

This midweek study will explore why it's important for students to recognize that all humanity has inherited a sin nature that can only be overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Social Concern

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the Spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth (Mic. 6:8; Eph. 6:5-9; 1 Thess. 3:12).

1 God calls us to speak for those who have no voice (Prov. 31:8-9).

Option: Ask students to identify someone in their lives who is not entirely able to make decisions or "speak for" themselves (a baby, a person in a coma, an elderly person, etc.). Then ask them who is responsible for making sure this person is taken care of. Explain that Christians are called to care for these people and others (unborn children, orphans, single mothers, etc.) in various ways.

Read Proverbs 31:8-9.

- ▶ *What does it mean to be dispossessed?*
- ▶ *If God commands believers to fulfill these social duties, what does that say about His character and attitude toward us?*

2 Christians shouldn't be passive when it comes to social issues (Ps. 82:3; Isa. 1:17; Jas. 1:27).

Option: Show (or describe) a sad commercial such as a commercial for a hunger relief program or the ASPCA commercial with Sarah McLachlan. Ask students to describe how they feel during these commercials. Are they compelled to do something? In the same way, when we see injustice in the world around us, it should move us to compassion and action.

- ▶ *What is one social justice issue in the world that moves you?*

Read Psalm 82:3.

- ▶ *Name a group of people who are oppressed.*

It is important to mention that you should take action to help whatever social cause God puts on your heart, but you should also care about and pray for other social causes.

Read Isaiah 1:17.

- ▶ *How do we pursue justice for the fatherless or widows?*
- ▶ *What does it mean to "correct the oppressor"?*

- ▶ *What are some ways you have seen people do the wrong thing for the right reason?*
- ▶ *How can we as Christians fulfill both of these commandments while still showing mercy and compassion for those who oppress these groups?*

3 We are called to stand for truth while showing compassion (Prov. 15:1; Eph. 4:15; Col. 4:6).

Read Ephesians 4:15 and Colossians 4:6.

- ▶ *How can we consistently speak truth to others in a loving way?*
- ▶ *How do you respond when someone speaks to you out of anger? Have you ever been tempted to talk to someone in this way?*

We typically do not respond well. Usually, this means yelling back at the other person. However, even if someone speaks in a negative way to us, we are still called to respond in graciously and lovingly. This is far more powerful than retaliating in the same angry manner.

Read Proverbs 15:1.

- ▶ *Have you ever heard of the phrase, "kill them with kindness"? What does this mean in light of this verse?*
- ▶ *How can you use kindness to share a truth that might be difficult to hear?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *Are you living a life that reflects these verses? In what ways?*
- ▶ *Are there any local organizations that support any of the causes you have talked about during this session? How can you personally begin to contribute to the elimination of these issues?*