

September 24th, 2023

“Living in the Midst of our Culture!”

THE VISION “To relationally **RESTORE, RAISE UP**, and **RELEASE** disciples of Jesus Christ .”

THE MISSION “We will create Biblical disciples in relational environments.” (**Matthew 28:19-20**)

WHAT IS A CULTURE?

- The characteristic features of everyday existence (*such as diversions or a way of life*) shared by people in a place or time.¹

WHAT IS AN OFFENSE?

- Properly, “the movable stick or trigger (‘trigger’) of a trap, trap-stick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall” (a stumbling block, occasion of stumbling).²

Hebrews 12:1–3 (NIV) *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”*

AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS AND CULTURE BUILDER...

1. I will abide in the Lord Jesus and do what He says.

- Have you ever experienced bitterness in a close relationship? The longer we hold on to hurt and offense, the more control it has over us.

John 15:9-12 (NIV) *“⁹As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. ¹⁰If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in His love. ¹¹I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (NIV) *“⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails.”*

2. I will choose to forgive and receive forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 (NIV) *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Colossians 3:13 (NIV) *“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*

3. I will walk in the wisdom God has made available to me.

James 3:13-18 (ESV) *“¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who*

¹ Definition of *culture* taken from Merriam-Webster.com

² Definition of *offense* taken from Strong’s Greek Lexicon #4625. You can check out for yourself the definitions of the Greek & Hebrew in the Bible using the online concordances at BlueBible.org, BibleGateway.com, and Biblehub.com.

make peace.

4. I will be committed to following Jesus, committed to being changed by Jesus, and committed to the mission of Jesus.

Matthew 4:19 (ESV) *And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

CLOSING:

Ephesians 4:11–16 (NLT) *¹¹Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹²Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. ¹⁶He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

**As a church, we will choose to abide, forgive, walk in wisdom,
and live as disciples of Jesus together!
This will allow us to build and live in a culture that is not easily
offended.**

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: **Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2; Luke 10:25-36.**

Ice Breaker: You get to choose one or the other 😊 . Would you rather listen to rock & roll or country? Would you rather eat at McDonald's or Burger King? Are you a morning person or a night owl?

Questions:

1. What from the sermon was challenging or insightful to you? Share a passage or statement that stood out to you.
2. Read both **Matthew 5:13-16** & **1 Peter 2** twice. What do these passages say about living in the midst of culture? What stands out to you as you read them?
3. When have you experienced people who love Jesus being "*salt and light*" in the culture? What was memorable or inspiring about it?
4. Read **Luke 10:25-36**. Help each other understand the significance and background of the characters in the parable Jesus told. What does living with compassion, sacrificial love, and not compromising key kingdom of God principles look like in the world you live in? What challenges do you face doing this? What are ways you want to grow? What help, resources, encouragement, and/or partnerships do you need?
5. What are you learning about yourself and your world as you consider the topic of being unoffended and offended? How are you thinking about or responding to situations differently?

Resources:

- "*Unoffendable*" by Brant Hansen
- "*Forgiveness*" by June Hunt
- "*Humility*" by Andrew Murray

Passages for Next Week, "The Gospel Happens to be Offensive!": **Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 2.**