

The Push and Pull of Modern Culture: How Christians Remain Poised and Gospel-Focused Under the Pressure of Current Cultural and Social Secularization

Ps. 11:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5

Timothy Keller, in his book, *Every Good Endeavor*, writes, "Everyone knows that things in this world are seriously out of whack. No one claims that his or her own life is as it should be, let alone the whole world. There is something wrong within us. Nothing ever seems to make us happy or fulfilled except in the most fleeting way. There is also wrong among us. The world is filled with poverty, war, suffering, and injustice. Something seems to have knocked the whole world off balance. But what is it? Who deserves the blame? And what is the solution?"

The main being asked today by Christians is this:

Ps. 11:3 "If the foundations are destroyed, is there anything the righteous can do?"

HOW DO CHRISTIANS REMAIN POISED and GOSPEL_FOCUSED under the Pressure?

Scripture gives us our guide. Scripture, as the Holy Spirit guides us, will walk us through. 2 Timothy 3 and 4 are two chapters that will inform our hearts and minds on this issue.

1. **Understand the Context of this Culture (2 Timothy 3:1-9)** – "perilous, difficult" - "*Difficult(furious) times* are times when a Christian hardly knows which way to turn or what to do. He has to live under a constant sense of hindrance and difficulty of one sort or another." (Internal pressures and External pressures)
 - ◆ **1 Tim. 4:1** "Now the Spirit expressly states that in later times some will abandon the faith to follow deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons,"; ***This is not new, it only feels new to us.***

A. Perilous times began in the garden (Gen. 3:1) when Satan said to Eve, "Did God actually say...?" This is the beginning of secularization

B. Perilous times continued through man's self-centeredness

2 Tim. 3:2-5 says... We've never seen a civilization so fixated on SELF

Kent Hughes described the people here as "**Having switched their souls' gravity from God to themselves, they in effect wrapped their arms around themselves in a loving embrace.**"

Joshua 24 and Judges 1-2

Joshua made a stand to serve the Lord no matter the cost, but the generations who came after him did not take God at this word, did not obey His voice and compromised. We see this played out in our culture, but also in our homes.

We ask again: "If the foundations are destroyed, is there anything the righteous can do?"

2. **Invest Your Life in the Culture with a Gospel-Focus (3:10-4:5)**

A. **By living a life for Christ that could be emulated no matter the cost (3:10-13)**

B. **By living and believing the inspired, inerrant Word of God (3:14-17)**

C. **By sharing Jesus clearly, patiently, boldly and incarnationally (4:1-5)**

God may be calling you to go to Calgary (to be one of the 10k prayer warriors); God may be calling your LIFE Group to reimagine how can invest time and resources into this community; God may be prompting you this morning to pray and participate in our VBS coming up soon; God may be calling you to go across the street to a neighbor and get to know them.

Conclusion: I want to close this message out with a reminder and challenge from **Jeremiah 29**. God allowed his people to be taken into captivity to discipline them and teach them. There were two prophets who told them not to unpack, but God told Jeremiah to write a letter. The letter said, "I, the Lord, have sent you into exile: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. BUT seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."

If you want to make the biggest impact on this culture, don't criticize, complain or run away...**PRAY** for the people, **invest** in them and **lift up** the name of Jesus every chance you get!

Takeaway Questions for Application:

1. What areas of culture do you see as helpful to your walk with God and what areas might be pulling you away from the Lord?
 2. What steps are you taking to guard against the pull of culture?
 3. How can you and others, together, make an impact for Christ as culture-influencers?
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