



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH BONNIE SALA

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Subject: Culture

LIVING COUNTER-CULTURALLY (with Bonnie Sala)

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15

“Are Christians Called to be Counter-cultural?” read the headline of an article penned by Robert Hidalgo. In many Christian circles, the answer would be “Yes, absolutely!” The Bible calls for surrender to God, a life that reflects God-centeredness. That’s a stark contrast to the self-centeredness that drives us as human beings. What we might call “cultural Christianity,” a generally held belief that God exists and that we would do well to know Him has faded away in the West. And knowledge of the God of the Bible has *never* existed in many places of the world.

We have, as Isaiah 53 so aptly put it, “gone astray and turned everyone to his or her own way” (Isaiah 53:6). So it shouldn’t be hard to understand why culture norms lean far from the path given us in the Bible. The visual arts, music, literature and online worlds—all reflect man’s current lost, very lost, condition. The believer may recoil from the darkness, the ugliness and the evil that often marks cultural expression today, but here we would do well to consider the cross.

Robert Hidalgo writes: “There are two sides to the cross. One side is against; the other side is for. All humanity stood against Jesus in that moment. But Jesus was on the side that was for life, for hope, for grace and for our salvation. We stood against Jesus, but He did not stand against us.”

In the cross, we see God’s anger toward sin and God’s love for His creation.

And now the question: “What if, instead of reacting to something or standing against something, we learned how to live for something?” asks Hidalgo. “The life of Jesus and His act of love on the cross was for us, and it powerfully stood against the forces of evil and darkness. Because when you are truly for something, everyone will know what you are against.”

The darkness we find in our culture is not countered by simply banning the objectionable or by staying away. The key to redeeming culture is the *light*. “The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them” Isaiah 9:2 (NASB) explains. Christian, you have seen the Light. It has transformed you. “For you were formerly darkness,” wrote the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:8, “but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.”

Yes, “there are certainly times when we need to protest and stand against what is wrong. There are times when we must cry out against injustice and call for an end to corruption.” But I hope,” Hidalgo concludes, “that’s not *all* we do. I hope we remember the best form of protest is to stand for something better.”¹

In our separation from things that are wrong, have we as believers moved so far away from the offensive that it’s impossible for the lost to brush up against the winsomeness, the peace that passes understanding in the midst of crisis, the hope we have in death? Is there any unbeliever in your life that’s close enough to smell, as 2 Corinthians

¹ Hidalgo, Michael. “Are Christians Called to Be Countercultural.” Relevant. February 18, 2013. Accessed March 14, 2017. <http://archives.relevantmagazine.com/god/practical-faith/are-christians-called-be-counter-cultural>.



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2:15 so beautifully puts it, "...the "pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing"?"

Yes, we may need to stand away from, to stand against, wrong. But may we more so stand *for* Him in whatever culture we live in. May we live lives that acknowledge the need for God's judgment and those that are filled with overwhelming gratitude for His grace. As culture increasingly celebrates the darkness, may we live out the Light. *That's* counter-cultural.

Resource reading: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17