

The Waters We Swim In

GETTING STARTED

We get so used to the world we live in. Day in, day out; we breathe in its air and swim in its waters. But like the proverbial frog in the pot, rarely do we think about the temperature of what we are swimming in.

The world invites us to swim in its waters, but the Gospel calls us to live lives that are distinctly different from the world around us. Different in values; different in beliefs; different in who we serve and what we love.

In this series, we will examine 6 cultural norms that the world invites us to embrace in contrast to the Gospel realities that Jesus calls us to embody.

KEYS TO A GREAT DISCUSSION:

***Best Practice Suggestions: Reading the following "Guardrails" will help your conversations stay on track.**

Guardrail #1: Show Grace- Believe it or not, topics such as race, politics, and gender can be challenging for everyone. Give each other grace and the benefit of the doubt—it will go a long way. Embrace discomfort as an opportunity for growth, acknowledging that challenging conversations can lead to deeper understanding and connection.

Guardrail #2: Practice Respect- Respect confidentiality within the group, ensuring that what is shared remains within the confines of the discussion.

Guardrail #3: Have a Posture of Humility is a chance for us to understand culture, how it influences us, and how we can live in this world in a faithful way. It has much more to do with us and our response to the "waters we swim in" than it does with critiquing society. In short, "work on you."

Guardrail #4: Go to Scripture-Scripture is the Word of God. It is powerful, living, and the final and ultimate authority. Refer to it often, trust in it in all areas, and seek to apply it to your life.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Read the following Scriptures together and then use the questions below (or any you wish to add) to discuss the text and unpack its meaning.



Have someone in your group read *Romans 12:9-21*

- What stands out to you *loudest* in today's text?

- How is love described in this section?
- What does it mean to "hate what is evil" and "cling to what is good" in verse 9?
- What does it mean to "never be wise in your own sight" (verse 16)?
- How can believers respond to evil with good (verses 17-21)?

GETTING PRACTICAL

*Sometimes we can answer questions for an ethereal perspective. Be as specific to your life and express as you can.

1. Tribalism, at its core, is a strong bond within a group. Where do you see tribalism as positive? How might it become harmful or contradict the values of a faithful Christian community?
2. How have you seen this kind of community be healthy and valuable? How have you seen damage by tribalistic mindsets?
3. How can we actively seek out opportunities to show love and hospitality to those who are different from us, especially those whom tribalism might lead us to exclude or overlook? Be as specific as you can.