

The background features a dark blue color with a faint, glowing grid pattern. Overlaid on this grid are several thin, light blue lines that form a network of interconnected nodes, resembling a molecular or network structure. The overall aesthetic is digital and scientific.

Love...

First, Always, and Never

The Meaning of “Culture”

- “The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group”
- “The characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time”

Merriam Webster

“The Customary Beliefs... The Characteristic Features”

Culture is...

The things we believe and do...

➤ First

➤ Always

➤ Never

1 Corinthians 13:4-6

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.”



What would the culture of my life, my community, my work, my school, and my church become, if I determined to live out the Love-First creed with all the conditions Christ has given to define His love?



In A Culture Where We Choose Christ-Conditioned-Love First,

“Love...

...always protects, always trusts,
always hopes, always perseveres. Love
never fails...”

1 Corinthians 13:7-8a (NIV)



We Must End the Hate Before It's Too Late

- We face a crisis of needing to put Love First. Yet, we have put nearly everything in our lives ahead of this God-ordained priority.
- Not a single historic Christian creed has included what Jesus said was of greatest importance in their doctrinal necessities.
- We know what Christ Conditioned Love looks like, sounds like and feels like. The path forward has been given to us.

John 17:14-18 (NIV)

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

The “Cliff Notes” Version

“In the world but not of the world.”

- Unfortunately, some have used this phrase to stoke a *church vs world* culture war.
- David Mathis has noted that in the John 17 prayer, being “not of the world” is not the destination, but *the starting place*.
- Revise it to, “*Not of the world but sent into the world.*”
- Jesus “Sent His Disciples Into The World.”

We're Not To Rail Against The World; We Are To Race Into It.

- “Social distancing” may be a necessary and even a wise and loving step to stop the spread of a deadly virus.
- But, at the spiritual level, it is knife to the heart of Jesus’ command that we be “salt” and “light.”
- We are to contaminate the world with the amazing and contagious story of the love of Christ that infected our hearts and commissioned our lives.

We Are To Engage The World In A Wise, Gracious, and Attractive Way.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.



We Must Avoid False Dichotomies

2 Corinthians 6:14 (NIV)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

1 Peter 2:11 (NIV)

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul

1 John 2:15-16 (NIV)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

Jude 1:23 (NLT2)

Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives.

Paul Is Clear On This.
We Must Be Wholly Engaged
With Unbelievers
But Not Become Unholy.



1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NLT2)

When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

Someone has Said:

“We are going to church by the thousands and our cities are going to hell by the millions.”



**The Church Is Not A Fortress
From The World.**

We Are Rescuers Sent Into The World.



**We Are Sent In The World To
Be Salt And Light.**



Being Salt And Light In The World Is
Rarely Offensive To Non-believers.
It Is When We, The Elect,
Act Like We Are The Elite That
There Is The Offensive Odor of Arrogance.



So, Give the World a Taste of Jesus.

- "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. (Matthew 5:13)
- Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. (Psalm 34:8)

We Have Been Called To Live The Christ-conditioned Life of Love In A Sin-conditioned World.

- We are aliens in our world's culture.
- We live as transformers of culture.
- We are not militant terrorist attacking culture.
- We willingly follow the Christ as suffering servants.

Three Words About Jesus Four Words About Christians That Light the Way For the World.

- “So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” (John 1:14)
- “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden...In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14,16)

We Need To

Hit Our Knees

And Then

We Need To

Hit The Streets.



Let's Pray This Prayer

Our dear loving Father in heaven, we praise you for lovingly sending your Son into the world to save us. Dear Jesus, we praise you for answering the call from your Father to come into our world. We have seen your Glory as the one and only son. Thank you for loving us that much. Now, you have sent us into our world to rescue those who are “sin sick and sorrow worn,” who hunger for hope. Help us to love others enough to go to them with your love and by the power of your Holy Spirit.

We pray in Jesus name, amen