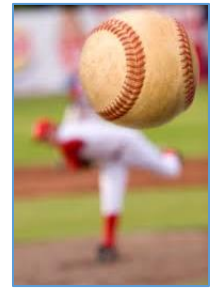


# Keep Your Eye On The Ball!



## Pursuing Our Biblical Mandate in a Godless Culture

(1 Peter 2:9-12; Jeremiah 29:4-7)

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### Introduction: A Contemporary Problem Facing the American Church Today

- Forgetting Our Appointed Identity and Abandoning Our Mission
  - We are being assimilated into the godless culture around us rather than positively impacting it.
  - Shifting cultural decisions are discouraging and distracting us from our identity and mission.

### 1. Our Identity (God's Sojourning, Holy People)

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now **you are God's people**; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as **sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> **Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God** on the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:9-12, ESV)

- A Chosen Race (Vs 9)  
Selected by God Himself to be a unique race of people within a multi-racial world
- A Royal Priesthood (Vs 9)  
We serve in the Kingdom of God as those who intercede and offer sacrifices.
- A Holy Nation (Vs 9)  
We exist as a nation of holy people within an unholy world.
- A People for His Own Possession (Vss 9,10)  
We are not our own, we were bought at a price for the Lord's own possession. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)  
Once you were not His people, nor had received mercy – Now you are a people who have received it.
- Sojourners and Exiles (Vs 11)  
We are aliens temporarily living in a foreign land, since our citizenship is in Heaven. (Philippians 3:20)

#### Here's the problem:

We don't consciously live out the identity that God has given us! When we "take our eyes off the ball" (spiritually speaking) we become more like the ungodly around us than the holy people God has called us to be in order to positively impact unbelievers for God's kingdom.

## 2. Our Mission (Infiltration and Kingdom Impact without Contamination)

- To proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you (out of darkness into His marvelous light) 1 Peter 2:9
- Abstain from the passions of the flesh (which wage war against your soul). Vs 11
- Keep your conduct about the Gentiles (Unbelievers) honorable. Vs 12
  - So that WHEN they speak against you as evil doers (in which you are not – *implied*) they may see your good deeds and glorify God (on the day of visitation). (See Matthew 5:13-16)

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> **Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.** <sup>6</sup> **Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.** <sup>7</sup> **But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf,** for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jeremiah 29:4-7, ESV)

- Settle into this foreign land.
  - Build homes, plant gardens and eat their produce. Vs 5
  - Marry (“within the Faith” – *implied* See Exodus 34:15,16) Vs 6
  - Have children, without decrease. (**BUT**) Vs 6
- Seek the welfare of the city where God has sent you. Vs 7
  - Pray for the welfare of the city (for in its welfare you will find your welfare). Vs 7

**Keeping Our Eyes on the Ball (Spiritually Speaking)** means that we embrace our divinely-pronounced identity and pursue our Christian mandate to infiltrate our culture to positively impact it without being contaminated by it.

## 3. Dealing with Distraction (Keeping Our Eyes on the Ball)

- A. Pursue a proper Christian mindset.
- “~~Isolation, Assimilation,~~ or Infiltration without Contamination” – Dr. Erwin Lutzer (The Church in Babylon)
  - “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” (1 Peter 2:11)
  - “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. (2 Timothy 2:3,4)
- B. Make daily decisions to live a holy, honorable and God-dedicated life.
- C. Consider personal ways you can be a blessing to the foreign community in which God has embedded you.
- D. Pursue intentional relationships of love with key people in your life to love them into God’s kingdom.
- E. Refuse to allow the world to conform you into its image. (Romans 12:2; Daniel 1:8; 3:16-18; 6:1-28)

### Ponder Point

Until you see yourself as a holy citizen of Heaven who is assigned to temporarily live in a foreign, godless world (intent on conforming you to its image), you will be frustrated with living in this increasingly evil culture and have little hope of positively impacting it for the kingdom of God for which he has mandated you to do.