

The Basics of Christian Culture

I. Introduction

- A. We may have all come from Adam and Eve, but we are not alike.
- B. "Christian culture" does not all Christians the same.
- C. God called a family (Abraham's family) and made a nation out of it (Israel), He allowed many differences.
 - 1. No two tribes were alike, but they learned, under God, how to function as a unit.
 - 2. Even during their wanderings in the wilderness, they maintained their distinctive differences.

II. A Chosen Generation

- A. At Calvary, Jesus introduces us to an entirely different culture than the one into which we were born.
 - a. **Deuteronomy 7:6-7** You are holy people who belong to the Lord your God. He has chosen you from all the people on earth to be his very own. ⁷ The Lord did not care for you and choose you because there were many of you—you are the smallest nation of all.
 - b. **Ephesians 1:4** That is, in Christ, he chose us before the world was made so that we would be his holy people—people without blame before him.
 - c. **John 15:16** You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and produce fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name.
- B. We must be born to this Christian culture.
 - a. **John 3:3-7** Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot be in God's kingdom." ⁴ Nicodemus said, "But if a person is already old, how can he be born again? He cannot enter his mother's womb again. So how can a person be born a second time?" ⁵ But Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born from water and the Spirit, you cannot enter God's kingdom. ⁶ Human life comes from human parents, but spiritual life comes from the Spirit. ⁷ Don't be surprised when I tell you, 'You must all be born again.'
 - b. **Romans 7:18-19; 24-25** Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me—I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is earthly and sinful. I want to do the things that are good, but I do not do them. ¹⁹ I do not do the good things I want to do, but I do the bad things I do not want to do. ²⁴ What a miserable man I am! Who will save me from this body that brings me death? ²⁵ I thank God for saving me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So in my mind I am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful self I am a slave to the law of sin.
- C. Just as God chose Israel to demonstrate His righteousness to the nations of the world, He has chosen the Christians of this day for a similar purpose.
 - a. **Acts 1:8** But when the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.

- b. **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
- c. **John 17:16** They don't belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world.

III. A Royal Priests

- A. Three times in the Bible, God declares us to be priests unto Himself.
 - 1. Future tense—**Exodus 19:6** you will be my kingdom of priests and a holy nation...
 - 2. Present tense—**1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession...
 - 3. Past tense—**Revelation 1:6** He made us to be a kingdom of priests...
- B. The job of the priest is to minister unto God and speak for the people.
 - 1. We hold the honor of being a kingdom of priests who also function as kings.
 - 2. We are not like others; God has set us apart unto His service.
 - 3. We, like Israel's Levites, are set apart and made a distinct culture to perform our duties better.
- C. The theme of our Savior's great prayer of intercession was for our sanctification.

John 17:16 They don't belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world.
- D. Jesus did not come to destroy the existing culture of His day. He did offer a behavior standard that was much higher than the normal standard at that time.
 - 1. Jesus taught that the motivations of the heart (the reasons we do things) were more important than the what we actually do.
 - 2. He argued that since thoughts come before action, we need to control our desires rather than try to limit our actions.

IV. A Holy Nation

- A. Peter believed that we have become a "HOLY NATION" (1 Peter 2:9).
 - 1. Other translators call this:
 - "a dedicated nation" (New English Bible).
 - "A consecrated nation" (Twentieth Century New Testament)
 - 2. This demands a different lifestyle.
 - 3. **Romans 6:19; 22** I use this example because this is hard for you to understand. In the past you offered the parts of your body to be slaves to sin and evil; you lived only for evil. In the same way now you must give yourselves to be slaves of goodness. Then you will live only for God. ²² But now you are free from sin and have become slaves of God. This brings you a life that is only for God, and this gives you life forever.
- B. Many believers have only added Jesus to their culture, but the Bible says Jesus came to start His own culture.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not inherit God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. Those who sin sexually, worship idols, take part in adultery, those who are male prostitutes, or men who have sexual relations with other men, those

who steal, are greedy, get drunk, lie about others, or rob—these people will not inherit God's kingdom. ¹¹ In the past, some of you were like that, but you were washed clean. You were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

C. Two things must accompany this written truth for it to be effectual.

1. First, it must become alive in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
2. Second, it must be obeyed in our lives.

V. A People for God's Own Possession

- A. The Greek word that is translated "God's own possession" in Peter's call to holiness (1 Peter 2:9) does not mean odd or weird. It means to possess.
- B. Titus, Chapter 2 gives a clear command to live the Christian culture. The instructions are divided by age.
- C. The older men (Titus 2:2)
- D. The older women (Titus 2:3)
- E. Young women (Titus 2:4,5)
- F. Young men (Titus 2:6-8)
- G. Slaves (servants) (Titus 2:9-10)
- H. Grace to live in a Christian culture in the midst of a worldly culture has been given to us. Anyone who has responded in faith has become part of that Christian culture.
 1. Paul says that this life-grace of God will teach us how to do two things:
 - a) Say "no" to ungodliness and worldly desires
 - b) To live self-controlled, decent and godly lives in this present age (Titus 2:12).