

6. In their appeal for cultural engagement, the authors use several arguments from Scripture, theology, and history to support their position. After reviewing the arguments below (page numbers refer to the book), which are their strongest/weakest supports, and why? At this point, do you agree or disagree that their appeal for cultural engagement is biblical?

The Creation Narratives: Even after the Fall, the culture-making command to fill and subdue and rule over the earth still stands (Gen. 1:28; 2:15; 3:23). As image bearers, our humanity calls for cultural engagement (pp. 52-53, 65).

Ministry of Reconciliation: Not only have we been reconciled to God, but have been given a ministry of reconciliation, which they interpret as going beyond people to include elements of culture (see pp. 57-58, 65; 2 Cor. 5:18).

Gnostic heresy: The sacred-secular split (which infects the worldviews of many Christians) sometimes is used to rationalize a withdrawal from the culture. It derives from a worldview with more in common with the ancient heresy of Gnosticism than biblical orthodox Christianity (see p. 62).

Incarnation: Rather than remaining withdrawn, aloof or detached, Jesus put on skin and moved into the neighborhood (p. 63; John 1:14). Hence his followers are likewise to be incarnational, in the world but not of the world (John 17:11, 15-16; 1 Cor. 5:9-10)?

Positive influence commanded: God's people are urged to impact culture positively (pp. 63-64, Proverbs 29:2; Jeremiah 29:5-7; Esther 4:14).

History: They site many laudable examples from Christian history of individuals who engaged culture for the benefit of all (pp. 47, 59-61, 72-73).

Sermon Notes

"Shapes and Shapers of Culture"

Various Texts

July 21, 2019

Introduction

Understanding Culture

Critical Reflection instead of _____

Cultural Engagement instead of _____

Conclusion

Growth Group Homework

For the week of 07-21-19

Questions adapted from John Stonestreet & Brett Kunkle, *A Practical Guide to Culture*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, 2017, pp. 58, 73.

Getting Started:

1. What examples can you think of in which Christians have positively impacted culture, even during a very dark time?

Digging Deeper:

2. If you were raised in a Christian home, how were you taught to think about culture? If you weren't raised in a Christian home, how have your thoughts about culture changed since coming to Christ?
3. In the following four passages, what words are used to describe the cultural ideas contrary to God's revelation that are continually coming at us? In each text, how are Christians admonished to respond? How would you describe what that would look like in your life?

Colossians 2:4,8

Romans 12:2

2 Corinthians 10:5

Hebrews 13:9

For Further Study:

Read Stonestreet & Kunkle, *A Practical Guide to Culture*, chap 2-3.

4. Are you more tempted to withdraw from culture or capitulate to it? In what ways?

5. In their argument against cultural withdrawal, the authors use several phrases to describe what this looks like. Read the following quotes, and then ask to what extent do you identify with those descriptions? Are they describing you? Do you agree or disagree with the author's assertion that cultural withdrawal is unbiblical?

Should we "wash our hands and dust off our feet as if we have no responsibility to steward the good things being lost" in the surrounding culture (47)?

Do I "subscribe to the 'caring about culture is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic' sort of thinking" (47)?

Do we tend to "flee from culture [and] withdraw into the safety of the church, take care of our own, and avoid the darkness" (62)?

Is our Christianity a "Let's get out of here so we can stay safe from the evil world until God takes us out of here" sort of religion (63)?

Are we "withdrawing from culture into Christian fortresses to avoid the evils of the world?" (71)

"Too many Christians, especially in the wake of all of the recent cultural shifts, think it's hopeless to engage culture. 'It's all over,' they say. Some spiritualize their surrender by suggesting the *culture-changing* business gets in the way of the *people-loving* business. ... Others retreat, looking for safety. They believe that Christians should get out of the way and wait for God's judgment. 'We' tried to warn 'them,' but 'they' didn't listen. So 'we' must protect our families, not to mention ourselves." (68)