

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: How to Live for Christ in a Culture That Doesn't January 9/10, 2021

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

NEW series: Following God in a culture that doesn't is easier said than done. The book of Romans is full of foundational gospel truth that will teach us how our faith can influence the world around us, instead of letting others tell us what to believe – especially in the places where Christianity and culture collide.

Use our Weekly Reflection Guide, in community or through personal study, to live out what we're learning on the weekends. *It's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you.* Choose the questions that are meaningful to you, then be REAL with self, God or others as you reflect, respond and pray.

Reflect/Respond: What did you take away from this weekend's message? Reflect on how you were challenged, convicted, encouraged or instructed. What is one way you could live out what you're learning this week?

You can live for Christ in a culture that doesn't when you...

1. Look for the good that God is doing: A critical spirit is not the Holy Spirit. Rather than marinate in the negative news and noise the world offers us, we need to look for the good that God is doing in our lives.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ..." Romans 1:8 ESV

"Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father." James 1:17 NLT

- How are you experiencing goodness? This might specifically be God's goodness to you, but it can also be good things happening in your life, relationships or circumstances.
- If you're not used to actively looking for the good, invite God to shift your perspective and give you eyes to see what is good both within you and around you. Practice seeking the good daily.

2. Surround yourself with people who encourage your faith: In our 24/7 digital culture, it takes discipline to wisely cultivate truth into our lives, homes and family. We must protect our faith by choosing the voices, ideas and opinions we let instruct us. We need to STOP listening to people who whip us up in anger, half-truths, division and hostility and START listening to people who stir us up in kindness, wisdom, unity and integrity.

"I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours." Romans 1:12 NLT

¹⁴We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church." Ephesians 4:14-15 NLT

- Is there anyone or anything you are challenged to STOP or START letting into your life? This might take a small course correction, or it could require REAL change. If you're not sure, ask God to give you wisdom and discernment as you choose who you surround yourself with – then listen and obey!
- What relationships (voices, opinions, ideas) in your life do you want to cultivate more?
- What are some specific ways you could invest in those relationships, so they serve both as an encouragement and an opportunity to encourage? Choose one and make that connection this week.

3. Stay biblically solid, but personally flexible: If the past year has proven anything, it's that we don't know what tomorrow will bring. Rather than holding tightly to our finite view of life, we need to trust God's infinite view. That means we practice letting go of our expectations and preferences and trusting His will and purposes.

"For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. ¹⁰Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish." Isaiah 9-10 NLT

- Where in your life are you holding more tightly to your expectations and preferences (for self, God or others) than you are to Jesus?
- Pray, asking God to help you hold that thing more loosely – to even work toward letting go. Ask Him to help you trust His plan and purpose.