



KINGDOM DESPITE PLURALISM

A SIX-WEEK COURSE ON STANDING FIRM IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Our culture is in crisis, lacking a faith that can ground it and nurture it. Human life is disrespected and discarded; the purity of marriage and sexuality is degraded; the economy is weighed down by crony capitalism and debt; religious freedom is in danger; worldly values abound.

How can we find new and innovative ways to stand firm against the rising tide of vulgarity and materialism, and bear witness to the gospel in the public square?

This lesson plan is ideal if people in your group...

- Feel concerned about the direction of the culture
- Are puzzled by the challenge of bearing witness in the public square
- Seek inspiration to defend life, justice, virtue, freedom and responsibility

Topics we will discuss include...

1. The Church and the Culture
2. Light to the Nations
3. Good and Faithful Servants
4. Dual Citizenship: Exalted and Humble
5. The Personal and the Political
6. Imagining Hope



WEEK 1: THE CHURCH AND THE CULTURE

Gather & Open with Prayer

Opening Discussion (5 minutes)

Being people of faith makes a big difference in our lives. What are some examples of how followers of Jesus are called to live in ways that are different from others?

When we live a different kind of life because we follow Jesus, that affects more than just us. What are some of the ways people around us are affected by the way we live as Christians?

Introduce Video:

In this video, pastor and seminary professor Charlie Self explains that when the gospel changes us, our communities are exposed to God's joy, peace and righteousness through that transformation in our lives.

Watch Video:

Charlie Self, *Faithful Churches Create Flourishing Communities*, Oikonomia Network (15 minutes)
tiu.edu/pluralism1a

Discussion (20 minutes)

Group leader selects questions to focus on.

The car mechanic described in the talk explained that his work served thousands of people. Think about your own daily work, in your home and on the job, and elsewhere in your community. Who does your daily work serve? How does it serve them?

As we accept the good news and follow Jesus, we experience the joy of God in our hearts. How does that bring a sense of meaning and purpose to our daily work as we serve in our communities?

What conflicts and feelings of anger or separation do you see among the people you encounter in a typical day?

As we accept the good news and follow Jesus, we experience the peace of God in our hearts. How does that help us cultivate forgiveness and reconciliation among those around us?

What do you see happening in your community that is wrong? In an ordinary week, how do you see people mistreating or taking advantage of each other?

As we accept the good news and follow Jesus, we experience the righteousness of God in our hearts. How does that help us stand up for justice and defend people when they need it?

Watch Video: Jay Moon, *The Connected Complexity of Culture Change* (9 minutes) tiu.edu/pluralism1b

Discussion (10 minutes)

Think about your local community. What are some examples of the “ideology/beliefs” of its culture? How about its “social/relationships” sector and its “economics/technology”?

Jay Moon shared some examples of how a change in one sector produces changes in the other sectors. Think about the car mechanic and the car dealership in the first video we watched today. How do you see a change in one sector making a change in other sectors?

What are some ways Christians could make a change in “social/relationships” or in “economics/technology” that would help show people the good news of Jesus?

Integration Point:

This week, look for examples of how living faithfully helps bring the joy, peace and righteousness of the gospel into the lives of those around us.

Close with Prayer