

Engaging the Issues @Home

Engaging the Issues @Home is a companion tool to our Engaging the Issues Podcast for families to use around the kitchen table to help start an engaging conversation about how their faith connects with the world around them.

ENGAGING THE ISSUE:

We sometimes wonder whether public policy has any real impact upon religious freedom. As Austin Nimocks explained in today's podcast, it's clear that the voters in Anchorage, Alaska saw the connection.

No amount of laws will solve sinful people from saying things and acting in ways that they should not speak and act. As Christians, we ought to be characterized by words that are as loving as they are true. No one should harass, or discriminate against, anyone.

Nonetheless, we live in a Genesis 3 world in which discrimination is an unfortunate byproduct of the human sinfulness. So, it falls to government to pass laws that appropriately balance human dignity with expression. Nondiscrimination laws that govern based upon one's immutable characteristics (color of your skin, age, gender, religion, etc.) do well to promote good behavior and punish bad behavior. Yet, those modern laws that expand those classifications to self-declared, malleable characteristics too often pit tolerance against religious freedom.

This is where we must continue to be wise in our dealings with the world around us. In our commitment to be loving and compassionate, be certain you see - as well as avoid - the pitfalls that surround the grand promises of tolerance.

Love with Truth and Grace.

ENGAGING QUESTIONS:

1. **What is true tolerance?** (*True tolerance is politely recognizing our differences while respecting the right of each other to disagree.*)
2. **Is religious freedom a license to be intolerant?** (*No. We ought never use the freedom God has given us as an excuse to sin. Instead, we ought to be marked by being a free people who show respect. 1 Peter 2:15-17.*)
3. **How to we steward our religious freedom?** (*Parents: this is a good opportunity to talk about the freedom we have as citizens of this country to pursue the Great Commission with our friends and neighbors. Likewise, take it as an opportunity to discuss religious persecution around the world.*)

ENGAGING OUR HEARTS: *Thank God that he has granted use the freedom to practice our Faith openly in this country. Pray that God will give you the grace to use that freedom to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20), while preserving those around the world who suffer persecution for their faith.*

ENGAGING RESOURCES:

- *The Intolerance of Tolerance*, D.A. Carson, Eerdmans Publishing Co. (2012).
- "Passing a Solution for Which There is No Problem," Jeremy Dys, 4/2/12, EngageFamilyMinute.com.
- Information on religious persecution - Voice of the Martyrs - Persecution.com.