

# HOLY CULTURE

**1 Peter 1:13–16** “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

“Ms. Kristal loves God” is what one of our kiddos said when talking about their classes on Sunday. They continued on and I had to go back to that. “Wait, what do you mean “Ms. Kristal loves God? How do you know that?” Braelyn smiled, “She just does.” Jordan and I looked at each other and smiled and she continued on. She’s left an impression on the kids regarding her relationship with God. Not what she knows about God, but how she feels towards him. There’s a “Kristal Culture”, if you will, that’s she’s created. Interesting. I’m not trying to embarrass her, and anytime you thank her for something, she always gives thanks to God (y’all notice that). That’s another part of the “Kristal Culture.” Okay, I’m done embarrassing her. She’s not the only one here like that, but I like taking about different individuals from time to time, because not only do we want them to hear our appreciation, but it encourages others. It makes this all real. It’s not in theory. It’s happening right now. We all need to have a culture created by God.

Today we’re talking about creating a “Holy” culture.

- Holy: we talked about it last week. It all begins with God and branches out. Today we’ll talk about our response and responsibility to God’s “holy call.”
- Culture: the word isn’t used in the Bible, but it’s everywhere.
  - Culture - “[Middle English, cultivated land, cultivation, from Anglo-French, from Latin *cultura*, from *cultus*, past participle] 15th century” From Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary
  - Culture - First recorded in 1400-50; late Middle English: “tilling, place tilled,” from Anglo-French, Middle French, from Latin *culture* “cultivation, agriculture, tile, care.” From dictionary.com
  - Definitions: *“the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular group of people, as a social, ethnic, professional, or age group (usually used in combination):”* **or** *“the shared beliefs, behaviors, or social environment connected with a particular aspect of society:”* In the context of Anthropology it is understood as *“the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.”*
- God always has expectations.
  - He wants His children to behave in a way that mirrors, or seeks to mirror, His goodness. I’ve decided to hold off on visiting numerous passages dealing with God’s expectations, but suffice it to say that you see it throughout the Bible. In fact, it’s a bit overwhelming when you looking at the Bible through a lens seeking passages that deal with the principle of God’s people living holy lives. Think about it this way - God made mankind in His image. Think about how Israel was God’s servant in the world. Think about how the church is the temple of God. Think about how Jesus shines through His people. In a world of darkness and sin - we are supposed to shine as pure lights. So, we could go from passage to passage, but we would be saying the same thing over and over again. I’m not looking at any particular sin this

morning - we'll talk about different aspects of life as time goes on. Today we're looking at principle and some of the most practical areas in life we need to be mindful of.

**In the World, not of the World:** **John 17:14–17** "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."

- Does the world ever hate you? Have they every seen anything to hate? Do you need the world to love you?
- Do we realize the world is in darkness? Do you remember that people in darkness are ignorant many times? Do you know that we get pulled into their darkness without realizing it?
  - Every get pulled into political discussions?
  - Every get pulled into discussions surrounding social issues?
  - When is the last time you went to the scriptures before speaking up? When's the last time you jumped on the wagon before really thinking it through? Jordan doesn't like me saying certain things are "common sense" and today, especially, she's right on. What's common thinking is typically not in line with God's way of thinking. I told you all recently how I read through a book describing the "culture" of the 2nd century Christians. Let me sum it all up this way: they were odd balls to Roman culture. They stood out.
- Brethren, I'll be honest: I've seen Christians get wrapped up in political and social discussions. They are saying things out of ignorance, but do so with such confidence. Why? Because they are going with the flow. I wish I could say it all comes from those outside the body, but many times they're parroting other Christians who have, out of ignorance, bought in to the what they hear on the radio or read on line. I hear Christians using lingo and phrases that we hear all around us from popular culture and I don't think they're even aware. Or they do and they believe the world is "on to something." It's almost worse, because they have the ears of their Christian peers. Their thoughts, which are shaped by their culture, are now infiltrating our lives. Marriage roles aren't being outright challenged, but it's how we speak to one another. Parenting apparently has been wrong for thousands of years - don't know if you knew that. Discipline is interesting to watch these days. Brethren - discipline your kids. How we view authority figures and leaders. It's not good. It's funny, because you have a whole "conservative" party that doesn't hesitate cursing at our countries leaders. If that's what it means to be conservative you can count me out.
- Not all culture is bad. We're all part of the culture. We do not live in a vacuum. But, there are things we are to be aware of and it doesn't happen without a purposeful mindset. You have to be critical thinkers. Do you see what's happening in America? Our moral compass is broken. Many times I feel like I'm living in a dream, but then again, that's what you get with the world. God will allow people who do not want to acknowledge Him to go their own way and He will "give them up." **Romans 1**. Many times we fail to see, as Jesus points out, that what's behind the world and their wisdom is the evil one.
- **Romans 12:1–2** "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

- The most immediate source that we have, regarding holiness, is God's word. His word will help us separate ourselves. His word will teach us how to rely on Him through prayer. His word will remain in our hearts and minds. This is truly a game changer.

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- Peter had to go one and say that, didn't he? Just when you thought everything was good . . . and then he calls you to this standard. But, look at it from his point of view: how could he not? I don't mean that in the sense of he was forced to give Christians some command that he himself cringed over. I know you don't believe that. That was an inspired goal, but it was one I believe he gladly accepted and worked toward. No one can be holy like God is, but when you see the holiness of God, how can you not strive for it. How could Peter, after being graced with a few years of perfection, not strive for it. After seeing goodness face to face. How could you not strive for it? Forced into holiness? Never. It was a gift from God.
- Do you stand out? Are you set apart at work? Are you set apart at home? What if you're struggling with it all?

**What do I do?** 1 Peter 2:9-10 "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

- What if you're struggling with holiness? What if there are things in your life that are of the world and you struggle letting them go?
  - Proverbs 18:1 Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.
- This scripture reminds me of something: we're a race. We're a priesthood. We're a nation. We're a people. What do I mean? It's not just "you", but "we". You don't have to walk this alone. You shouldn't be walking it alone. You need to walk alongside those who walk towards Christ. You know, the further away you are from God, the less like Him you are. The closer you are to holiness, the more holy you become. Wouldn't it make sense to walk by holy people? I'm not trying to pass over the importance of praying for help and going to God's word so you'll know what He expects and to remind you of who you are, but there's another practical life line that God has given you.
- Others will help you with:
  - Humility
  - Commitment
  - Courage
  - Patterns/Behaviors (not only see them, but learn them)
  - Hosea 10:12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that He may come and rain righteousness upon you.
    - What do you want the culture of your home to look like?
    - What do you want the culture of the church to look like?
    - What do you want to bring to the table at the work place?

- Is there something in your life you'd like to remove or introduce?

**2 Timothy 2:19–21** "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work."