

Connect360: Isolation or Impact?

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- *Lesson 2 in the Connect360 unit "Kingdom Power: The Sermon on the Mount" focuses on Matthew 5:13-16.*

Too often, there is little distinction between the church and the world. Greed, prejudice, anger and immorality are also found in the church. Congregations are tempted to turn to marketing schemes and downplaying biblical teachings and values in order to make the unchurched feel comfortable in our midst. The church cannot reach the world by becoming assimilated into the world.

If we are not to be assimilated, does this mean the church should be isolated from the world? Christian alternatives for education, recreation and social ministries may be essential to the development of strong families and for the preparation of well-grounded disciples for Christ. Yet, does this also run the risk of isolating us from the world when we are supposed to be light? Jesus demonstrates the balance of withdrawing from the world to be energized by the Holy Spirit, in order to reengage the world bringing light to places of darkness.

Christ is not calling the church to assimilation or isolation. He is calling us for transformation. If we were saved just to be protected from the evil one, Jesus would have taken us to heaven the moment we were saved. Jesus prayed, "I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

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