

Reflections Questions for Individuals and Small Groups

Stronger Faith for Today: Growing Resilient Disciples #5

“Counter Cultural Living and Mission”

Martin Macaulay 13th Sept, 2020

Often we feel our culture around us trying to squeeze us into its mould. (Rom 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”)

1. What are some of the pressures you feel from culture?
2. What are some of the Christian resources that help you resist that pressure?

Read Jeremiah 29:1-14.

1. We saw last week that the exiles in Babylon were to settle down, make a life for themselves and pray for the peace and prosperity of the city of their enemies, because their captivity would be 70 years. How do you think they felt hearing Jeremiah tell them the LORD said 70 years? How do you think they had felt when they heard Hananiah’s word of prophecy back in Jer 28:2-4?
2. How is God developing patience and a long-term view for you right now? In what way might Covid-19 restrictions be a part of developing patience and a long-term view for you?
3. When you read that famous verse in the context of facing 70 years in exile in Babylon, how does it encourage you. Jer 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.”

The Barna research indicated that resilient disciples were taking the long-term view. It also showed the importance of curbing entitlement and turning away from self-centredness.

We need to embody the countercultural, kingdom way of deflecting attention [from ourselves] to Jesus... We need more leaders who accomplish less in the limelight and more behind the scenes to shape the hearts, minds and souls of the next generation. In digital Babylon – in the era of YouTube, Twitter, self-promotion, and the humble brag – we must learn to put self aside. This is the countercultural way of Jesus. [Faith for Exiles, p.188]

4. What practices from Jeremiah’s letter (or elsewhere) might God be calling you to spend time in to curb entitlement and turn away from self-centred ways?
 - Prayer (Jer 29:7,12)
 - Reading the Bible (Jer 29:4) Find out what the Lord says.
 - Service and sacrifice (Jer 29:7) “Having a shared mission is one way of thinking about ourselves less”
 - Solitude (perhaps Jer 29:13)
 - Worship

Resilient disciples strongly agreed with the statements:

“I am given real chances to contribute to my church.”

And “I have access to leadership training through my church.”

5. Is there some contribution God is leading you to make toward our vision of Thriving Church, Thriving Communities? Can you help another (perhaps younger) person be involved in contributing alongside you? Resolve now to access further leadership training. Contact the office. ET Leadership Summit dates will be announced soon.