

FAITH, FEAR, AND ★ POLITICS

WEEK TWO

How the Church Changed the World

MAIN IDEA

Changed Hearts do more than changed laws.

STARTER

Would you rather pass a law prohibiting slow drivers in the left lane of the highway or convince 1,000 people a year this is the right thing to do? Which do you think would be more effective?

SCRIPTURE EMPHASIS

As a group, read these passages before you begin your discussion:

- These passages stress the heart rather than the law:
 - Jeremiah 31:33
 - Ezekiel 36:26-27
 - Matthew 23:25-26
 - 2 Corinthians 3: 3

UNPACKING WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT . . .

- When you think of Christians and politics, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

Look at this chart of how the early church changed Roman culture:

Rome Before Jesus	Rome Influenced by the Church
Emperor was worshiped as a god.	There is only one God.
Roman authority is unquestioned.	Rome is a tool of God's goodness
The cross was a tool of execution	Cross was a symbol of salvation.
The poor were neglected.	Poor were taken care of.
The law preserved order.	The law reflects a moral God.
Sick people were banished.	Sick people were taken care of.
Widows were ignored.	Widows were taken care of.
Limited social programs.	The church supported the poor.
Regular practice of infanticide	The church invented orphanages.

- Do you think the early church succeeded in changing culture without being politically active?
- How is the way you're living right now influencing the people around you?
- Read Acts 2:42-47. What were the traits of people in the early church?
- Based on those traits, pick the type of person that best describes you:
 - I'm someone who likes to engage in discussions with people about Jesus and in a friendly way introduce them to following Christ.
 - I'm hospitable and love to help and take care of people who are in need.
 - I'm an inviter - someone who can easily have lots of people join you on the weekend at LCBC.
 - I'm gifted with empathy and can effectively help the poor and neglected.
 - I'm gifted with generosity and the ability to see where your wealth can help those in need.
 - I'm someone who prays consistently for people and you let them know you are praying for them.
 - I'm not sure where my gifting and passion is yet, but I'm open to discovering it.
- Where do you need to trust God in how you are influencing people's hearts?

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

Think of the person you got to know last week. Move in the direction of seeing their heart changed by doing one or more of the following:

- Pray for them.
- Listen to their story and make an effort to understand them.
- Invite them to a gathering.
- Ask them to join you for a meal.
- Look for ways to love them and show them Christ's love.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Tim Mackie has a great lecture on YouTube about the early church and politics called:

Lecture on the Early Church & Politics: Tim Mackie (The Bible Project)