

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: Colossians 4:5-6, Matthew 5:13-16

June 7, 2015

Overview

How do you become relevant in a non-Christian society? This is a very large question that has been around since the beginning of the church. When Christianity first started it was persecuted by both the Jews and Romans. Christianity was basically persecuted by the Jews because of its basis on Jesus, faith and grace rather than works and following rules. It was persecuted by the Romans because it wasn't an approved religion. It was in this setting of being an outlaw religion that the believers were told to be the salt and light of the earth. Sometimes we look at our society (United States) today and believe it is an impossible task to be the salt and light for Jesus with the current intolerance of Christian beliefs. A first century Christian would look at our society and see a tremendous opportunity to be the salt and light given all the freedoms we have today. In the first century there were numerous approved pagan religions, temples set up to foreign gods as well as temple prostitutes. Being salt and light in this setting would have been challenging at the very least. In the United States believers are not being drug before governing bodies and questioned about their beliefs. No one is being flogged for speaking up for Jesus (Acts 5:40).

So how do you speak truth today? Some might suggest it is through compromise. In order to be relevant Christians need to compromise some of their beliefs in order to be the salt and light. Maybe Christians shouldn't take such a strong stance against abortion, gay marriage, drugs, alcohol abuse, etc... Jesus spoke against compromise when He said: "But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" Compromised truth equals no truth at all. Believers were never told to compromise on the truth in order to win non-believers to Christ. Showing grace does not mean compromising truth. Throughout 1 Corinthians 9:20-23 the apostle Paul tries to understand the position of those who are not yet believers. This isn't done by conformity (Romans 12:2), but by understanding. Christians should try spending time understanding the opinions of others rather than just trying to convince non-believers that they are wrong. Being the salt and light of the earth means understanding those around you, not compromising, and finding a balance between grace and truth. Without God this would be an impossible task, but with Him all things are possible.

Bible Study: Colossians 4:5-6, Matthew 5:13-16

1. Discuss what it means to be the salt and light in today's society.
2. I once heard it said that the only thing faster than light is darkness fleeing. Salt is not distinguishable in a pool of saltiness nor is a flashlight effective in a lit room. Christians need to find ways to interact with non-believers. Discuss as a group some ways this can be done.
3. Before being the salt and light to the world believers need to first be the salt and light in their own families. Why is family sometimes the hardest area to be a witness? In what ways can a mother or father who has never been the salt and light to their own family start?
4. What are some of the darkest areas of society (strip club, abortion clinic, etc...)? How can Christians be the salt and light in these areas?
5. Have you ever witnessed to someone with only truth and no grace or have you ever witnessed to someone with only grace without emphasizing truth? How did people respond?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 9:20-23. What value is there in trying to understand a non-believers point of view? How can this help strengthen your ability to witness to them?

7. Sometimes we look at the opposition in our society to Christianity with discouragement instead of opportunity. Throughout history the church has experienced its strongest growth under persecution and opposition. What obstacles are there in our politically correct society to Christianity today? How can these be used as an opportunity?

8. Think of one person you want to become the salt and light of the world to. Take some time to develop a plan to make this happen over the next week, month, or year. Share the starting point of your plan with the group.