

## Questions For Session 3 of “*Compassion & Conviction*”

### *Chapter 5: Messaging And Rhetoric*

1. Why are words so powerful? Discuss ways in which words are used for good or evil. (pp.74-77)

2. Skim the stories in Acts 17 of Paul preaching in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. How does the Bible affirm the value of persuasion? (pp.77-78)

3. Discuss the seven guidelines the book gives on pp.80-81 for “faithful and effective communication in the public square”. Which of these do you find in short supply in public, political communication today?

4. Describe how messaging is used in “Orwellian” ways today? (pp.81-85)

5. *“The more important the issue, the less Christians should rely on talking points and taglines. If our assessment is limited to the resonance of a phrase, then we’ve outsourced our thought process to well-paid wordsmiths. Regurgitating buzzwords is easy and careless.”*

How do advocates and politicians oversimplify societal matters like drug abuse and abortion? (pp.85-87)

6. Why do Christians need to be on their guard about religious rhetoric by politicians? (pp.87-89)

7. How is rhetoric used to dehumanize opponents? What principles does the book present that might help us frame the current conflict in the Middle East? (pp.89-91)

## Chapter 6: Politics And Race

*Unfortunately, the American church has always been divided along racial lines. There are exceptions, but generally we struggle to see past racial and cultural differences and treat each other like brothers and sisters in Christ. This continues to severely damage the church's credibility. How can we speak healing into a broken world when we are reflecting the world's divides?*

*In actual fact the deep racial divides in our nation present one of the greatest opportunities for the American church. Racism is in the church, but it is not unique to the church. It's the gospel that is unique to the church – the truth that the divine power of Almighty God reaches even across the deepest of cultural divides (Romans 1:16). While other systems and institutions struggle to face this greatest of American challenges, the church should be leading the way. (pp.93-94)*

1. The above paragraphs from the opening of the chapter are weighty and worth unpacking.
  - a. How does racial strife damage the church's credibility?
  - b. How does our nation's racial divide present a great opportunity for the church?
  - c. What does it mean, "Racism...is not unique to the church. It's the gospel that is unique."
2. Share your thoughts and observations about the section *History Of Racism And The American Church* (pp.94-96).
3. How did the early church confront its racial problems? (p.97)
4. People will sometimes say "But I don't see color!" as if to say they've learned to see past racial bias. But the book strongly disagrees with what it calls "colorblind ideology". What arguments does it make for Christians to not embrace this line of thinking? (pp.98-99)
5. Similarly, the phrase "identity politics" is a very flammable concept today. What are some ways the book asks us to think of identity politics? (pp.99-100)

6. What can Christians do today to guard against the danger of “tribalism” today (i.e. people who stoke racial division for the sake of their own self-interest)? (pp.101-102)

7. What are the 4 steps the book advances for pursuing reconciliation. Identify, define, and discuss each of the steps. Specifically think of ways you personally, and the church corporately, can participate in these steps.

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4: \_\_\_\_\_