

Name of the class: “The Christian and the World.”

Scriptural focus: Jn. 17:14-18, “*My prayer is not that you take them out of the world They are not of the world ... I have sent them into the world.*”

Description: This class is based on the inherent tension Christians experience by living their physical lives in the world while their spiritual lives are rooted in heaven. Some Christians become “so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good,” while others live so comfortably in the world they seem indistinguishable from unbelievers.

The questions we are going to explore in this class include:

- What did Jesus mean when he used the word “world” in Jn. 17? Did he mean the physical world, or people generally, or unbelievers, or what?
- What does it mean to live *in* the world? What are some possible consequences of living in the world? How can Christians live in the world without weakening their spiritual life and/or adopting a worldly life-style?
- What does it mean to not be *of* the world? Can Christians work in a completely secular job and not be of the world? Should Christians avoid certain kinds of activities or people to avoid being of the world?
- If we imagine a “Christian Involvement Meter,” with “**In** the world” at one end of the scale and “**Of**” the world at the other end, where would the needle point for ... evangelical Christians generally? FPC members? Me and you personally?

Methodology: Except for the first introductory class, which will be mostly lecture, this course will consist of class discussion based on two sources:

- (1) The first half of the course will focus on the Bible, mostly the New Testament with some reference to the Old Testament. A special emphasis will be placed on *how Jesus himself lived* in relation to the world, and on the *words* he spoke about how his followers should relate to the world.
- (2) Guest speakers, from both the FPC membership and outside the church, will be invited in the second half of the course to describe the challenges, successes and failures of living as a Christian in their particular “world.” This will include the worlds of public and private education, the worlds of law and medicine, the worlds of corporate and self-employed businesses, the world of military service, the world of the arts (music, drama, dancing, etc.), the world of the stay-at-home parent, and so on.

A complete syllabus will be distributed at the beginning of the course. Regular attendance and homework will be strongly recommended but not required.