

Culture Wars #1 **Engaging the Culture**

Word

Scripture Reference

Acts 17:16-34

Discussion Questions

1. Culture is a way of thinking, living or behaving that defines a group of people. It is like the air we breathe; we don't consciously think of it. We only think about it when we are exposed to a different cultural practice. Was there a time in your life when you were shocked by a different culture? Share your experience with the group and how you coped with it.
2. Acts 17:16-34 relates how Paul reacted to the Athenian culture, the center for Greek philosophy and education in biblical times. What disturbed Paul about Athens (v.16)? Why did it provoke the spirit within him? Does ungodliness bother you? How do you react when you see things that are definitely wrong as far as the Word of God is concerned being practiced?
3. As a follower of Jesus Christ, your response to ungodly culture should be disturbance. What are some commonly accepted practices today that should be a cause of distress to God's people? How can you emulate Paul in engaging the culture? Discuss why you should not let the world dictate the culture you live. Talk about practical examples on how you can combat the biblically wrong, worldly cultures you live in today.
4. A Christian's responsibility to culture is to engage it to transform (v. 17-18). Describe how Paul presented his message to his diverse listeners. Discuss how you can help transform the culture in your home, school, or workplace so that the common practices become glorifying to your heavenly Father and edifying to each other.
5. As Christians our expectation when engaging culture is rejection (v. 18). How did the philosophers react to Paul's thoughts? How do you respond when others don't take you or what you say very well? Do you compromise your Christian testimony, or do you show courage by walking away from a situation that displeases the Lord? Share an experience and discuss.

6. A believer needs to be prepared when confronting culture, and part of that preparation is to understand the culture (v. 19-23). Why do you think was the council of the Areopagus interested to hear what Paul had to say? What was Paul's attitude towards these people? How did Paul use his knowledge of the Athenians' "unknown god" to impart his knowledge of the true God (v. 23)? How would you prepare yourself to understand the people you are trying to reach for the Lord?
7. A believer also needs to have strong biblical knowledge to be prepared in confronting culture (v. 24-31). How did Paul describe God to his audience? How did he prove that God was not an idol (v. 29)? What incorrect beliefs do the culture you're a part of have about God? Can you explain to an unbeliever why you believe what you believe? How important is it to have correct biblical foundational beliefs in order to counter the wrong perceptions of God in your culture?
8. Describe the different responses Paul's audience had to his message (v. 32-34). What is the most encouraging response you can get from a person you are sharing the gospel with?

Walk

Unless one's worldview is filtered through a biblical grid, we cannot engage the culture. Do you know your faith enough that you can confidently depend on what the Bible says? What are you doing to wake people of today's culture to the Christian way of life?

Worship & Prayer

Pray for...

- GCCP Christians to live biblically in an ungodly and permissive culture.
- Baptismal candidates to faithfully commit to follow Christ and love His church.
- Healing for Jake Malto, FW, Segundo Yu, Anabelle Uytengsu and BF (sick and depressed due to various troubles).
- Mercy and protection for A.B. and D.O.
- Protection of the Fil-Chi community from abductions and extortions. God's peace to calm the hearts of His people.
- Two Bhutanese pastors to be cleared of all charges against them.

Culture Wars #2
The Asian Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

Colossians 2:6-10, 16-23

Discussion Questions

1. Cite examples of ethnic cultural practices that are neutral, meaning that its practice do not conflict with Bible doctrines. Share with the group some non-neutral cultural practices that you know and discuss why you should definitely abstain from doing these things.
2. Colossians 2:6-10 tells us that in engaging the culture, we need to know that our identity in Jesus Christ is as a Christian. You are a Christian first and your ethnicity second. How did the apostle Paul tell the Colossians to remain in Christ even though the people lived in a very syncretistic* culture? What cultural beliefs sidetrack you from living as a follower of Jesus Christ? Discuss how being assured in your identity in Christ can help prevent your ethnic culture from hindering you to be rooted, built up, and strengthened in your faith?

**Syncretistic means combining different forms of belief or practice.*
3. As a Christian, your actions should be driven by your set of beliefs, which must be according to Jesus Christ (v. 8-10). What wrong teachings was Paul concerned about in verse 8? Give examples and discuss how Filipino-Chinese traditions and beliefs drive your values and how these values drive your actions. How in turn does your Christian belief influence the values which drive you into action?
4. Paul, who was a skilled philosopher, warns us against any philosophy of life that is grounded only on human beliefs and experiences. One such philosophy is legalism, or advocating obedience to rules which are not in the Bible (v. 16-17). What is the danger of legalism? How could these rules prevent you from actually living in obedience to the Word of God? In the Chinese culture, what customs do we practice and think are harmless, but are actually binding us from being obedient to God?

