

Taking Your Faith Private



Part 5 – How Should We Live?

Taking Your Faith Private

Once Again...



There is a growing pressure in society for Christians to remain silent and hide their faith. While some of us occasionally encounter this pressure, many of us are unaware of just how far it has spread or how deeply it is engrained in our culture. Some of us have unconsciously bought into the belief that we should keep our faith to ourselves, and most would mistakenly conclude that they came to this belief on their own. This pressure is not accidental nor naturally evolving. It is not something new. It is and has been carefully planned and has its roots going back over six decades. But its greatest effects have yet to be felt. This pressure to take our faith underground will only increase during our lifetime.

Taking Your Faith Private

The Series So Far...



Week 1: Stigma and Silence

Week 2: Tolerance and Intolerance

Week 3: What's Wrong With Keeping Silent?

Week 4: Isn't Persecution Good for the Church?

TONIGHT: How Should We Live as Light?

Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to Culture



We often think of our response to culture at a macro level:

Christ against culture.

Christ of culture.

Christ above culture.

Christ transforming culture.

Christ and culture in paradox.

Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to Culture



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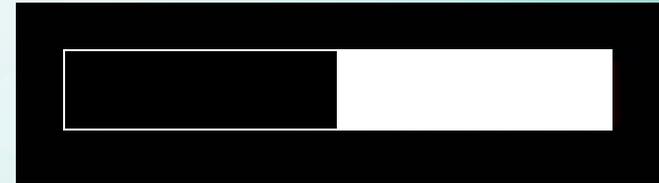
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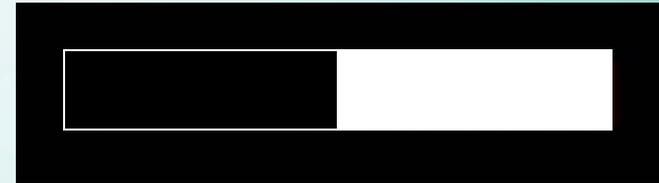
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Responding to Culture



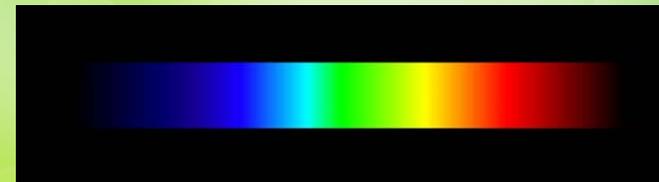
We often think of our response to culture at a macro level:

- Christ against culture.
- Christ of culture.
- Christ above culture.
- Christ transforming culture.
- Christ and culture in paradox.



But our lives in Christ, as they are lived out in the context of culture day to day, are made up of varying responses:

- Adopt some aspects of culture.
- Transform some aspects of culture.
- Reject some aspects of culture.



Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to the Stigma



There is a growing pressure in society for Christians to remain silent and hide their faith.

- We should not let stigma go unchallenged.
- We cannot accept that it is better for faith to be banished to state-mandated or socially-mandated privacy.

Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to the Stigma



While some of us occasionally encounter this pressure, many of us are unaware of just how far it has spread or how deeply it is engrained in our culture.

- We should be aware of the efforts to privatize faith.
- We should be equipped to educate other believers.

Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to the Stigma



Some of us have unconsciously bought into the belief that we should keep our faith to ourselves, and most would mistakenly conclude that they came to this belief on their own.

- We should think clearly about whether we have put on the “mind of Christ,” or surrendered to “human judgments.” (2 Cor. 2:14-16) Stigma is most effective when it is subtle.

Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to the Stigma



This pressure is not accidental nor naturally evolving. It is not something new. It is and has been carefully planned and has its roots going back over six decades.

- We should be wise about who and/or what we support, culturally and politically, and to what degree the by-product of that support is greater hostility toward public faith.
- We should look inward and backward, and learn from the ways we have added support for a private faith and the alleged neutrality of secularism.

Taking Your Faith Private

Responding to the Stigma



But its greatest effects have yet to be felt. This pressure to take our faith underground will only increase during our lifetime.

- We should prepare our hearts for the persecution that is beginning, and that which is to come.
- We should work to rejoice in our suffering.
- We should keep in mind that our suffering is for a time, that God is sovereign, and that the church is growing in every other part of the non-Western world.

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Matthew 5:9-11



“Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you
and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of
me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward
in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the
prophets who were before you.”

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Matthew 5:13-16



“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

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1 Peter 4:12-14



“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

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1 Peter 3:13-17



“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. ‘Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.’ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”



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