

The Restful Life Influencing Culture

As those who have found hope in Jesus, we can influence the culture around us plagued with hopelessness (Daniel 3:8-30). Rather than withdrawing from or warring against the world around us, we are called to be *salt* and *light* to it (Matthew 5:13-14). The world or culture around us is fertile ground desperately looking for what we have: the Spirit of God in us. And because we carry the Holy Spirit, we can go to and engage the people around us with immeasurable love and grace, pointing them to our Heavenly Father. The world is drawn to God through our good works, which the Spirit empowers us to do.

GET THINGS STARTED

How do you tend to view the world or culture around us? Is your perspective towards our culture more negative or positive? Do you primarily lean towards withdrawing from it, warring against it, or engaging it as an opportunity? What do you believe has shaped your perspective and response to our culture the most?

WATCH THE GROUP VIDEO FOR WEEK 8

GO DEEPER

1. How do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3:16-18 when he orders them to bow down to his golden image? What do they choose to do (and not do), and what would their response look like today in our current social, political, and moral environment?
2. According to Daniel 3:24-25, who enables these three to survive the fiery furnace unscathed, and why is this significant? Where else do we possibly see this kind of appearance in the Old Testament?
3. In Daniel 3:26-30, how does Nebuchadnezzar react to what happens to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego after they are thrown into the fire, and how does this eventually shape their culture in Babylon? Which choices or actions of Jesus followers today have the most or least cultural impact?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What environments has God purposefully placed you in to carry His Spirit into as salt and light? Who specifically in those spheres of influence needs hope, love, and an encounter with Jesus? What do you think it looks like to be salt and light to those people? What can you practically do, and what should you clearly not do? What is your next step to take this week or this month?
2. As *The Restful Life* series wraps up, what phrases or concepts from *Called to Reign*, by Leif Hetland, have had the biggest impact on you? How have those concepts changed your heart and perspective?

PRACTICE IT NOW

As a group, in an attitude and atmosphere of prayer, ask God to give you His heart and perspective towards our current culture. Ask Him to help you *be* and to *have* in His presence before doing. Ask God to show you specifically who you have regular contact with that desperately needs hope and love. And ask Him for the courage and boldness – and for divine strategy – to deliberately interact with them in such a way that they see Jesus in you.

READING THIS WEEK: Chapters 14-16