

Message by John Johnson
How to Silence Your Critics
February 28 – March 1, 2009
1 Peter 2:11-12

Questions for Discussion:

1. Pastor Johnson mentioned that there is an implied message within this section: that we are not saved to stay behind and hide, but that we have a mandate. What is that mandate? Did Jesus have this in mind when He prayed for His disciples at the end of His days? (Jn 17:14-19) What encouragement should we take from His prayer?

2. 4 approaches to engaging the culture around us were discussed this weekend:

Cocooning: hide in spiritual 'bomb shelters'

Copy: accommodate to surrounding cultural ideals; growing a 'private faith' as opposed to a 'personal faith'

Co-opt: form a religious rebellion and take over the power structures

Or **Creating:** praying and working for the enriching of culture around us; helping to bring the Kingdom values to our world.

How do you view your engagement/dis-engagement with culture? Is that set of values being challenged by this letter from Peter? What influences your stance in this way?

3. Is there a disconnect in our discipleship in this area? Do we need to hear about, talk about and pray about what influence we should have as members of the Kingdom, God's New Creation which is inaugurated but not yet fully realized?

4. What real and concrete ways might we, as a people, become Embrasive instead of Abrasive? (More embracing rather than rubbing people the wrong way?) What was Jesus' approach in this area? Can you give some examples in which His character and actions turned His enemies 'upside-down and inside-out'?

5. Even when we are pursuing and living out lives of authentic love and character in our world, what should we expect from outsiders? Will it always be easy-going or people patting us on the back for our 'good works' inspired by God? What will your reaction be when it happens to you? When it happens to those you love?