



Cultures in Conflict, Session 4, PART ONE Ray Vander Laan

WHY LEARNING COMMUNITIES?

To become better and better disciples of Christ TOGETHER so we can face *anything* through...

1. Deeper learning of Biblical truth
2. Stronger “iron sharpening iron” relationships

Ephesians 4:12–16 (ESV) ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Remember... it’s all about putting God’s truth into action in everyday lives

OPENING CONVERSATION

Hebrews 12:1a (ESV) ¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,

2 Timothy 2:2–3 (ESV) ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Titus 2:1–6 (ESV)

SESSION 4, PART ONE, “The Lord’s Supper: Discerning the Body”

➔ **The Father’s House: a different social order**

Task of the father, the patriarch, was to manage resources and to use those resources to care for everyone, or to bring in the marginalized, rescuing, paying debts. Even to welcome stranger, to embrace them into the father’s house.

➔ **Who is Lord?**

✓ The message of a Roman city – Caesar is “lord”

✓ The message of tassels – reminder of God’s big picture mission that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ welcoming all into the Father’s house

✓ Paul’s message in Corinth where he finds a community of Christ-followers

➔ **The Roman/ Greek social order** – EVERYTHING in life based on your social class.

- ✓ Romans followed a hard and fast class system that ruled EVERYTHING in everyday life.

Classes laid out:

1. Romans – Wealthy Freeborn - divided into Equestrians, Decurions, Ordinary Romans
2. Imperial (of the emperor's family or household) slaves that were freed
3. Poor Freeborn Romans
4. Poor Freed Slaves
5. Wealthy non-Roman citizens
6. Freeborn non-Roman citizens who aren't wealthy
7. Imperial Slaves
8. Household Slaves
9. Farm Slaves
10. Mine/ Galley Slaves

Everyone knew their place and their class.

- ✓ Roman banquet was how they showed status and class. Everyone seated by class, quality and quantity of food determined by class. A person's value was based on wealth, birth status, social class

➔ **Christ-followers in a culture where class means everything**

- ✓ When gathered in Jesus' name we don't distinguish by class...

DISCUSSION and APPLICATION

- ➔ What are characteristics of class systems?

Where does it come from?

What motivates the systems?

How does it impact daily living?

How do these connect with divisions Heiser talks about?

- ➔ How ingrained are class systems in human nature?

How do class systems relate to power?

In what ways is power distributed in our culture and lives?

- ➔ Contrast the Father's House with a class system: what are the differences?

- ➔ Can you think of any examples of churches falling into class divisions?

→ What are examples in the Gospels and Acts of people breaking class divides?

→ What do the following scriptures tell us about living as Christ-followers?

Romans 10:12 (ESV) ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

Galatians 3:28–29 (ESV) ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Colossians 3:11 (ESV) ¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

James 2:1–9 (ESV)

James 5:1–6 (ESV)

1 Timothy 6:17–19 (ESV) ¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

→ How does this inform the mission Christ gave us?

→ Other thoughts?

TAKEAWAYS...



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