



Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

Living as God's Child: Two Cultures

Charles Halley, in his book *The Heart of the Matter: Changing the World God's Way*, defines discipleship for both the church and the individual as the process of exchanging a world in which we are at the center for a world in which God is at the center. (Page 14)

This happens when the Holy Spirit connects us to Christ through Holy Baptism. To be a disciple is to follow Christ—through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Halley suggests that as we live in this world we are constantly confronted by two cultures which are very different: **the culture of this world** which is in sharp contrast to **the culture of the kingdom of God**.

Halley notes, “Not only did Jesus show the sharpness of kingdom contrasts in His teachings, He demonstrated that the values of the two worlds are actually inverted! Look through a glass prism, and what happens? Usually, you can see an upside-down image of what you expected. By using paradoxes—seeming contradictions—Jesus held up a prism and exposed the upside-down nature of what the world values as opposed to what He values.” (Page 18)

- What is it that the Christian values highest above all?
- How is this different from what the world values above all?

What do the following passages say about the differing values of the world and the kingdom of God?

Isaiah 55: 8-9

Mark 8: 35

Matthew 20: 16

Matthew 23: 11

Luke 14: 11

Which worldly values do Christians find most difficult to reject? What proof can you offer that supports your answer?

There are, of course, those who try to accommodate the world's values with God's values. It doesn't work—it never works. What are the two things Jesus mentions in the following passages that confront us as we live in this world?

Stewardship Prayer

Lord, You are the owner of everything. All that I have is a gift from You. Your generosity is overwhelming.

Yet, my life is often a poor reflection of Your goodness. I have been selfish and stingy. I haven't sacrificed freely and eagerly. I easily fall into following worldly values.

I need Your grace and forgiveness. By the power of Your Spirit, lead me to give myself first and completely to You.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

- Mark 10: 17-23
- Luke 9: 59-62

St. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that we are a new creation in Christ. What does that mean for us as we reflect on the tension between the world’s values and God’s kingdom values?

- Romans 12:1-2

A pastor wrote the following in the newsletter to the congregation he serves:

The truth is that in Baptism God crucified our sinful nature, buried us with Christ and raised us into new life. The Bible makes it clear that these benefits of Baptism are God’s doing. Our sanctification is also God’s work, which He affects through Baptism to conform us to the image of His Son...Baptism is always something to which we can daily return in genuine sorrow over our sins and in true faith that God has indeed redeemed us righteous in His sight through the life, death and resurrection of His Son.

What encouragement does Baptism give us as we live in the tension between the values of the world and the values of God’s kingdom?

As we live in Christ we are empowered to serve. What do the following passages say about this service to our neighbor?

Galatians 5:13

Romans 12:10 (list two)

Romans 15:7

Romans 15:14

Colossians 3:13

Ephesians 5:21

Romans 16:16

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Galatians 6:2

How can I better keep focused on kingdom values and resist the world’s values?

Closing: Close with a prayer asking God to give us courage to live as His children in a world that constantly tempts us to live according to its values.



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