

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 24: Cancel culture and the whole person

Topic Introduction

Target found itself in hot water at the beginning of June, secularly hailed as Pride Month. Citing safety concerns amidst conservative backlash, the store announced that it would remove some of its LGBTQ-focused products and move some of its “pride” displays. This led to boycotts from the other side of the political aisle with activists disavowing Target for what they see as caving in to pressure. This story and many others in the news has us thinking about: “Cancel Culture.”

Discussion

To help you in looking back, here are some keywords, phrases, or examples we used or defined:

cancel culture, Justine Sacco, Target, J.K. Rowling, politics, learning domains/cycle (head, heart, hands), whole-person response, emotional intelligence (EQ), grace

These questions follow the thread of our discussion on today’s episode of *Concurrently* and may serve as launch points for your conversation at home or in the classroom:

- » Where does this phenomenon come from? Where did it originate?
- » What examples of “cancel culture” are you familiar with? Where do we observe it?
- » For what reasons do people and groups seek to cancel one another?
- » Where have you observed cancellation operating in your own circles/groups? Is anybody “safe” from being canceled? Explain.
- » How does fear of being canceled affect us as individuals as we operate in public spaces?
- » What types of things deserve our protective responses—responses which may look or seem like cancellation but are in a different category? Define that category (as opposed to cancellation). What merits putting somebody outside of your realm of support?
- » How does what we observe of Jesus’ time on Earth, engaging with all those around Him, shape our discipleship response to “cancel culture”? What can we learn from His words and actions?
- » What do we believe as a family, class, school, group, or church? What is the point of the gospel? What is the point of the Christian life? What does it mean to show grace to another?
- » How can we engage (virtually) online in an appropriate extension of our embodied selves (that recognizes others as embodied selves)? What might that look like in your own practice?

Guiding a Whole-person Response

Cognitive Dimension or Head-level:

- » What do we know about cancel culture? What have we observed or experienced?
- » What do we need to know about cancel culture, our current society, and even the unfolding course of history that brought us to this place?
- » What do we need to know from scripture that helps train our thinking, feeling, and action?
- » For this section on cognitive or head-level knowledge, I highly recommend use of our resource “The Big 5”—an adaptation of Aristotle’s Five Common Topics of Invention—to further draw out the conversation (or dialectic/Socratic dialog). <https://gwnews.com/the-big-5/>

Affective Dimension or Heart-level:

- » What would motivate you to mute, silence, or even cancel another person?
- » If you have ever experienced being muted or silenced, how did that feel?
- » Why should we prize civil discourse between multiple points of view?
- » How does “love of neighbor” work its way out at the heart level—in our attitudes and beliefs towards others? What emotional postures help us to foster relationships rather than cancel or destroy them?

Behavioral or Hands-level:

- » What do you do when faced with something you don’t agree with/believe? How should you act?
- » Do you have to agree with everyone or do what others insist you must do? Explain.
- » What structures could we put in place to guide civil and compassionate engagement? What suggestions would you give for actions to try first before either blowing up or shutting down others?

Scriptural Anchors/Provision

From Matthew 5:38-46: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?”

See 1 Corinthians 13

From 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. “Since then we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others, for Christ’s love compels us. So from now on, we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way we do so no longer. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.”

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