

## ***Preserving and Expanding His Value System In Our Culture***

### **I. The Spirit Of This Age**

- a. It is vital to recognize that unseen wicked forces are constantly working to undermine people on earth by shaping their value systems. If Satan succeeds in influencing individuals to embrace his value system, he gains control over their lives. His strategy is to lead people into adopting paradigms—in areas such as religion, politics, ethics, and morals—that stand in opposition to God.

***(1 John 5:19-20 NASB) “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”***

***(Ephesians 6:12 NASB) “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”***

- b. Regardless of what percentage of the culture of this age identifies as "Christian" we have to face the reality that the majority of culture does not embrace Jesus' value system. An important couple of questions for us to ask in sobriety are, 1) What core values do those around us embrace? 2) What influence have they had on me? God's perfect will (what He desires most) for us is that we would not be conformed to what the "spirit of the age" embraces, but that we would be conformed to His values through clear understanding.

***(Romans 12:2 NASB) “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”***

*Whatever you give your time to is what you value most, what you value most is what consumes you, what consumes you conforms you, and what conforms you determines your future. -Louie Giglio*

- c. We overcome the "spirit of this age" through adopting God's value system (Sermon on the Mount), and intentionally embracing communities and individuals that are committed to the same thing. Though there is significant value to individuals living the sermon on the mount lifestyle, communities that adopt His values, become an exponentially effective influence in culture.

***(Acts 2:42-47 NASB) “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all the believers were together and had all things in common; 45 and they would sell their property and possessions and share them with all, to the extent that anyone had need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”***

### **II. The Salt Of The Earth**

***(Matthew 5:13 NASB) “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by people.”***

- a. Jesus called His followers the salt of the earth. In His time, salt served two primary purposes: 1) to preserve food and 2) to enhance its flavor. Similarly, believers are called to preserve God's core values in the midst of a decaying culture and to live in a way that draws others toward Him. This dual role—preserving and enhancing—highlights the transformative impact Christians are meant to have in the world.

*(Colossians 4:5-6 NASB) “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Your speech must always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”*

- i. Just as salt prevents decay, believers are tasked with upholding and defending God’s values in a culture that often drifts away from truth. This involves living lives rooted in integrity, speaking out against moral decline, and embodying principles that reflect God’s character.

*(Titus 2:7-8 NASB) “In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, 8 sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.”*

- ii. Salt also enhances flavor, making food more appealing. Similarly, believers are called to make God’s love, grace, and truth appealing to those far from Him by demonstrating joy, compassion, and hope in their daily lives. This includes building relationships, serving others selflessly, and creating environments where people can experience the goodness of God firsthand.

*(John 13:34-35 NASB) “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another.”*

*(John 17:21 NASB) “That they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*

- b. *“but if the salt has become tasteless...it is no longer good for anything”* – Salt becomes tasteless in two primary ways: 1) Impurities compromise it at the chemical level 2) It gets watered down.
  - i. When we allow even small impurities or sins to creep into our thoughts and habits, they undermine our ability to be an effective influence. This is why it’s essential to regularly “take inventory” of our lives, examining our hearts and aligning our actions with God’s truth.

*(Psalm 139:23-24 NASB) “Search me, God, and know my heart; Put me to the test and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there is any hurtful way [way of sorrow or way of idolatry] in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”*

- ii. If we offer a diluted representation of Jesus’ values, it will fail to resonate with those who can find more compelling alternatives in culture. The most appealing thing to the human heart is an authentic portrayal of Jesus, as we were created to fellowship with Him.

*(2 Corinthians 2:15-17 NASB) “For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing: 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? 17 For we are not like the many, peddling [diluting] the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.”*

### III. The Light Of The World

*(Matthew 5:14-16 NASB) “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”*

- a. Christians are called to shine brightly in a culture often overshadowed by darkness. Jesus describes us as a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, emphasizing our responsibility to boldly embrace our public witness. Rather than retreating into isolation out of fear, we are called to engage with the world. This doesn’t mean conforming to its patterns but transforming it through our example of love, truth, and good works. When we hide the light of Christ by withdrawing from culture, we deny the world the hope and guidance God has entrusted to us.

*(John 17:15-18 NASB) “I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world.”*

- b. Jesus called His followers “*the light of the world*,” emphasizing their role as visible and unmistakable reflections of God’s glory in a darkened culture. Light is essential for sight—without it, there is no clarity or understanding. Similarly, the church’s role is to bring spiritual illumination, offering clear guidance and understanding to those on earth. This mission is rooted in the nature of Christ Himself, as described in **John 1:1-5**. As Christ’s representatives, we are called to embody His light, helping others to see and understand the truth in a world often shrouded in spiritual darkness.

*(Daniel 11:33 NASB) “And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many...”*

*(Daniel 12:3 NASB) “And those who have insight will shine like the glow of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”*

*(John 1:1-5 NASB) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. 5 And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp [overpower] it.”*