

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

How do we tackle this topic?

- 1)What is individualism?
 - 2)The good, the bad, & the ugly of Individualism
 - 3)What is God's perspective?
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

By Individualism I do NOT mean Individuality

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

St. John of the Cross

"No baby willingly gives up the breast of his mother's milk"

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

Robert Bellah (1 of 5 authors) - Habits of the Heart:

"We believe in the dignity of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not morally wrong, it is sacrilegious."

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

Robert Bellah (1 of 5 authors) - Habits of the Heart:

"We believe in the dignity of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not morally wrong, it is sacrilegious."

Individualism is the idea that the individual is then independent & self-reliant

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

Craig Biddle: Author & Speaker

“The fundamental political conflict in America today is, as it has been for a century, individualism vs. collectivism. Does the individual’s life belong to him—or does it belong to the group, the community, society, or the state? Individualism is the idea that the individual’s life belongs to him and that he has an inalienable right to live it as he sees fit, to act on his own judgment, to keep and use the product of his effort, and to pursue the values of his choosing. It’s the idea that the individual is sovereign, an end in himself, and the fundamental unit of moral concern. This is the ideal that the American Founders set forth and sought to establish when they drafted the Declaration and the Constitution and created a country in which the individual’s rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness were to be recognized and protected.”

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

Two things have happened that have radically shaped our sense of self:

a)We value the dignity of the individual

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

Two things have happened that have radically shaped our sense of self:

- a)We value the dignity of the individual
 - b)We mistrust the authority that is over & above the individual
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

1)What is individualism?

Two things have happened that have radically shaped our sense of self:

- a)We value the dignity of the individual
- b)We mistrust the authority that is over & above the individual

Individualism is thus a social theory favoring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control

- Independence FROM the collective having authority
 - Self-reliance as a way of ensuring the collective authority is limited in its power
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

2) The good the bad & the ugly of individualism

a) We are stuck in the in between

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

2) The good the bad & the ugly of individualism

a) We are stuck in the in between

Habits of the Heart:

"Modern individualism seems to be producing a way of life that is neither individually nor socially viable, yet a return to traditional forms would be a return to intolerable discrimination & oppression."

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

2) The good the bad & the ugly of individualism

a) We are stuck in the in between

Brooking Institute survey of college students:

- 50% of republicans would be directly opposed to their child marrying a democrat & 1/3 of democrats return the favor
 - 44% do not believe the 1st Amendment protects hate speeches
 - 51% think it is acceptable for a student to shout down a speaker with whom they disagree
 - 20% agree that it is acceptable to use violence to prevent a speaker from speaking
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

2) The good the bad & the ugly of individualism

a) We are stuck in the in between

b) An unhealthy push for heroism (independence)

Habits of the Heart:

“When it is not IN & THROUGH society but in flight FROM it that the good is to be realized, the line between ethical heroism & madness vanishes.”

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

2) The good the bad & the ugly of individualism

- a) We are stuck in the in between
- b) Any unhealthy push for heroism (independence)

Hauerwas & Willimon: Resident Alien

"We learn that our highest duty is to make our lives a heroic creation"

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

2) The good the bad & the ugly of individualism

- a) We are stuck in the in between
- b) An unhealthy push for heroism (independence)
- c) An unhealthy push for self-reliance

Habits of the Heart:

"A primary emphasis on self-reliance has led to the notion of pure, undetermined choice, free of tradition, obligation or commitment as the essence of the self."

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity

Gen. 1:27 "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

a) We are shaped by the Trinity

Henry Grunwald – Time magazine

“One of the most remarkable things about the 20th century, more than technological progress & physical violence, has been the deconstruction of humanity.”

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

a) We are shaped by the Trinity

Habits of the Heart:

“Our view of man obviously depends on our view of God... The ultimate irony, or perhaps tragedy, is that secularism has not led to humanism. We have gradually dissolved – deconstructed – the human being into a bundle of reflexes, impulses, neuroses, nerve endings. The great religious heresy used to be making man the measure of all things; but we have come close to making man the measure of nothing.”

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
 - b) The need for Community
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community

Tim Otto – Oriented to Faith

"If individualism is our highest duty, then expressing ourselves & our sexuality becomes a sacred obligation. But if we understand ourselves as part of God's people, we must ask, 'How does my sexuality need to function in order to serve the community?'"

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3) What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community

John 13:35 "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you (the community) have love for one another."

John 17:23 "I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me."

The Ekklesia = the gathered

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3) What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community

Gerhard Lohfink:

"The true miracle in the church happens when humans let themselves be gathered & when they let their lives be joined into the true community; & the fact that this happens time & again in the history of the church, in spite of everyone's desire to be his own master & in spite of everyone's wish to entrench himself behind his own four walls & that in all these persons seek for God's will in unanimity; such is the true miracle of the church. Where all this happens, there is a place where God is acting." —

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3) What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community

Robert Bellah – Sociologist from Cal

“There are truths we do not see when we adopt the language of radical individualism. We find ourselves NOT independently of other people or institutions but rather through them.”

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3) What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community



Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
 - b) The need for Community
 - c) Our Collective Memory
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community
- c) Our Collective Memory

i. The collective memory shapes our perception of character

Chuck Colson – "There is no limit to the human capacity for self-rationalization"

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
 - b) The need for Community
 - c) Our Collective Memory
 - i. *The collective memory shapes our perception of character*
 - ii. *The collective memory shapes our sense of suffering & hardship*
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3)What is God's response?

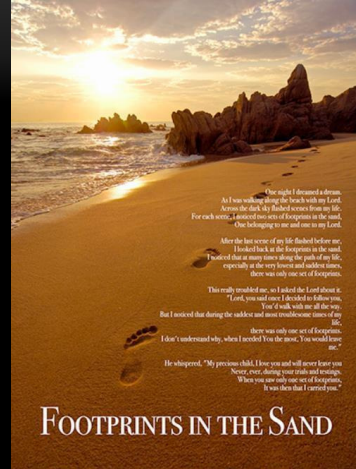
- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
 - b) The need for Community
 - c) Our Collective Memory
 - i. *The collective memory shapes our perception of character*
 - ii. *The collective memory shapes our sense of suffering & hardship*
 - iii. *The collective memory shapes our ability to have hope, joy, understand grief, & obtain true thankfulness*
-

Cultivating our Culture

Individualism:

3) What is God's response?

- a) We are shaped by the Trinity
- b) The need for Community
- c) Our Collective Memory



Cultivating our Culture

Conclusion:

➤ *If individualism is our highest call then expressing ourselves & forcing our opinion is the highest order & we can see where this intolerance & arrogance has left our country*

But if we understand ourselves as part of the Trinity & God's people we will empathize with the one before us seeking to hear their heart

Cultivating our Culture

Conclusion:

➤ *If individualism is our highest call then our sexuality becomes our sacred obligation to push & to share & to claim*

But if we understand ourselves as part of the Trinity & God's people we must ask, "How does my sexuality need to function in order to serve the community"

Cultivating our Culture

Conclusion:

➤ *If individualism is our highest call our rights, our needs, our very person will always come first & lead us into detachment & isolation*

But if we understand our essence is to stay connected, to stay vulnerable, to trust & love & place others first...then we will have a shot at finding life
