



Six Week Pursuit
Impact Culture

Dear Church Family,

We have an odd tradition in my family. We believe wholeheartedly in survival of the fittest! Well, at least when it comes to communication. If you wish to add to the conversation, you must be willing to jump in; seize the moment! If you don't interrupt, you probably don't have anything worth saying. Hey, it's a talk or be talked-at world.

This culture came as a total complete shock to my wife. She stated that hanging out with my relatives was nothing short of anxiety inducing; everyone just talks over the other. It's madness! Huh, here I thought it was perfectly normal.

Every one of us has a distinct culture and upbringing. You may not recognize it, but your habits and customs are influenced greatly by your childhood, school, neighborhood, family, friends, and experiences. And, because each of our cultures can be so different, it's also not unusual to experience a culture clash with someone else.

It's not unusual

When one set of ideals and customs run into another, completely different set, it only makes sense there would be resistance. We have all experienced this and it can be awkward, even hostile at times. And this is exactly why following Jesus can seem so foreign and difficult.

Did you know the very second you make the decision to follow Jesus, your culture and beliefs run right into Jesus and His own culture? It's true! God has His own culture! *Culture Clash* You'll find what God values is a bit different than what we American humans value, and this is exactly why following Jesus can be so frustrating!

If you have been following Jesus for some time, you have experienced this struggle; the battle between following American Christianity and following Jesus. If you are new to Jesus and have not yet ran into this

battle, then that's awesome! Christian culture is not necessarily the same thing as Jesus' culture. Sadly, there can be a huge difference between the two.

Christian Culture

or Jesus Culture?

t- involved in programs, and possibly daily prayer and Bible reading; maybe. Now, these are all things a Jesus follower can do, but notice they are all outward. As scary as it sounds, it is entirely possible to do everything listed above and not follow Jesus. We need something deeper than these outward expressions.

Christian culture is listening to Christian music, watching wholesome movies, reading Christian books, wearing Christian shirts, going to Church on Sundays, being

When the Holy Spirit showed up in Acts 2, he immediately IMPACTED the CULTURE of every Jesus follower. While formerly afraid and hesitant, the followers of Jesus suddenly became loud and confident in their faith. Love was undeniable among them and the work of God was observable to the outside. It was incredible!

Culture Change

But it did not end in Acts 2. The Spirit continued to fill people and IMPACT CULTURE lone after the beginning. Take Philip for example. Philip, a follower of Jesus, is chased from his home due to persecution. Soon, he finds himself amongst Samaritan people. Samaritans were unclean outsiders to the Jews, and Philip was Jewish. Compelled by the leading of the Spirit, Philp steps right into a culture that clashes with his own, and immediately sets to sharing Jesus. This is Jesus' culture: no boundaries. We are limited, but the Holy Spirit is limitless!

Philip did not travel to Samaria to plant a church of Samaritan Christians. He just happened to be there, and during his time there, Philip preached regardless of the cultural boundaries. Sharing Jesus became a natural expression for Philip. Everywhere he goes, Philip shares Jesus. This is because Jesus has filled Philip's culture or, dare I say it, Jesus had become Philip's culture.

So, let me ask: is Jesus unnatural to you? Is Jesus awkward in your family? Is Jesus out of place amongst your friends and neighbors? Then

let the Holy Spirit overflow your life! The Spirit radically transforms our lives to the core and replaces our American culture with Jesus' culture!

The truth is, we cannot share Jesus on our own. For some of us, sharing Jesus is difficult and uncomfortable. Talking about Him feels unnatural and strained. While others of us, have no problem talking about Jesus and Christian culture, but it comes across as forceful, awkward, and off-putting.

Jesus is our small talk

But when the overflow of the Spirit is brought in, sharing Jesus suddenly becomes seamless, natural, and welcoming! Now, instead of just forcing Jesus into our old culture, we are transformed into a new culture that is entirely different. Our old culture begins to take on the qualities of Jesus' culture, and soon enough Jesus' culture is our culture. Jesus' overflowing presence radically transforms our behaviors, attitudes, lifestyle, and, ultimately, the entirety of our lives!

Our friends, neighbors, co-workers, families, and everyone in our lives need to see Jesus active in their world. They need to see day-to-day Jesus. No longer is Jesus relegated to Sundays, morning prayer, Wednesday nights, etc. No, every second becomes Jesus time. We need the Baptism of the Spirit to IMPACT CULTURE church! We need the Jesus culture!

With love,

Pastor Vern Pastor Ly

Group Discussion

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions with your group.

1. Why can following Jesus tend to be awkward and frustrating?
2. What are your thoughts on Jesus having His own culture? Do you like the idea of Jesus' culture, or does the fact intimidate you? Why?
3. How is Christian Culture not necessarily the same as Jesus' Culture? How can you read the Bible, pray, and attend church and still not be living in Jesus' Culture? How is that possible?
4. Sharing Jesus was natural for Philip. Why? What would make Jesus a larger part of your life? This applies to all of us. You can never have too much Jesus.
5. What would your life look like if Jesus dominated every moment of your day? What do you think would change? Jesus wants to radically transform our culture. How might Jesus transform your home life? Your work life? Your school life?

In 2013, German researches used language and ethnicity as indicators of cultural diversity. The U.S. ranked in the middle, while countries like Chad, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea ranked as the most diverse.

- Adam Hadhazy

Closing Prayer

Close your time together in prayer. Here are a few ideas of what you could pray about based on the topic of today's discussion:

Jesus help us to:

- Have your culture
- Talk more like you
- Focus on you rather than Christian culture
- Wisdom in sharing you
- Be Baptized in the Spirit

Weekly Challenge

This week church, I encourage you to talk about Jesus with someone. This person could be your spouse, your kids, your friends, your church family, your neighbor, etc. The purpose is to become more comfortable with sharing Jesus. The conversation could be as simple as: Isn't it incredible what Jesus did on the cross? Let's just make it our goal to talk about Jesus more.



Questions for Kids

If you have children, here are some questions you can go over with them.

1. What do you think culture is? What does the word mean? You and I both have a culture; its everything we believe, our traditions, the holidays we celebrate, what we value, our morals, how we spend time with our families, etc.
2. Did you know that Jesus has a culture? What do you think Jesus' culture is like? What kind of things does Jesus value?
3. What if you had the same culture as Jesus? What do you think Jesus would do if He was living your life? Do you think your life would look really different? How?

Closing Prayer

Pray together as a family. Here are a few ideas of what you could pray about.

Jesus help us to:

- Love people who are different from us.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit's help
- Invite people to church.

Did you know?

In Asian countries like China, slurping your soup as loud as you can, is considered a compliment!

I bet your parents wouldn't think so. Talk about a culture shock!

THE EXTREME CHALLENGE

Do you have what it takes to conquer this challenge?

This week, your challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to invite 3 friends to church and invite 3 people you're not good friend with to church! Think you can do it? Even if they say no, you are still showing Jesus to them by loving them and inviting your friends into God's house! You can do it!