



The Daniel Dilemma

Chris Hodges

Focus God has called us to set the culture, not reflect the culture. But the culture will impact us if we are not prepared for it.

Fun On separate pieces of paper, write down items that are commonly paired together. For example, salt and pepper or beauty and the beast. Without them knowing any of the items, attach a paper to each person's back. Players must discover who has the other half of their pair by asking yes or no questions.

Review Key Scriptures: Daniel 1:1–16; John 1:14; John 8

1. Culture will always try to change your identity and how you see yourself.

The enemy has a label for you, and we often buy into that script. But God wants to bring us back to the original name, the original identity that He has given to us. When culture shifts, you must know who you are.

2. Culture will try to change your standards.

We don't need to condemn those who don't hold our standards, yet all of us need to grapple with how much of the secular world we will allow in our lives. The enemy will try to get you to compromise what you once believed was right.

3. Culture will try to test you.

The tests are coming. As our society moves away from God, we must stand firm in the middle of it.

4. When culture shifts, we must respond the right way.

Jesus loved people with both grace and truth. Truth without grace is mean. And grace without truth is meaningless. God didn't call us to prove a point. He called us to be effective.

Group Dynamics Idea Take a moment and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal any labels the enemy has attached to us. Encourage participants to repent for believing that lie. Then, listen for God to speak His original name and identity over each person.

Discuss

1. We are called to impact culture, to be a thermostat rather than a thermometer. What are some practical ways you can do this in your arena of influence (workplace, family, neighborhood, school, etc.)?
2. Chris Hodges challenged us to take a deeper look into how much of secular culture we allow in our lives. Why is it important to regularly examine where our standards are? Give room for the Holy Spirit to highlight areas in your life that need to be re-evaluated according to His standards.
3. Do you tend to respond more with grace or with truth? Think of a specific situation where you were tested in your standards. How did you respond? What could you have done differently?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- Our culture is shifting, and the Church must be ready to handle these shifts.
- You CAN stand firm and influence the culture at the same time.
- We are called to love people with grace and truth.
- The most loving work our God does is call us out of our sin.

Prayer

Lord, we want to walk without compromise in the standard You have called us to walk in. Teach us how to genuinely love others where they are and to call them into deeper revelation of Your truth. Would You make us a light to impact and transform this culture? In Jesus' name. Amen.

New Leader Tip Be prepared for a wide spectrum of standards. Keep in mind that each person's journey with the Lord is unique, and some may be at different stages than others. This is a great opportunity as group leader to practice responding in grace and truth. Wherever they are at, encourage them to submit their standards to the Lord and to His Word.