



Walking with God in a Confused Culture

1 Peter 3:8-18

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“The world” that we are going into today though, I believe, is very confused about who God is and who Christians are. George Barna released a study on what Americans believe when it comes to God and the Bible:

Barna Stats

- Millions of people (1 out of 12) believe that Joan of Arc was Noah’s wife.
- **God** - 9 out of 10 Nine adults believe in “God.” However, only six out of ten believe in the God of the Christian Bible— a deity who is all-knowing, omnipresent, has unlimited power, created the universe.¹
- **Jesus** - 60% claim to be Christian, but only 45% believe that He is alive today (Barna). By The way, in just one decade, the number of those professing to be a Christian has decreased by 15%.
- **Bible** - 91% of the households in America have a Bible, but less than 1/3 believe that it is accurate.
 - BUT – only 20% (including those claiming to be Christians) have read the entire Bible.²
- 10 percent of the adult born-again population currently possess a biblical worldview.³

From 1 Peter 3:8 - 18, we are going to look at 3 things:

1. BE ENGAGED - We are called to be actively involved!

- a. Language - 1 Peter’s language shows engagement in a culture.
- b. Walk with our heads up – not hiding. Fully present!
 1. Walk ready, expecting an opportunity – you have Hope and an answer for the hope.
 - a. When we walk with God, there is always opportunity. (Eph 5:16)
 - b. Look at Jesus
 2. There is nothing more exciting than seeing God provide an opportunity and then place you right in the middle of it.
- c. What holds us back? (What keeps us from being engaged)?
 - i. **Fear** –
 1. Persecution – labeled, mocked, made fun of...

¹ Barna, George (2016-09-13). America at the Crossroads: Explosive Trends Shaping America's Future and What You Can Do about It (Kindle Locations 283-284).

² Ibid Kindle Locations 691-692.

³ Ibid Kindle Location 629

- a. 1 Peter 4:12 “Don’t be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you.”
 - i. When you walk with God, this will happen.
 - ii. **Be concerned if you are not experiencing it.**
- b. This is rooted in pride – “How will this make me look?”
- c. Loss of relationship – We are so hungry and desperate for friendship that it causes us to compromise all other areas of our lives.
 - i. **WARNING! -- A misplaced desperation creates a misplaced dependence --**
 - ii. This causes us to do what Leslie Newbigin describes as “domesticating the gospel”.⁴

2. BE EQUIPPED – 1 Peter 3:15

- a. Defense – Greek word *apologia* – verbal defense, a reasoned argument or statement. One of our greatest defenses is THE WORD!
- b. Know His Word
- c. Know His Voice – “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27.
- d. Know His People – Church/Body of Christ
- e. Application – use it or lose it. (James 1:3, Psalm 34:8)

3. Etiquette

- a. 1 Peter 3:15, 16
- b. We don’t separate the messenger from the message very well
- c. How do we present:
 - i. **Gentleness** – not forced or coerced.
 - ii. **Respect** - Respect is looking at another person and seeing the face of God, because He made them. Because of this, we treat them the way that God treats us. God treats us as a person to love, not a project to manage.
 - 1. People are not projects! When we treat them as projects, we elevate ourselves above them -

Conclusion

God has COMMISSIONED you to join HIM in the most important work that you could ever do – walking with God in HIS mission.

Application Questions:

- As you consider these 3 areas, let’s ask ourselves:
 - Are we Engaged? - Are we looking for opportunities?
 - Are we Equipped? - Do we know how to share the gospel? Do we know His Word?
 - How is our Etiquette - Are we welcoming? Are we gentle and respectful?

⁴ Newbigin, Lesslie (1989-10-30). The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (p. 152).