5. The false teachers in Colossae were teaching the people that since God was far away, they could approach Him through angels (v. 18). A belief in beings other than Jesus Christ to mediate for us and to “improve” our relationship with God is called mysticism. The danger of this philosophy is that it takes your focus away from Jesus and what He has done for you on the cross. Asians give great value to honoring our elders and practice a tradition called ancestral worship, where we honor the dead through prayers and offerings. What is the danger of regarding our ancestors with great adoration or respect? As a Christian, how can you make a stand to not “worship” ancestors without disrespecting your elders?
6. What are the flaws of human rules and teachings (v. 20-23)? What is the danger of asceticism, the philosophy that believes, “If I abstain, I will gain favor”? Share an example in your culture where asceticism is practiced. How could it shackle you from doing what pleases God?
7. As a group, list the beautiful parts of our Filipino-Chinese culture that has no religious connotation. Discuss creative ways in how you could engage the culture by (a) keeping these customs but changing the meaning of it, or (b) keeping the meaning but changing the custom.

Walk

Reclaim the culture! Show the people in your circle of influence that Jesus Christ and the Chinese (or other) culture are not mutually exclusive. You are a walking testament of that. How do you plan to apply this truth into your life?

Worship & Prayer

Pray for...

- Wisdom for God’s people to live rightly when Bible and culture contradict.
- Blessings for those who were baptized as they live faithfully in obedience to Christ.
- Wisdom in preparing for the October 5 “Parents Appreciation Day” program.
- Healing for Ang Chu Lan, IB,
- DJU, FW, EG, good result of BC’s mammogram.
- Political leaders to listen to godly counsel and exercise good governance.
- Safety of all residents near Mount Mayon in Albay, Legaspi.
- Reconciliation of Philippines & China ties.

Culture Wars #3 The Sex Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

Thessalonians 4:3-7; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20

Discussion Questions

1. We live in a hyper-sexualized society where sex is marketed everywhere: on billboards, TV shows, the movies, best-selling books, and magazines. How does it affect your thoughts and actions?
2. As Christians, it is our responsibility to engage the sexual culture of our society by filtering it through the Word of God. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7. Paul was addressing the hyper-sexualized Roman culture of his time where all sorts of sexual immoralities were encouraged. From this passage we can learn five principles that can help Christians engage to transform a sexual culture. The first principle is that it is God's will for you to live a holy life (v. 3). What did Paul urge the Christians to do? Name some of the sexual activities or relationships that will never allow a person to live a holy life. Why is it so? Discuss God's purpose for creating the sexual relationship.
3. The second principle we need to understand is that each person has a personal responsibility to exercise self control in order to overcome sexual sins. How is self-control possible when sexual temptations abound? As a single person, discuss how you can guard and protect yourself from this problem. As a married person, what are the precautions you need to take to safeguard your marriage from temptation? For parents, how can you talk with your children wisely and age-appropriately to help them have the right concept regarding sex and to keep them from becoming an easy prey of deceitfulness around them?
4. The third principle Paul teaches in the passage is that the key to overcoming sexual sins is to know God (v. 5). How did Paul characterize the heathen in this verse? Discuss how a Christian's sexual conduct should be different from that of the non-believers.
5. In verse 6 we find the fourth principle to engaging a hyper-sexualized culture, and also serves as a strong reminder to overcoming sexual sin,

which is that God judges (v. 6). How does having the wrong desire result in wrong actions? Discuss why acting out your sinful desires is harmful not only to yourself, but to others as well. What are some possible results of God's judgment to those who are involved in sinful sexual relationships?

6. Finally, the fifth principle we need to understand about living in a sexual culture is that the purpose to which we are called as followers of Jesus Christ is to live in holiness (v. 7). A holy life demonstrates God's power at work. How would your personal life testimony affect others? Do you find it uncomfortable to do what is right before the Lord because it doesn't fit the cultural norm of today's society? Are you upfront about your beliefs and convictions in spite of possible criticism from other people?
7. 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 disproves three myths about sexual relationships that many people today accept as truth:
 - (a) *MYTH #1: Sex outside of marriage is okay.* According to the Bible, why is this considered sin (v. 15-16)?
 - (b) *MYTH #2: It's okay if I just look (v. 18).* Read Matthew 5:28 and discuss how Jesus views sin. How does sexual immorality differ from other sins in terms of what the Bible teaches about how to deal with it?
 - (c) *MYTH #3: It's my body; it's my right (v. 19-20).* As a Christian, what makes your body different (v. 15, 19-20)? Sex is not a right; it is a gift from God paid at a very high price by Jesus Christ. How does mass media influence you with the wrong attitude towards your body?

