



SESSION 1

INFLUENCING CULTURE

Theme: God calls believers to show His glorious greatness to a culture mired in sin and darkness.

I. _____ by God's Word (1 Peter 2:1–3)

A. Make a _____ from sin (2:1)

Peter called for a radical separation in all settings and from any kind of evil actions, _____, _____, and _____ of others.

B. Have an _____ for the Word (2:2, 3)

Believers should _____ God's Word because it causes them to grow as believers, becoming _____ from and effective influences on their culture.

II. Shine Through _____ Connections (1 Peter 2:4–8)

A. Connected to _____ (2:5)

The _____ lives in all true believers and spiritually connects them to form a _____ to God.

B. Connected to _____ (2:4, 6–8)

Our lives should " _____ " with Christ's _____.

III. Represent God as _____ (1 Peter 2:5, 9, 10)

A. Represent God as _____ priests (2:5)

Sinners need believers to be holy priests so they can see the _____ of living according to their _____.

B. Represent God as _____ priests (2:9, 10)

To live as God's royal priests means we proclaim the _____ of Christ.

IV. Live as _____ (1 Peter 2:11, 12)

A. Reject the _____ (2:11)

Peter begged the scattered believers to abstain from the fleshly passions that _____ and the _____.

B. Reflect _____ (2:12)

Peter instructed his readers to keep their _____ honorable before the world.



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read 1 Peter 2:1–3.

What attitudes or actions prevalent in today's culture do you need to lay aside from your life?

How might you increase your longing for God's Word?

THURSDAY

Read 1 Peter 2:4, 6–8.

How do your words and actions show others that Christ is your foundation?

In what way is Jesus a stumbling stone to unbelievers (2:8)? How does Jesus offend today's culture?

TUESDAY

Read 1 Peter 2:5.

How did Peter describe the spiritual connection all believers share with each other?

How might this connection with other believers improve your ability to influence culture?

FRIDAY

Read 1 Peter 2:5, 9, 10.

What does it mean for believers to live as holy priests in the world (2:5)?

What reasons do we have for proclaiming God's greatness to the world (2:9, 10)?

WEDNESDAY

Read Romans 12:1, 2.

What does it mean to be holy and acceptable to God?

In what ways do believers conform to today's culture? Pray that you will let God's Word transform your mind so that you won't conform to the world.

SATURDAY

Read 1 Peter 2:11, 12.

In what ways do you keep your conduct honorable among unbelievers?

What do you need to do to make your life more distinct from the world's culture?



Tough Questions Answered



How is it possible to be separate from the world but still engage with culture?



It can be difficult to live counter to the world's culture when you're living in the middle of it. We want to influence the culture for Christ. But if we engage too much, it's easy to start compromising our values. That's why God calls us to live holy lives, separate from the world (1 Peter 1:15, 16). Yet, the call to live separate from culture is not a call to withdraw from it.

Believers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13, 14). Salt seasons and preserves food by coming in contact with it. Similarly, believers must engage with the world in order to influence it. And in order to reflect Christ's light into the dark, sinful world, believers must maintain a presence in the world's culture. If believers lose their "saltiness" (their influence) or hide their light by blending into culture instead of letting Christ's light shine through their lives, they fail to fulfill God's purpose for them.

The call to live separate from culture is not a call to withdraw from it.

At the same time, we must be careful when engaging with culture (Rom. 12:2). Paul reminds us not to get sucked into the world's ways or pressured into compromising Biblical truth. Living a holy life begins by renewing your mind. Consider the things you feed your mind. What do you watch, read, and listen to? Where do you go and who do you hang out with on a regular basis? Continually evaluate these things against God's Word. This doesn't mean you can't have friends who are unbelievers. It means you have to be willing and strong enough to say no when people try to persuade you to believe or do things you know are contrary to God's will.

Sometimes it seems easier to fit in with the world than to live separate from it. No one said it would be easy! Jesus told His followers that they would have trouble in this world (John 16:33). But it's not impossible. When you feel pressured to fit in, rely on the Holy Spirit. Only by His power can you live separate from the world's values while still living within the world's culture.



Influencers: Biblical Guide for Engaging Culture

This study provides Biblical answers to present cultural issues. Through this study, you will gain confidence in becoming a godly influencer on your culture, pointing people to God's truth and grace.



Time with God

Keep a journal as you work through your Time with God each week. A great way to think through passages and gain insights is to ask yourself simple questions. See the list below and sample questions for each one.

Who?	<i>Who wrote this passage? To whom was it written?</i>
What?	<i>What is this passage about? What happened to the characters in the passage?</i>
When?	<i>When was this passage written? When did the events in the passage take place?</i>
Where?	<i>Where was this passage written? Where did the events in the passage take place?</i>
Why?	<i>Why was this passage written? Why is it organized as it is?</i>
How?	<i>How should this passage affect its readers? How might I live out this passage?</i>

As you answer these questions in a journal, you will begin to see what each passage means and how God wants you to use it.



How to Have Eternal Life

You can know for sure you will spend eternity with God (1 John 5:13). Are you certain you will?

1. First, you must realize you were born a sinner and are guilty of committing sinful acts (Rom. 3:23). Your sin separates you from God because God is holy and without sin. God is also just, meaning He must punish sinners. He cannot ignore or excuse the sins you have already committed. God will condemn sinners to suffer in the Lake of Fire for eternity (Rom. 6:23).
2. Second, there is nothing you could do to make yourself acceptable to God. No amount of good works could ever make up for your sins (Eph. 2:8, 9). You are under the penalty for your sins, and you are helpless to change that fact on your own.
3. Third, God has lovingly provided a way for you to be saved from the penalty for your sins. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to be born as both fully man and fully God. Jesus willingly died on the cross as the holy sacrifice for sinners (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:8, 9). He bore the punishment for sin in the place of sinners. God the Father accepted Jesus' sacrifice for sins. Jesus rose from the dead after three days, victorious over sin and death (1 Cor. 15:20).
4. Fourth, salvation is a gift God offers to you (Rom. 6:23). You can accept the gift of Jesus' payment for your sins by placing your trust in His finished work on the cross (Rom. 10:9, 10). When you place your trust in Jesus alone for salvation, God guarantees you will have eternal life (John 5:24).

If you aren't sure you are saved, place your trust in Jesus Christ right now. You will know for certain that you will spend eternity with Him!