HOW DO I MEANINGFULLY ENGAGE CULTURE?

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Read **John 13:3–15 and 33–35** which record part of Jesus's last meal with his disciples before his crucifixion.

As you read, pay careful attention to the details that show Jesus modeling the kind of love that he challenges his disciples to show when he's gone. Take note of the question he asks them in verse 12 and think about the impact that Jesus's example at this meal had on these men.

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Now read **John 13:33–35**, and note the answer to the question that Jesus asked in verse 12. This is Jesus's parting challenge to his followers, and it has a continued impact for each of us today.

33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the

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Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. [34] *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.* [35] *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Think about your final moments with the most important people in your life. If you could write the script in advance now, how would you fill in these blanks for yourself? As I have _____, so you must _____. Many people might give advice about money, time, or work, but at some point in that last conversation, they would probably say something about their relationships. About how to care for each other. Even though culture might credit it as kindness or just being humane, that kind of love began with Jesus and comes from our heavenly Father. It's the kind of love that he challenges us to.

2. When you're faced with a controversial cultural topic about which you have strong opinions, do you tend to separate yourself in order to protect yourself from giving in, or are you more likely to surrender and throw your hands up? What would it look like for you to take the third option and thoughtfully engage in an issue the next time a conversation about it arises?

APPLY IT

In **John 13:34–35**, there is one phrase that is repeated three times. Underline it in your Bible or on a page. In the margins or on a note, write the names of three people in your life right now who need that kind of love. Pray and ask God to help you understand how to meet them where they are, despite your differences, and love them the way Jesus modeled.

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION (IF DESIRED)

1. Who is the most difficult person in your life to love? What makes it so hard? What does conversation with that person typically look like?

2. Who in your life has modeled Jesus's love to you? How has that love impacted you?

3. What is one cultural, political, or spiritual topic that you have the strongest opinions about right now? When a conversation arises about this topic, what is your default posture? What might change about your posture if you took Jesus's final challenge into consideration?

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