

Reconstruction: A Better Way
Titus 2:11-14
Growth Group Discussion Guide

Begin with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you all through God's word, and to lead your discussion.

Opening Questions (try to get everyone involved in discussion):

- Are there any patriotic holidays or festivals that you find especially meaningful? Which ones and why?
- We're thinking about the concept of deconstruction during our current sermon series—that some people dismantle and even desert their Christian faith, for a number of reasons. Some people describe the way that Christians have blurred their religious identity with their partisan politics as the catalyst for their deconstruction.
 - In your own experience, has this issue posed any problems for your own faith? Why or why not?

Read Titus 2:11-14, then discuss the questions below.

- Pastor Josh reluctantly used the term “Christian Nationalism” to describe the “problem” at the heart of this week’s deconstruction topic. Does that term, “Christian Nationalism,” invoke certain feelings for you? Feel free to share them.
- Josh shared several definitions or descriptions of “Christian Nationalism.” Review them below, then discuss: What is new to you in these definitions? What would you prefer to modify about them?
 - R. Moore: “The term *Christian nationalism* refers to the use of Christian words, symbols, or rituals as a means to shore up an ethnic or national identity.”
 - Paul D. Miller: “Christian nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should *take active steps to keep it that way*. Christian nationalists want to define America as a Christian nation and they want the government to promote a *specific cultural template* as the official culture of the country.... “
 - A. Whitehead: “In addition to the standard Christian religious and theological beliefs, Christian nationalism brings with it a host of cultural assumptions about who really matters and who should be in charge of life in the United States—[typically] white, natural-born Christian citizens.”
 - M. Taylor: “Christian nationalism refers to how some (not all) American Christians blend their religious devotion with nationalistic ardor.... When people blur any religious identity with their partisan political identities, we call that religious nationalism.”
- As you read those definitions, what problems do you recognize in Christian Nationalism?
- *Pastor Josh unpacked four ways that Jesus—as seen in Titus 2—offers us something better than Christian Nationalism. Discuss those, using the prompts below.*

- **God's grace gives us a better footing.** It removes all grounds for pride.
 - In what way is religious nationalism inherently prone to, or tied up with, the sin of pride?
 - How does God's grace give us a better footing on which to stand?
- **God's grace changes our motives and means.** How do you see this in Titus 2?
 - How have you seen Christians in America adopt worldly methods in their political pursuits?
 - What would it look like to pursue legitimate political ends, using Christlike means?
- **God's grace gives us an unshakeable hope.**
 - In what way is religious nationalism built on a false hope?
 - In what way does this false hope play on fear?
 - In what way is gospel hope more sure and lasting?
 - How can this hope motivate us to healthy political and social engagement in the present?
- **God's grace gives us a better allegiance.**
 - How have you seen Christians in America (of all political stripes) let their political allegiance become greater than their allegiance to Jesus?
 - According to Paul's words to Titus, why is this a problem?
 - What might our lives look like when our allegiance to Jesus is greater than our political allegiance? What impact would it have on our church and surrounding community?
- Application:
 - How do you sense God speaking to you through this particular topic?
 - Do you feel that you're being prompted to take any action steps as a result?

Share and Pray

- Spend some time sharing with one another about needs that you have. If you are comfortable sharing about where you need prayer related to today's topic, do so. You might even include a time of confession, if it seems fitting.