Walk

God created sex to be a beautiful and fundamental component of a marriage relationship between one man and one woman. No matter what culture says, it is sin when it crosses the boundaries God has set for it. Living in sin affects your relationship with God as well as the people around you, especially those whom you love. Ask God to search your heart for any sexual impurities that shows in your thoughts or actions. What are some practical ways you can do to get rid of these impurities and live in holiness instead? What promises can you claim from God's Word to give you the courage and strength to do so?

Worship & Prayer

Pray for...

- For God's people to keep themselves holy and pure, to flee from sexual immorality.
- Full recovery & good biopsy result for IB.
- Good preparations for the church's anniversary celebration.
- Peter's successful cataract operation.
- Grace for RCM's daughter & son-in-law; spiritual healing of Mr. Ong and Mr. Lim.

Culture Wars #4 The Homosexual Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
1 Timothy 1:9-10; John 8:7-12

Discussion Questions

Important: Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, we highly encourage you to listen to the full sermon at www.gccp.org.ph/sermon before discussion in order to view the message in its full context.

1. Cultural acceptance of homosexuality has radically changed the last 25 years, perpetuated by mass media. Many “closet gays” have come out and we are now asked to accept their lifestyle. Those who do not do so are considered narrow-minded or a bigot. Do you know someone who lives a homosexual lifestyle? How do you interact with that person?
2. Before going any further, it is important to define some terms:
 - (a) *Homosexuality* is the sexual attraction to someone of the same gender, while *heterosexuality* is the sexual attraction to a person of the opposite gender. What does the Bible say about God’s design for sexual attraction?
 - (b) Homosexual *orientation* is one’s predisposition to be sexually attracted to someone of the same gender. Homosexual *behavior* is the acting out of this predisposition. Which of these does God condemn? When does a person cross the line of actually falling into sin? Discuss the significance of 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 in how you should view homosexual tendencies.
3. What do you believe makes a person attracted to someone of the same gender? Does having a predisposition to be or do something mean that you should act it out? Discuss why some people are more inclined to behave a certain way than others. How do labels and stereotypes affect someone’s behavior?
4. Read these passages and discuss how God views homosexual behavior:
 - (a) *Leviticus 18:22, 20:13*. How do these verses describe a sexual

relationship between people of the same gender?

- (b) *Romans 1:26-27*. How will someone’s attitude concerning sexuality be affected when that person rejects God?
- (c) *1 Corinthians 6:9-10*. Does this passage mean that those who are guilty of the sins mentioned are permanently barred from heaven? Will someone who claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ but continue with these practices with no sign of repentance go to heaven? What should a person do to inherit the Kingdom of God?

5. Homosexual behavior is definitely considered a serious sin in the Word of God, and so the response of those living out a homosexual lifestyle should be repentance toward holiness. How can life transformation be possible for a person who lives a homosexual lifestyle? If that person has genuinely repented but continues to feel attracted to the same gender, what can he/she do to avoid falling into sin again? Share with the group how it is possible to remain pure and celibate and live a holy life in spite of the temptation to be attracted to a person of the same gender.
6. As a Christian who experienced God’s grace, mercy and forgiveness, do you believe that people who live a homosexual lifestyle can be forgiven and transformed? As a follower of Jesus Christ (individually or as a church), how can you be a refuge of forgiveness without compromising God’s Word regarding this sinful lifestyle? Discuss how you can reach out to those who are bound by this sin without falling into sin as well.
7. Read John 8:7-12. What did Jesus tell the woman that showed He didn’t define her by her sin but also didn’t let her off the hook? A Christian’s response to those who live out a homosexual behavior should be to engage them for Jesus Christ, show them grace and mercy, love them as God loves them, but also to demand holiness. Unless you show that there is joy in living a life of holiness, it will be difficult to lead a homosexual person to the Lord. How can you show them how wonderful it is to live in holiness?

Walk

As a follower of Christ, you are bound by the Word of God. How do you engage a culture that celebrates homosexuality? Do you participate in this behavior by finding enjoyment and entertainment in its blatant display in the mass media? Are you so desensitized by its common practice that your response is simply to accept it, which keeps you from being a light for Christ? How can you extend love, grace and mercy to those who practice it, but demand holiness as well?

