

Living the Last Days Life Group
Spring 2024 State College Access Church
Applying Wisdom to Current Issues
Pastor Jonathan Srock

Goal of This Exercise

We are not here to argue or debate on the mother. We are all Christians and united under the banner of Christ. We want to gain wisdom, actionable, practical understanding on how to approach these issues with a Christian attitude, spirit, and desire for righteousness.

Ground Rules

1. Treat one another with a kind and gentle heart. There are no enemies among us here. We can have a difference of opinion.
2. Allow others to speak on each issue and respond to questions. This is a discussion.
3. Discuss these issues with the goal of providing wise counsel and judgment on how we can approach these issues as Christians in an unbelieving world.
4. If this gets too heated or one of these categories takes too long, I will decide whether to continue, to end discussion, to move on to the next topic, or to stop discussion of the topics.

Current Issue Categories

- **Politics and Being a Christian**
This is not about how we should vote or political debates. Christians live as the citizens of heaven (Philippians 1:27; 3:20) and citizens of a country on earth. How much should we be involved in the government and politics as Christians? We do not place our trust in the political system to change this world for the better. But as citizens, we have certain rights.
- **Economic Issues**
Anyone living on earth needs money to live. We need it to provide for our families. There's a line in Scripture between hoarding and being generous, and what we do with the money we are given. Jesus talks about money more than any other topic. How worried we get during economic downturns and excited we get when the money flows freely may be barometers of our spiritual condition.
- **Gender Issues and Alternate Lifestyles**
Gender issues have become bigger it seems than ever before. We're facing new questions about transgender and gender confusion. Only now has medical science caught up to the desire of some to change their physical sex to match their preferred gender. Children are being placed at risk along these lines as well. Alternate lifestyles have been "in the news" and culture for some time now. The Bible is very clear about where we should stand as Christians. But how do we address people with the love of Jesus and truth at the same time? How do we have personal relationships and bring the light and love of Jesus?

- **Racial Issues**

It seems as time goes on in our country and around the world racism is running rampant. Sometimes we may be surprised to realize we may also be exposed to racism and perhaps might have racial issues of our own to work out. The Bible talks about the Church as a place without racial labels (Galatians 3:27-29). How do we bring racial unity in a world divided by racial lines?

- **Immigration Issues**

Our nation is in the throes of an immigration explosion. This crosses with political concerns, but it has become more about public health and safety. Should we welcome immigrants? Should we make a difference between statuses like illegal and legal? In what ways can Christians enter this issue and maintain the love of Christ for all people with the truth of laws?

- **Homelessness and Poverty**

Jesus told us we would always have the poor with us (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8). The individual Christian probably has a hard time giving to the poor generously. We all have a cap on the amount of money we have to work with. Our kind and caring hearts may not match our checkbook. Aside from that, we must also consider the Church's place in homeless and poverty issues. The government is also involved in helping the homeless and the poor. What can we do in these situations?

- **Education Issues**

Our education system especially in the inner cities has had many issues for a long time. It seems the children of our nation are not getting a good education. There are political possibilities for education, but sometimes those did not help when people are resistant to offering options. What can we do as Christians in this educational environment? Indoctrination is not a desirable option but that is happening in many educational settings. Don't just think elementary-high school. It's happening in our colleges as well. We're not talking about liberalism as much as the basic standard of education not being met.

- **Environmental Issues**

Some people go to the extreme of wanting to protect the earth at the cost of human lives. They think getting rid of humans will save the planet. At the same time, people on the other end of the spectrum don't mind abusing the earth and its resources. Even Christians might say that since the earth will be made new in the end we don't have to worry about it. Scripture teaches us to be good stewards of what God has given us, including the earth. How do we do that well?

- **Technology and AI**

We have always had technology with us. Even the wheel was a piece of technology we still use today. Technology can make our lives easier and better. But it can also present concerns and issues we would have never foreseen. Now, with the rise of AI and some of the ethical issues, as well as spiritual ones, it raises, how do we treat technology as Christians? Can we use some technology for good? What safeguards can we put in place for unethical use and expansion of technology?