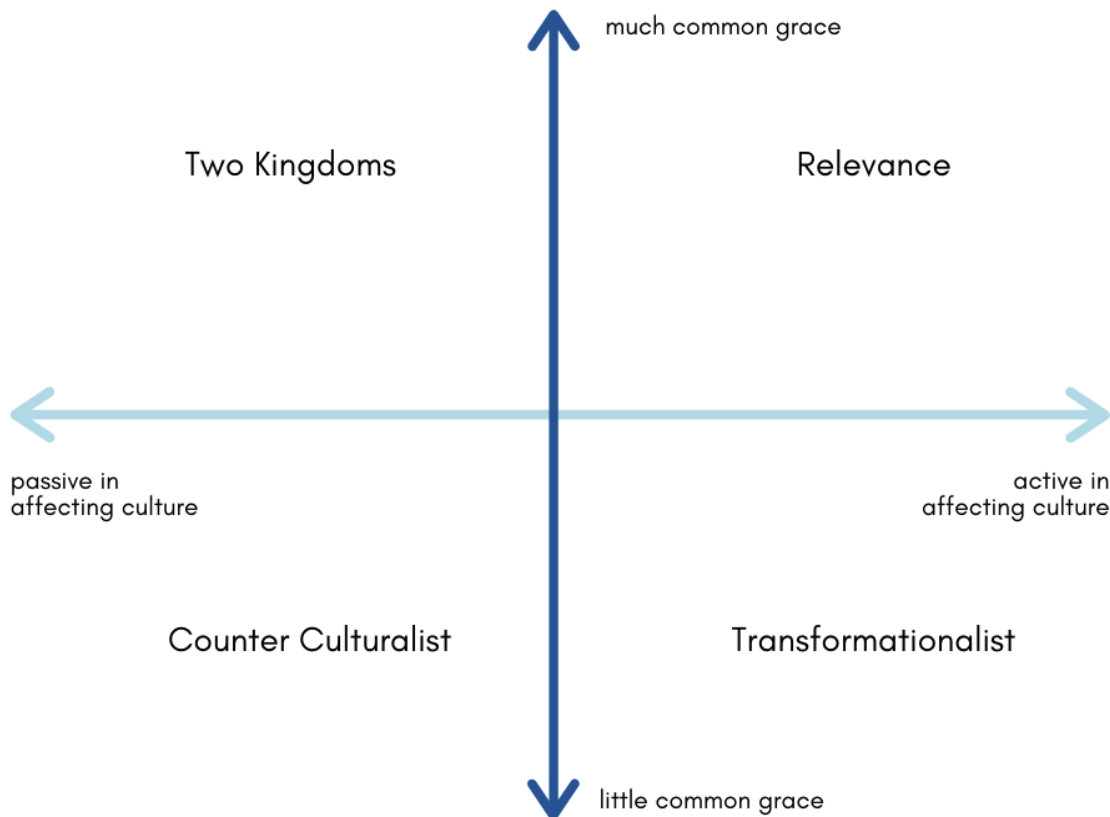


# Gospel and Race

## Week 1: Cultural Engagement

Four Quadrants Approach delineated by Tim Keller in Center Church  
Applied to the context of Gospel & Race discussions within Hope Community Church, a 6-week study



Leader's note: The study passages are not connected 1-to-1 to the Keller material or quadrant under consideration that week. Rather each is biblical testimony regarding the Gospel and how it comes to bear in situations, teachings, parables, etc. which involve ethnicity/race. In that sense, themes of the bible and quadrant may overlap but it should not be assumed that the quadrant directly flows out of the biblical passage.

### Introduction Questions

? What has stood out to you recently regarding the public conversations about race?  
What about the private conversations happening with family, friends and coworkers?

(Note: The aim of these questions is to reflect on how we each come from a cultural history that affects our perspective.)

Video introduction from Cor: [Week 1 Video](#)

## Study the Passage and Discuss

### 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

<sup>19</sup> Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. <sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

? Consider v. 19 and the reality that Paul's freedom means he is not obligated to do any of what follows. In other words he is free to not serve. But he chooses to use his freedom to serve. Has this ever happened to you—somebody served you not out of obligation but out of joy? What impact did this have on you?

*Possible answers: teammates, family, neighbors, parents; you experienced their love for you. It feels like a huge difference when someone was required to do something versus when someone chose to do something, made all the more special if what they did came at personal cost of time, money, etc.*

? Review the four examples Paul mentions: Jews, those under the law, those without the law, and the weak. Do you know of any ways these groups are similar or dissimilar to one another?

*Possible answers: historically, ethnically, different motivations, expectations and needs; there likely would have been hostility between different groups, yet Paul aspires to reach each of these disparate groups with the gospel because a key similarity amongst all of them—they need Jesus!*

? What, ultimately, was Paul's hope in becoming "all things to all people"?

*Possible answers: understand which parts of the gospel they know/don't know; knock down barriers to his sharing of the gospel; a willingness to deprioritize certain religious or cultural markers for the sake of prioritizing Christ*

? Imagine a person from each of those groups being saved. What would Paul's response be? What would be the response of each of those saved individuals upon hearing how Paul adapted and served each of them according to their needs and circumstances?

*Possible answers: Paul: excited the gospel was heard! Despite personal cost he may have seen it as totally worth it. Others: may be encouraged he moved toward them. May squash the "faking it in a different culture" vs. genuinely caring & engaging where people are.*

### Additional Questions About the Paradigm

? The horizontal axis was described by how passive or active an individual or group is in engaging the culture. What other descriptors could we use to further clarify what is meant by active or passive?

*Possible answers: active: engaged, reaching out; passive: possibly apathetic or insular, prioritizing inward community versus outward, or counter-cultural*

? The vertical axis was described by how much or little common grace is in view when engaging the culture. What other descriptors could we use to further clarify what is meant by much common grace or little common grace?

*Possible answers: much common grace: stress image of God in every person, God is working everywhere, this side of the axis sounds very inclusive; little common grace: stress specific grace, especially saving message of Christ/gospel, this side of the axis sounds very exclusive*

? Self-examination. Given these descriptors, reflect on your life. Do you find yourself more active or passive when it comes to influencing culture? In what ways (if any) does your standing on the axis potentially change depending on what specific cultural topic is in view? (For example, it might sound like this: I tend to be pretty quiet when it comes to most cultural hot buttons; but when the topic of \_\_\_\_\_ comes up, I can't help but speak up!)

And do you tend to consistently emphasize common grace (i.e. the image of God in all people) or little common grace (i.e. God's saving work) when engaging with culture? (For example, do you tend to identify how we're all alike or, on account of the gospel, how we're different?)

*Possible answers: Answers will vary.*

### Takeaway(s)

How do I want to grow in light of these things?

What am I asking the Lord to do with my heart and life in response to this study?

? Given conversations you've had with other Christians concerning race, what have you heard from them that would indicate that you may be at a similar or different spot than them regarding these two axes?

? Give an example of what could happen (positive or negative) of a church filled with Christians all of whom exist in the same spot on the grid. Give an example of what could happen (positive or negative) of a church filled with Christians all of whom exist in different spots on the grid.

? Given the testimony of 1 Corinthians 9:19–23, take a moment to reflect on each axis point answering the question: what encouragement might Paul give to this approach to culture and, therefore, to race as well?

### **Accountability**

? Share one thing you're thinking about or challenged by this week.

? What is one take-home application regarding today's study that you'd like the group to check in with you next week?