Worship & Prayer

Pray for Christians to faithfully live out the truth of God’s Word everyday with grace and love, in order to engage our culture to be transformed for Jesus Christ.

Culture Wars #5

The Consumer Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

Revelation 3:7-8

Discussion Questions

1. We live in a consumer culture where we desire to have the widest selection of the best brands at the best price. A person can simply walk in a mall or a one-stop shop and find countless varieties for one product needed. Nowadays, even the schools our children attend, the courses they take in college, or the activities they engage in have grown in number—a far cry from the simple lifestyle not too long ago. Is this a good thing? Do you think a simpler life and fewer choices would have been better? Discuss.
2. Consumerism is basically the practice of trying to get the most (or the best) for the least cost to you, a concept that has unfortunately worked its way into the church. So many people would go church shopping, looking for the best church that would provide an all-in-one solution to their problems. What brought you to your church? Are you there just for the convenience it offers? How are you growing spiritually in your church? Examine your heart and see if you are one of those people who expect blessings from God but who do not want to do anything for Him in return. Discuss why a consumer mentality is not healthy especially for a Christian's church involvement.
3. Read Revelation 3:7-8. How did Jesus Christ describe Himself (v. 7)? Who is Christ as far as the church is concerned? Discuss how a change in perspective about Christ changes how we view church.
4. 2 Chronicles 16:9 teaches us that we are not the ones who choose God, but He is the One who chooses whom He will use. God is the "consumer" and you are the "product" that must make yourself attractive in order to please Him. What does God see when He looks at you? Will He put you down and choose another, just as you do when

you buy things and choose a better brand over another?

5. Describe God's selection criteria of who He will choose to do His work (v. 8a; Isaiah 6:8). In what areas of service have you been willing to serve the Lord? How does your willingness to serve Him help you develop your faith and the gifts He has entrusted you with?
6. Out of the seven churches in John's vision, the church in Philadelphia was commended for having "little strength." (v. 8b). Why do you think would the Scriptures teach that having little strength is an admirable branding for a church, contrary to what our consumer culture promotes? What is the danger of being too talented? In what area of your life do you tend to rely on your own abilities, thus neglecting to depend on the Lord? Discuss what happens when a Christian becomes like a power strip that is unplugged from its source and plugged into itself.
7. A consumer looks for the best bargain where he/she gets the most out of the purchase price. What does God expect from His children in return for the price Jesus Christ paid (v. 8c)? Do you courageously stand up for your faith, or are you embarrassed about what the Bible teaches? Describe a situation in which you found it difficult to stand up for God. How can you show your loyalty to God in these circumstances?

Walk

As a Christian looking to engage a consumer culture, do you see God as the Consumer who gets to choose whom He will use to do His work? Do you see Him as Someone who paid a very high price for you and therefore entitled to your commitment and loyalty to Him? If God takes away the talents and abilities you consider important in your service to Him, will you still cling to Him for strength? Take a look at your spiritual walk. Would you say that God got a good price out of you?

Worship & Prayer

Pray for the spiritual transformation of the church's consumer culture into one abounding in willingness to serve the Lord, in looking to God for strength, and in unity in proclaiming Christ especially to the lost and broken.

Culture Wars #6
The Occult Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

Discussion Questions

1. The word *occult* means *hidden* and it describes any practices and beliefs that deal with supernatural powers and the spiritual realm whose power and authority do not come from the one true God. This “once-hidden” occult culture has now made its way into the mainstream and is influencing the environment, including those of Christians. What are some examples of occult practices today? Why do you think today’s generation is so fascinated and intrigued with the occult? If occult “powers” do not come from God, where do you think it comes from?
2. Deuteronomy 18:9-12 describes three general categories of occult practices: *divination* or the practice of attempting to predict the future; *magick* or the practice of using charms, spells, chants/sayings, and rituals to change the future or manipulate the events or circumstances of one’s life; and *spiritism* or the attempt to contact spirits (or the dead) for some special revelation or knowledge.
 - (a) How does God view these practices? Discuss.
 - (b) What are some examples/manifestations of these practices?
 - (c) If God were disgusted and repulsed by these practices, why do Christians accept them?
3. As detestable as it is to God, the lure of the occult is very strong. Why do you think occult practices are so alluring? Read and discuss Romans 1:25.
4. The great danger of occultism is when a person begins to substitute God, giving Satan a foothold in his/her life. What does Isaiah 8:19-20 warn us against? What are some possible ways a Christian can replace God instead of putting his/her trust in Him? How do you think Satan takes advantage of it? What does the Bible teach us about how to resist the devil (1 Peter 5:8-9)?
5. An obviously ungodly, “satanic bad” practice is easily rejected by people, and so Satan masks it (1 Timothy 4:1). How are occult practices being masked in today’s culture? Give examples and discuss these practices that obviously do

not come from God yet are culturally acceptable even in Christian circles today. As a Christian parent, how can you protect your children from these practices? As a follower of Christ, are you guilty of practicing occultism—knowingly or unknowingly?

