

Come Out of Hiding; You Were Born for This

Many years ago, Jesus went up on a mountain, sat down and spoke to the group He was with, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a basket, but on a candlestick. And it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

We were never meant to be hidden but seen for who we truly are and what we have to give.

The challenge to hide away in the shadows, however, can confront us all too quickly in an often vitriolic cultural climate. The contentious world around us can shut us up, shut us down and cause us to want to go with the flow as to not make waves.

We may not think we are hiding. We might even reason that we are taking the higher road in order to avoid the chaos and the drama. But do you ever find yourself afraid to share your ideas, opinions, beliefs or political views? Do you find yourself keeping quiet in order to protect yourself from retaliation or rejection? Are you superficially conforming to the opinions of others in the workplace to protect your job security or to be accepted within your social networks? Are you fearful of being stereotyped because of the color of your skin, your ethnic background or your generational label? Do you expect to be shut down, held back or forced to choose sides when your desire is to unite?

There is wisdom in not adding to the noise of thoughtless opinion. However, when you feel as though your voice has been

stripped from you or that you have nothing to offer the world around you, you must remember that you were created with a purpose, by design, with a priceless value and a needed contribution.

Jeremiah 1:5 says, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you were born I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” The prophet responds: “Then said I, ‘Ah, Lord God! Truly, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.’ But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am a youth.” For you shall go everywhere that I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces” (Jer. 1:6-8a).

The cultural narrative of devaluation is a ruthless saboteur to individual identity and expression as well as societal health. All we desire—no matter our age, race, gender or beliefs—is to be celebrated and valued for who we are and what we can contribute to our world. This is not selfish or proud; it is part of our created design. Every person wants the freedom to love and be loved for who they are. We were also made to need and partner with one another, celebrating the beautifully diverse facets that together make up God’s favorite creation: humankind.

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