

Small Group Questions

Part 1: When Faith And Culture Collide

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Read

Daniel 1:1–21; 1 Peter 2:11 –12; 1 Samuel 2:30; and Jeremiah 29: 1–14

Reflect

The Israelites have been taken captive. Daniel along with several other Hebrew best and brightest are chosen to live and train at King Nebuchadnezzar's court. To strip them of their identity, faith and heritage, and get them to assimilate into the Babylonian culture, the king changes their names and provides food and drink considered unclean by the Hebrews. Daniel must decide whether to conform or stand his ground for his faith. In his situation, what would you do?

Pastor Greg offers several thoughts about handling cultural norms that conflict with our faith.

1. We are all aliens in a foreign culture.
 - a. Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in? How have you been pressured to fit in?
 - b. Who or what are you placing your identity in? Where is your primary allegiance?
2. The world/culture we live in is hostile toward the God we serve.
 - a. Have you experienced hostility because of your faith? Explain.
 - i. How did you react? Stay or leave? Grow quiet or very vocal? Do you feel you responded properly?
 - b. Think of instances where you have experienced culture renaming something to make it sound better, to make it seem not so bad. How have you seen beliefs rationalized away?
3. The world/culture is the object of God's plan of redemption and Christ's death.
 - a. When you think of worldly culture, do you automatically think of Christ dying to redeem them? We were there, too.
 - b. In what ways could you show them God's love rather than rejection and condemnation?
4. We are in the business of cultural transformation.
 - a. Do you see Christianity as a tight little community that needs to protect itself? Or as a community that needs to do everything it can to further God's Kingdom? Explain.
 - b. Does the way you live and react to others reflect your beliefs? In what ways could you improve?

What do you do when faith and culture collide?

1. Decide ahead of time where you will take a stand.
 - a. Why is it important to decide your stance before finding yourself in a tempting situation?
 - b. What battles are likely to come up soon for you? Which are worth fighting for?
2. Always be gracious when confronting a hostile culture.
 - a. Daniel could have shown anger or acted self-righteously. He could've caved in and just done what they asked. Yet, how does Daniel handle the situation?
 - b. Has God ever placed you in "exile", but later you realized you were where you were needed?
3. Expect God to reward your efforts.
 - a. How willing are you to go "all in" even if you don't know how you will accomplish your goal?

Respond

What is your next step? Where is God leading you? How can your small group support you and hold you accountable in this?