

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS IN A COMPLEX WORLD

A HOMEGROUP DISCUSSION SERIES

We live in an increasingly complex world! And as Christians, we sometimes face dilemmas and have to make hard choices. We live *in* the world, even if we may not be *of* it.

The purpose behind this series is to prompt discussion and consideration about what is involved in living for Christ, loving Christ, and imitating Christ in the context of our modern world. Many people in this world live by a moral code of some kind, so we can ask ourselves what it is that distinguishes those who seek to live as disciples of Jesus Christ? Not all Christians agree about what is right or wrong in any given set of circumstances. But Christianity often provides an ethical perspective and gives us a framework within which to make our decisions and choices. We should always remember that being a Christian involves submission and allegiance to God's will. That means we have to learn to discern God's will in situations, and allow our decisions to be influenced by our understanding of that. The old question: "What would Jesus do?" (WWJD) is perhaps not a bad starting point!

This series will cover some sensitive issues, and needs careful handling. It may prompt thoughts and bring back difficult memories. We will cover issues as varied as "why should we obey our rulers?", "is war ever justified?" and "assisted dying". Different people will have different views on these subject and it isn't the purpose of this series to say who is right or who is wrong. But I hope it will prompt some serious thinking about the considerations which Christians should bear in mind when coming to a view about their position. Each part of the series incorporates a video, to help begin a discussion. And we begin the series with this short video clip from Bishop David Atkinson who has helped place all this in a theological context:

<https://youtu.be/MqMnXYFoLxk>

After viewing this video, here are a few questions to get you thinking and talking. These are fairly typical of the kinds of questions we need to be willing to face up to in the complex society in which we live:

What factors shape our values and beliefs?

Many people live by what they would call a “moral code”. Can you identify any moral values that differentiate Christians? How are Christians different from the rest of the world?

What are the ideals (e.g., freedom, tolerance, respect, inclusiveness etc.) that should be honoured in the Christian community?

What are the limits, if any, of freedom of speech?

What is the relationship between privacy, freedom, and security? And when, if ever, does government have the right to restrict the freedoms of people?

What can today’s generation learn from your generation? And what can *you* learn from *them*?

How does the media shape our view of others, and ourselves? Does it influence our thinking?

The Psalmist said “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5). Is humankind inherently good or evil?

How does our faith make a difference to the way we live our lives? Any practical ideas which we might be willing to share?

REMEMBER Bishop David’s “template”:

FACTS
VALUES
OPTIONS
CONSEQUENCES

Micah 6:8

***He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God.***