATE or COMPROMISE, but to ENGAGE and influence culture.

**Matthew 5:13** **You are the salt of the earth.** But if the salt should lose its taste [lost its influence], how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

**Salt influences** what it touches. If salt doesn't change the flavor you either have a medical problem OR it's not really salt. It is scientifically impossible for salt to become flavorless, but people of the ancient world often mixed impure substances with salt to make it go further, and diluted it's influence.<sup>3</sup>

☀ **Adrian Rogers** *"The problem is not with Hollywood, the pornographers, the liquor dealers, the politicians and the theological liberals. The problem in this auditorium today - saltless Christians."*

Are we being the INFLUENCE that Jesus wants us to be, OR have we ISOLATED *from* or COMPROMISED *with* culture?  
**If there's no difference, we won't make a difference.**

Jesus expected His disciples to **influence the culture** rather than compromise with the culture. They were to think differently, act differently, & react differently, to **Engage Culture Without Being Entangled By Culture**.

**Is there anything that DILUTES your influence?** (Language, impurity, treatment of others?)

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<sup>3</sup>Craig Blomberg, vol. 22, *Matthew, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 102.

**Matthew 5:14-16** <sup>14</sup> **"You are the light of the world.** A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, **let your light shine before others,** so that they may **see your good works** and **give glory to your Father** in heaven.

Don't ISOLATE yourself. YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. ***We are the plan God has to influence our culture.***

✪ In **A.D. 112 Pliny**, a Roman governor, wrote to Emperor Trajan to see how to deal with the Christians (2nd generation of Christians) in his region. Pliny noticed that the Christian influence caused many of the pagan temples to become nearly deserted, severely impacting businesses that profited from selling idols and sacrifices, influencing the culture to turn from false gods to the one true God, Pliny writes:

*"They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up."* <sup>4</sup>

The early Christians didn't leave their faith in their homes, even when facing persecution, and we shouldn't either.

Oh that WE would see Jesus would permeate our culture...THROUGH US!

***"YOU are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world."***

LONG after this election is over...followers of Jesus are to continue to do what Jesus did...

***ENGAGE CULTURE WITHOUT BEING ENTANGLED BY CULTURE.***

## heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- \* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- \* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Steve & Debbie Bass (673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (973-0047), Jere & Darlene Burnette (673-1888), Fain & Linda Poppell (464-1282), Jim & Derita Pinkard (464-6188), or Boss & Amelia Mulkey (464-6717).

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