

This midweek study will explore why it's important for students to be concerned about social issues and show Christ's love to all people. Use the following outline, activity, playlist, and video ideas to lead a midweek event for your students.

Essential Doctrine: Social Concern

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the Spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth (Mic. 6:8; Eph. 6:5-9; 1 Thess. 3:12).

1 All Christians are commanded to pursue God's will in their lives and in society (Ex. 20:3-17; Deut. 10:12).

Option: Before you work through the passages and questions that follow, ask students these questions. *Is it possible to have faith that you hold privately, but not publicly? Is it possible to have a faith that doesn't affect how you interact at school, in your family, and in larger society as a whole?*

- ▶ Why is it that Christians are commanded to have a personal faith and share that faith in society?

Read Exodus 20: 3-17.

- ▶ What does it say about our faith when we take it just as seriously outside the church as we do inside?
God commands believers to have no other gods before Him. This command includes our status, relationships, popularity, appearance, or anything that could get in the way of making His will supreme in our life.
- ▶ How does the way we think about God determine how we interact with the outside world?

Read Deuteronomy 10:12.

- While the rest of the world may have been pagan, God still commanded Israel to stay true to His commands. He told His people not to depart from His laws, even when surrounded by unbelieving cultures.
- ▶ How does God command believers to behave in a society today that may not acknowledge Him?
 - ▶ What are some ways you can "walk in all the ways" of God within culture?

2 Christians are commanded to oppose racism and defend the vulnerable (Jas. 1:27; 2:8).

Option: Ask students to name some people who are vulnerable and marginalized in society. Then, discuss what it means to devalue and exploit the vulnerable. Place students into groups and assign them one of the vulnerable or marginalized group of people you listed. Instruct students to discover ways the gospel calls believers to defend and assist these individuals, and then share them with the larger group.

- ▶ What does it say about God that He commands His believers to oppose racism and defend those who are vulnerable?

Opposing racism and defending the vulnerable doesn't mean we view others as charity cases; instead, it means we see others as Christ sees them—people created in the image of God.

Read James 1:27 and 2:8.

- ▶ In what ways you can oppose racism and defend the vulnerable in your sphere of influence?
- ▶ What does opposing racism and defending the vulnerable say about your belief and trust in the gospel?
We are not called to simply love our neighbors, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- ▶ How is loving your neighbor as yourself different from simply being nice and kind?

3 Christians should be visible in the world without compromising their loyalty to Christ (Matt. 5:13-16, 43-48).

Read Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48.

Believers are not called to only have private beliefs—we are called to be a "city on a hill." This means we are in the world, not as secret believers, but as those who are loyal to Christ.

- ▶ What happens to our witness if it is known we are believers but fail to act as a "city on a hill" to others?
- ▶ How can you transform from a Christian with a private faith to one who's a "city on a hill"?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How might your life need to change to better reflect you have a public and private faith?
Challenge students to know their faith should lead them to social concern by defending the vulnerable and opposing racism, all-the-while living visibly in the world without compromising their loyalty to Christ.