

## Compelling Portrait Part 2: Connections

**Objective:** To challenge us to engage our culture for Jesus without becoming like our culture.

**Read together:**

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"*

*15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.*

*16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

**Matthew 3:13-17**

*Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

**I Peter 2:11-12**

- What is the hardest thing about connecting with someone with whom you have nothing in common? What are one or two things you can do to make a connection?
- Have you ever stopped to consider why Jesus was baptized? According to the sermon, what was the reason for Jesus' baptism?
- In your experience, do most Christians isolate themselves from our culture, do they condemn our culture, or do they adopt the culture to the point of being indistinguishable from it? What is the danger of each? Is one worse than the other? Do you have a tendency towards one of those responses?
- Why do you think most Christians find it so challenging to speak truth to our culture while loving and serving the people who make up that culture?
- Why do you think our culture has such a difficult time hearing the message of the church? Is any of that difficulty our (Jesus followers) fault?
- How do we connect with people in our culture so that we can show them Jesus without becoming a part of a culture that rejects Jesus?

**Final Thought:** Jesus engaged his world without becoming like it and he calls us to do the same.

**This Week:** Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you the wisdom and courage to engage our culture without becoming like it.

