

As a Believer, Have You Been Hiding During This Culture War?

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. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, 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 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 that 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 1:5-8, “‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.’ Then said I: ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, 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 to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces...’”

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.

Our faith commands us to love one another (John 13:34). Beyond this law is the heart that recognizes that the love, value, honor and celebration of our fellow man/woman will not only heal our land but release us to build the kingdom of God as fulfilled, whole, happy and unique representatives of the heart of God.

Science confirms this truth and now proves that our physical brains are wired for love and validation. It’s time for us to come out of hiding. We must refuse to partner with the voices that would tear down, devalue, mock, hate, lie and rob the dignity of our precious humanity.

We must be those brave souls who stop devaluation and choose instead to let our lights of love and truth shine brightly. This is the heart of Jesus personified and meant for every color of skin, every age, gender and party.

Break the silence and let your voice of hope become contagious. Become a catalyst of validation in your world; a spark for positive change; a demonstration of the love of a kind and caring God.

You were born for such a time as this. You were born to shine!

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