

re:View Worldview Study
Topic 01 – Culture

(To teach this session you will need: “01_Numb_Culture” DVD, television or projector, DVD player, student handouts, this leader’s guide, and magazines for the “Illustration Idea.” You may also wish to use “reView_01_VerseSlide.ppt” for the verse. It is also recommended to have your students complete “review_00_PreStudySurvey.pdf” a week prior to beginning the study.)

NOTE: If you’re teaching the abbreviated 7-session series, this is Session 1.
If you’re teaching the extended 13-session series, this is Session 1.

Suggested Session Layout

Watch “Numb” Film [6:15]
Film Discussion [5:00]
Watch “Culture” Teaching Segment [7:05]
Teaching Segment Discussion [7:30]
Illustration Idea [7:30]
Recap [5:00]
Total session time [35-40 mins.]

Watch “Numb” Film [6:15]

Brief Synopsis: Sometimes we glide through life and don’t even notice what is around us. This film is a glimpse into the day of an average guy like that – with one exception. From the moment he gets up until the time he goes to bed, his life will subtly change with every wave of influence. *(For further insight, be sure to watch the directorial comments before viewing the film with your students. You may also choose to show the directorial comments as part of the discussion time.)*

Film Discussion [5:00]

What is the film about?

Many things shape us in ways we don’t realize.

How did the main character react to what was happening around him?

He didn’t notice it; if he did notice it, it was subtle.

What are examples of things that changed as a result of the influences around him?

Apartment, coffee, suit, lunch, car

What does each of these examples represent in today’s popular culture?

Answers will include: advertising, media, etc.

What do you think the analyst on the TV meant when he said, “The question then becomes: What are we going to do? Are we going to sit here and be numb, or are we going to do something about it?”

This, as well as the radio interview with the senator early in the film (“The longer we stand by and do nothing, the harder it will be to take control later”), is another way of saying that if we sit back and let culture’s influence permeate our lives, we become nothing more than desensitized. It is hard to engage culture if we don’t recognize that it is all around us.

(Feel free to use optional handout “reView_01_NumbFilmQuestions.pdf”)

Watch “Culture” Teaching Segment [7:05]

Synopsis and Outline: Whether we recognize it or not, our culture is the major influence in our behavior, values, and beliefs. Our goal as wise believers is to critique knowledgeably culture’s values rather than uncritically absorb them. The first step in making life changes is to recognize how profoundly culture shapes us in ways we probably don’t even realize.

- I. Introduction: Culture in Times Square
- II. What is Culture?
- III. Culture and Worldviews
- IV. Culture and Values
- V. American Pop Culture
- VI. Conclusion: Why is This Important?

(For your reference, a teaching outline of Dr. Brown’s teaching segment can be found under “reView_01_TeachingSegmentOutline.pdf.”)

Teaching Segment Discussion [7:30]

What did Dr. Brown mean when he mentioned the fish in the ocean?

We are surrounded by it.

We are influenced by it.

We see everything through it.

We can’t escape it.

Culture is a major influence in what three things?

Behavior, values, and beliefs

What is popular culture?

Popular culture is a collection of values, themes, ideas, and behavior that is popularized mainly through media and technology. The most visible forms of popular culture are seen in television, movies, music, the Internet, etc.

Why is popular culture so influential?

That’s why it’s “popular!” Popular culture becomes a means by which people, particularly young people, express their identity and values. It is also the means by which they explore the big questions in life.

How is “the right to choose” seen as the most important value in our culture?

We like to be “pro-choice” about everything. Ask how everyone would feel if there was only one kind of ketchup or one television station to watch. This is actually how it was under communist governments! But, is choice always a good thing? The answer is, of course, that we have the ability to choose what is right and good, but also to choose what is wrong and bad.

Illustration Idea [7:30]

Find some examples of magazine ads that illustrate different trends in culture. With each of these ask, “How has this influenced the values of student culture today?” Ask them if they can think of similar examples. After talking about magazine ads, shift the discussion to television, movies, or music.

Recap [5:00]

Have your students open their Bibles to Romans 12:2. Have someone read it.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

Point out the basic format of the verse: “Don’t do this anymore but do this instead.” Paul says that the Romans were already being conformed to the pattern of their world. Isn’t this the exact thing Dr. Brown was talking about with the fish? Without realizing it, the fish was being affected by the water.

Paul says that the Romans should stop being “conformed” or molded by the “water” around them, the culture they were in. Rather, they should be transformed by renewing their minds. The idea behind the word “transformed” is that of metamorphosis – changing into something different. While conformity to the world is something that happens passively, being transformed is something that happens actively. Conformity just happens, but transformation requires effort. Transformation only happens through mind renewal, changing the way one thinks. This is what we’re talking about when we talk about thinking Christianly.

Note the result: being able to know God’s will. God’s will is good, pleasing, and perfect. It can’t be known without changing one’s thinking processes.

Paul’s admonition is for us today as well. We need to be conscious of the world’s conforming influence upon us and seek to be different from that by changing how we think. We need to think Christianly.

Encourage your students to take notice of how much culture is influencing them as they go about their week. Remind them to look to God’s Word and not the world for direction on how they should live.

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