



DATE	April 5, 2019
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Culturally Engaged; Biblically Unyielding
SERIES	Your faith matters. In fact, it's so important to God that He's given you useful tools, situations and opportunities He wants to use to perfect your faith. You just have to jump. What are you willing to jump into or out of, so God can perfect your faith?

The influence of culture in our lives is an occurrence that pre-dates even Babylonian times. In fact, we can learn from Daniel – a Babylonian captive - how to lovingly engage in our culture without yielding our identity in Christ.

1. We are instructed by God to live in this world and not of it, or to use Pastor David's metaphor: to be a fish in a saltwater culture but to not become salty. Read what the Bible says about living in our world: Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:2; and 1 John 2:15-17. Why is it so important to not become salty when our culture would tell Christ-followers that we are over-zealous; overreacting; overly conservative?
2. In order to live in our world but not become like it, we must be resolute in our hearts to fear the Lord Jesus. What does this word *fear* mean? Read what Proverbs 9:10 says about the fear of the Lord. Discuss the difference between fear producing reverence and obedience vs. fear resulting in terror of punishment.
3. Name a few practical ways in which we can put on lenses to see the world God's way. How is this fearing the Lord?
4. How can you relate to Daniel (*Daniel 1*) and the challenges he faced in his circumstances and his faith? How can privilege/opportunity subtly confuse a person's faith?
5. Current cultures try to rename us, but God is very clear about our identity. Discuss your favorite verses about who God says you are (i.e.: Psalm 139: 13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:12, etc.). How did Daniel celebrate his identity in Jesus while still being engaged and respectful in a culture that was trying to rename him? How can we emulate Daniel while still being gracious/submissive to those in charge?
6. When looking at our own individual spheres of influence, what are some ways we can change our culture instead of condemning or conforming to it?
7. King Nebuchadnezzar tried to create a new normal for Daniel by requiring him to eat food that had been dedicated to other gods. In what ways is our current culture trying to create a new norm for Christ-followers? And what tactics does our culture use to try isolate Christ-followers from each other? List practical ways you can graciously combat these tactics.

Prayerfully look at any area in which you are allowing yourself to be renamed, changed, or isolated by our world today. Ask God to show you what steps you can take to be engaged culturally but unyielding biblically.