

Let's Get Radical

Nine years ago I made this declaration: "I spent the first 50 years of my life trying to be balanced. I want to spend the rest of my life trying to be radical." All history shapers are radical, and I believe it's time for believers everywhere to take on this attribute.

We tend to equate being "radical" with being "extreme," but that is only part of the definition. To be radical means to go to the origin or the root. Thus, a true radical is rooted.

He is the antithesis of the sad person Jesus described in the parable of the sower who "has no root" and "quickly falls away" when persecution comes (Matt. 13:21, NIV). A radical is a "good soil" believer who hears the Word and mixes it with faith, allowing the seed of the Word to literally take root, grow, and produce much fruit (see v. 23).

Jesus called us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. That's radical.

He commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. That's radical.

He said we are to preach the gospel to every person on earth and turn all nations into His followers. That's radical.

Paul was shipwrecked, flogged, and spat on, and his motives were impugned. He lived under constant threat of assassination and was beaten three times within an inch of his life—all for the sake of the gospel. That's radical.

What does it mean to be radical for Jesus today? A true radical is one who defies the whims of his times and calls people back to root realities and root causes.

The need in the body of Christ today is for radicals who are anchored in:

- truth, not conjecture
- grace, not legalism
- faith, not skepticism
- discipline, not indolence
- history, not fads
- hope, not despair.

Most of all, we need radicals who are anchored in Christ and the assurance of His global glory. “We who have fled to Him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to His promise with confidence. This confidence is like a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls” (Heb. 6:18-19, NLT).

I want to be a truly radical follower of Jesus: rooted in Him, extremely in love with Him, extremely devoted to Him and His cause. The acrostic below spells out for me the components of a radical life fully given over to Jesus:

Revelation. True radicals live by revelation drawn from intimacy with Jesus.

Anointing. True radicals are anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Discipline. True radicals retain that anointing by practicing historic Christian disciplines.

Integrity. True radicals are those whose public persona is matched by private purity.

Courage. True radicals follow the truth, speak the truth and call people to the truth.

Anchored. True radicals are anchored in history and hope; in the Word and the Spirit.

Love. True radicals are driven by the love of God at work in them by the Holy Spirit.

The late theological-ethicist Richard Niebuhr observed that the great revolutions in the history of Christianity do not occur by discovering something new. Great revolutions happen, said Niebuhr, when someone takes radically something that has always been there. Martin Luther took the simple gospel message of justification by faith radically. John Wesley took

the simple message of biblical holiness radically. William Seymour took a present-tense encounter with the Holy Spirit radically. Mother Teresa took ministering “to the least of these” radically.

I believe this is the day for us to take Christ’s Great Commission radically. I believe it is the hour for us to go forth with radical faith, radical commitment and radical love and usher in His second coming by making disciples of all nations. We can’t start a revolution by being balanced. Let’s get radical!

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