

Gospel Centered Framework for Culture and Unity:

Gen. 1-2 (Read Gen. 1:26-31 & 2:15-25)

Introduction:

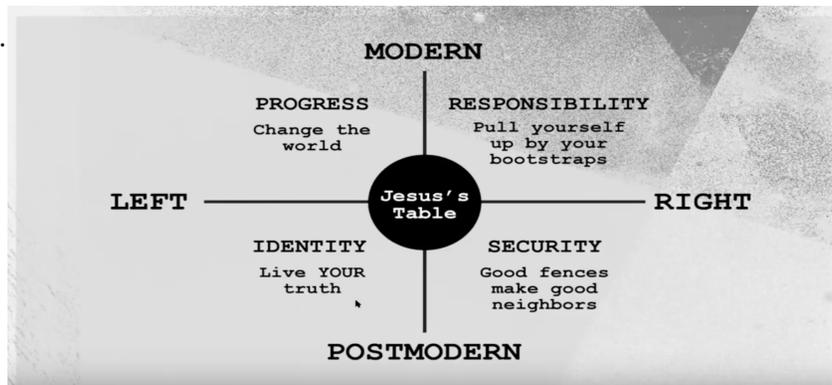
This week we are pivoting from the sermon on Sunday to Saturday's seminar: "**Gospel Centered Framework for Culture and Unity.**" Jim Mullins reminded us that "If idols are false gods, ideologies are false religions that are based on false gods." Ideologies are reductionistic (seeing life through a single idea), religious (demand your allegiance) and prescriptive (tell you how to live). There is a tendency for people to get so locked into their ideological framework that others who hold a differing perspective are viewed as the enemy. Unfortunately we see this in the church as well. Instead of being bonded together for the cause of Christ, we often see infighting, accusations, and demonizing. How can we come together and be unified while holding such opposing views?

Jim Mullins discusses a framework that seeks to bring everyone to Jesus' table to learn from one another and see each other's strengths and weaknesses, so that we can be unified in reaching the world for Christ.

Discuss:

1. As you reflect on the seminar, what stood out to you? What challenged you? Were there any questions you want answered?

2.



The diagram above shows two continuums: 1) Left (progressive) and Right (conservative); 2) Modern (rational/knowledge is the end all) and Postmodern (ultimate is narrative/subjective). This creates four quadrants of ideologies/perspective on life. The diagram shows the names and slogans for each quadrant. As you read Gen. 1:26-31 & 2:15-25, how do you see each quadrant in the creation story?

3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?

4. As we have seen, Christ is the creator and redeemer of all things, including these perspectives. Each of us will lean to one quadrant or another. The danger comes when we make our perspective the center rather than Christ. In order to flourish, we need to orient ourselves toward Christ and learn from one another. What makes it difficult for you to sit at the table with someone who shares a different view?

5. Jim discusses 10 commitments that help build unity. As you read them, which ones stand out to you? What do you find the most challenging?

-**Worship** (Ex. 20:2-3; Ps.115:1-8; Phil. 2:9-11): I commit my allegiance to King Jesus over all other idols and ideologies.

-**Love of Neighbor** (Phil. 2:1-11; Matt. 22:34-40): I commit to participating in civic life as a means of loving and serving my neighbor rather than just serving my own interests.

-**Image of God** (Gen.1:26; Ja. 3:9): I commit to honoring the image of God in all people by treating them with respect and abstaining from dehumanizing caricatures.

-**Biblical Wisdom** (Ps.119; 2 Tim. 3:16): I commit to having my views challenged by the Biblical Story rather than using the Bible to proof-text my predetermined positions.

-**Fruitful Speech** (Gal. 5:22-23; Ja. 3): I commit to engaging in political discourse with speech that's marked by the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

-**Humble Learning** (Ja. 1:19; 1 Cor. 12:12-26) I commit to being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger as I seek to learn from the varied perspectives within the body of Christ.

-**Remove the Log** (Mt. 7:1-5) I commit to giving more attention to critiquing the potential flaws in my own political leaning, conduct, and sin than I give to scrutinizing others.

-**Biblical Justice** (Is. 1:17; Micah 6:8; Mt. 23:23) I commit to understanding and pursuing justice as I engage in civic life, not minimizing scripture's repeated call to seek justice and allow scripture to critique popular conceptions of justice in our culture.

-**Peacemaking** (Mt. 18: 5:43-44; Ro. 12:17-21) I commit to face-to-face conflict resolution rather than arguments on social media.

-**Loving Enemies** (Mt. 5:43-44; 1 Tim. 2:1-4) I commit to loving and praying for my so-called political "enemies," especially those whom I have a hardest time loving and praying for. This includes praying for our government leaders regardless of who wins the election.

Take some time this next week to review the 10 commitments. How can you implement these in your everyday conversations?