6. Because of the sensationalism of the occult, even Christians get frightened by “dark powers.” But the Bible clearly teaches victory over Satan is centered on Jesus Christ. Read Ephesians 6:11-12. How does Jesus protect you from the power of darkness? Discuss how your Christian testimony is important in engaging the occult culture (Revelations 12:10-11).
7. As a follower of Jesus Christ seeking to engage the culture, your response to the occultism permeating this generation should be to repent, renounce and remove. Read Acts 19:18-19 and describe what the early Christians did with occult practices after being convicted by the Holy Spirit. How can this be manifested in your life? How should James 4:7-8 give you courage to get rid of your sin and live a victorious life in Christ?

Walk

*There is strength in the Name of the Lord
There is power in the Name of the Lord
There is hope in the Name of the Lord
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

As a Christian, what should you do with anything that depicts and celebrates evil and is not glorifying to God? Examine what you are reading, listening to and feeding your minds. Claim God’s promise that you can overcome the occult culture because you are His child and there is strength, power and hope in Jesus’ Name.

Worship & Prayer

Pray for...

- Wisdom to recognize and reject all forms of occultism propagating our culture;
- Safety for the PTPM Holy Land Study Tour group;
- Blessings for Dr. Ken Shigematsu as he prepares for the Spiritual Life Conference this November;
- Healing and recovery for Steve who suffered massive stroke;
- Grace and healing for cancer patients: LG, IB, Segundo Yu, Teresita Tan;
- Spiritual growth of DJD and salvation of his family and friends.

Culture Wars #7

The Achievement Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

Psalm 1:1-6

Discussion Questions

1. We live in a culture driven by the desire for achievement, whether in school, at home, at work, and even in the church. What drives a person's desire to be successful? How is this manifested in your life?
2. The drive to achieve something, often the result of our desire for happiness and significance, comes from four underlying subcultures:
 - A *Culture of Materialism* from the drive to have more
 - A *Culture of Intellectual Elitism* from the drive to be the smartest
 - A *Culture of Power* from the drive to be the most influential
 - A *Celebrity Culture* from the drive to be the most famous

Discuss the following:

- (a) Why is success often associated with cultivating these pursuits?
 - (b) How are these subcultures manifested? In what ways has it affected your life as a Christian? In what ways do you think has it affected the church community?
 - (c) What dangers do you think these subcultures bring to your life as a follower of Jesus Christ?
3. The achievement culture is driven by our pursuit of identity, significance, and happiness—things that we believe give us joy and satisfaction in life. Read Psalm 1:1-6. Verses 1-3 describe to us a “blessed” or a “happy” man.
 - (a) Discuss how the environment (or people) you frequently associate in affects your way of life as a follower of Christ (v. 1). How does a Christian become immersed in a culture of sin? Describe its progression. In what ways have people in your circle influenced you, especially in your spiritual walk?
 - (b) Where do you get your identity and sense of happiness? Do you take delight in your identity as a child of God? What does delighting in something mean?

- (c) As a follower of Christ, do you take delight in God's Word? The more you want to follow God more intimately, the more you must know what He says. What steps are you taking to know God better? Are you intentionally applying it in your daily life? Share with the group how God's Word has influenced and transformed your beliefs, actions and your way of life.
- (d) Discuss how being rooted on Jesus Christ can make you prosper in your pursuits (v. 3)

4. What is a chaff? Why do you think verse 4 used this word to describe people who define themselves by their achievements apart from God? What kind of rewards does pursuing earthly achievements bring to you, and how does God view it? How does its worth and significance compare with pursuing heavenly success (v. 5-6)?
5. As a follower of Jesus Christ, how are you to engage a culture so defined by success? Read Proverbs 2:7. A drive to live uprightly and righteously to be more like Christ results in a culture of discipleship that defines our success not by what we have, what we know, or who we are, but by the eternal victory Jesus Christ achieved on the cross and gave us freely. What are you doing to cultivate a culture of discipleship in your life?
6. If there is one thing you pursue in this life, can you honestly say that you will pursue being the most Christ-like? Is that something you can find satisfaction and joy in?

Walk

The world may define your success and significance by who you are or what you have, but who you are in Jesus Christ and what you have in Him has eternal value and is worth far more than the greatest human achievement there will ever be. A God-controlled life that results from your active, intentional pursuit of Christ-likeness is TRUE SUCCESS in God's eyes. Do you find your significance in what you have in Jesus Christ? Could you honestly say that you would rather have Jesus than anything this world has to offer? Examine your life now. Do you think you would be someone who will be remembered as a person who walked with God?

Worship & Prayer

Pray for GCCP worshipers to acknowledge God as the source of all wisdom and knowledge & to be faithful to use them for His glory. Pray also for preparations for the Spiritual Life Conference, and also for the healing and recovery of our brothers who are suffering both from physical and spiritual illness.

Culture Wars #8
The Beauty Culture

Word

Scripture Reference

1 Peter 3:3-4

Discussion Questions

1. Our current society places too much importance on physical appearance as a basis for one's self-worth. Share with the group how you've observed this beauty culture being manifested. Do you think Christians are exempted from this craze of wanting to look good physically?
2. There is nothing inherently wrong with having an attractive outward appearance. As a Christian it is good and decent behavior to take care of yourself and to look your best, but you cross the line when you become overly concerned about your outward appearance at the expense of cultivating inward beauty. Why do you think people want to be acknowledged as physically beautiful? Discuss.
3. As Christians, our perspective of beauty should be viewed through a biblical grid. Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and 1 Peter 3:3-4. What does the Bible say about God's perspective of beauty? Does it matter to Him how you look on the outside? How would you describe a beautiful heart? Why is it easier to be beautiful on the outside than the inside? How can someone develop inner beauty or a beautiful heart?
4. Read Proverbs 31:30. Do you think that in today's culture where the use of cosmetics is considered normal and plastic surgery is accepted and encouraged, that the Bible's description of charm and beauty still hold true? How do you judge beauty in other people?
5. A follower of Christ needs to see the beauty in others by looking for a Spirit-filled life. What does a Spirit-filled life look like? Read 2 Corinthians 4:16. When the apostle Paul wrote these words he was nearing the end of his life. Describe what you think he would have looked like had you met him at that time. Do you think Paul would have aged gracefully? Discuss how your view of someone is affected by how that person lives his or her life. Do you know someone whose life is so Spirit-filled that you don't care what he or she looks like from the outside? What about that person's character and behavior

make him a Spirit-filled person?

6. As a child of God, we also need to see beauty in ourselves, but how do we do that when our culture feeds us with false standards of beauty and makes us feel unworthy if we don't live up to that standard? Read Genesis 1:27 and Psalm 139:14. To see the beauty in ourselves we must come to an understanding that we are made in God's image and likeness. What is the basis of your identity and self-worth? Do you believe that you are made in the image and likeness of God? Does the knowledge that you are a product of an all-knowing Creator who never makes mistakes give you the confidence to "let your light so shine before men?" (Matthew 5:16a).
7. The beauty culture tells us to impress the world with our outward appearance, but what kind of impression to the world does Jesus teach us to pursue (Matthew 5:16b)? In what ways could a believer hide his or her light from the world?

Walk

*"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me;
all His wonderful passion and purity.
All thou spirit divine, all my nature refine;
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."*

Examine yourself. Are you so preoccupied with your outward looks that you don't have time to work on your inner beauty to shine as light for Christ? Can you honestly say, "I'm just a nobody trying to tell everybody, about Somebody (Jesus), who can save anybody" to the people around you? Consider how in this vain world you can become a beautiful follower of Christ; one possessing a beautiful heart, living a spirit-filled life, and nurturing the knowledge and appreciation of having been made in the image of God.

Worship & Prayer

Pray for...

- For the beauty of the Lord to radiate brightly in the lives of His people.
- Fruitful community fair wherein more unchurched people visit and enjoy GCCP.
- Blessings upon the choir as they prepare for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.
- All Christmas J.O.Y. shoeboxes to bless needy kids.
- Healing for Danny (sepsis), IB, FC, GL, BC, AU (salvation), MTC (ICU), FW.
- Repentance and spiritual healing for CM.
- OY to complete all his immigration papers before Dec. 15.