

The background of the image is a network diagram. It consists of numerous small, colored circular nodes (in shades of teal, yellow, red, green, and purple) connected by thin, grey lines. These lines form a complex web of connections, with some nodes acting as central hubs and others as peripheral points. The entire network is contained within a thin teal border.

ACTS

How do you act when you meet an impressive person?

(we are usually super predictable)

Most of the time we fall into 2 categories:

1. Enjoy being impressed
(wanting them to make an impression)
2. Enjoy being impressive
(wanting to make an impression)

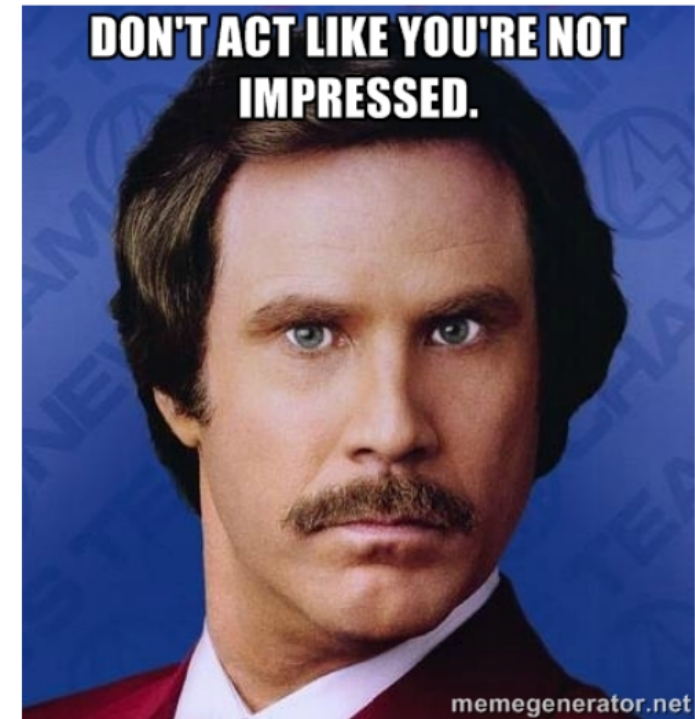


Doug Pennington (2004)

It is our job to see them as human beings, with all the abilities, emotions, facts, experiences and idiosyncrasies that make up each one of us. It's normal to be impressed with what is extraordinary about a person, and wants to try to impress them. That's normal. Importantly, you should always look and feel like impressive people, as secondary to who they really are - and be available to have in the place appropriate to them, but that's also easy. That's real humanity always remembers. That's most common place to their most important one.

Most of the time we fall into 2 categories:

- 1. Enjoy being impressed**
(wanting then to make an impression)
- 2. Enjoy being impressive**
(wanting to making an impression.)



Doug Pennington (2004):

It is our job to see them as human beings, with all the similarities, conditions, hurts, experiences and strangeness that make up each one of us. It's normal to be impressed with what is impressive about a person, and vanity to try to impress them. But most importantly, you should always feel and treat their impressive qualities as secondary to who they really are- and be available to them in the place everyone else ignores, but that Jesus sees- their real humanity. Always remember, their most common place is their most important one.

What's true about *people*

is true about *culture*

And *everything else* that is "impressive"

(school and office mates, parents/children, church, city, neighbors, fellow parents, or vague sense of "Americanism")

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an impressive person?

(we are usually super predictable)



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And **everything else** that is "impressive"

(school and office mates, parents/children, church, city,
neighbors, fellow parents, or vague sense of "Americanism")

If we are **substantive Christians** living intentionally
with the **kingdom of God** in mind:

Jesus will dramatically change our **Reaction and
Response** to the influences around us.

How we **React**

1. Jesus should dramatically change our reaction to impressive things

The more impressive Jesus
becomes for you - the less
impressed you are with other
things - and yet the MORE you
care about them.



Most people: React impressed, according to the
impression. React based on the impression.

Paul: In response, all self-will
comprehension, self-will.

Reaction: "You're kidding! The Christ of God!" 10:38

The rot in Athens they couldn't see
that Paul saw

"full of idols"

Epicureans and Stoics
"What is this babbler trying to
say?" vs. 18

"He seems to be
wishing to persuade the
people." vs. 19

Vacuity

Acts 17:12 All the Athenians and the
Athenians who heard Paul spent
time with him, being amazed at his
teaching.

They had all of these ideas
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We never see our own rot when we are
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How we **Respond**

2. Jesus should dramatically change our response to impressive things

The more impressive Jesus
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Faithful Response
Grace and truth: "contextual witness."

Gracious Hospitality: means caring about your guest's
condition and feelings, and then taking your action as a
host to make them feel welcome, comfortable, safe, and
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Paul in context...

Studied their city

Quoted their writers

Understood their objections

With such a few cultural
assumptions - that we can
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penetrative.



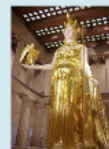
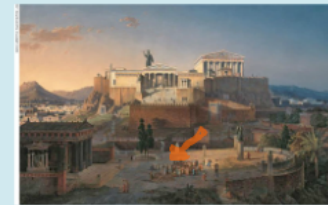
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We will see **our culture and the people in it**, with all the similarities, conditions, hurts, experiences and strangeness that make up the real human experience. It's normal to be impressed with what is impressive about an impressive culture, and vain to try to impress them. But most importantly, you should always feel and treat the cultures' impressive qualities as secondary to who we really are- and **react and respond** to them in the place everyone else ignores, but that Jesus sees- their real humanity. Always remember, their most common place is their most important one.

How we React

1. Jesus should dramatically change our reaction to impressive things

The more impressive Jesus becomes for you - the less impressed you are with other things - and yet the MORE you care about them.



Most People: Super Impressed, wanting to be impressive, hated those smug jerks

Paul: unimpressed, ok with being unimpressive, cared deeply

Reaction: "Greatly distressed...the city was full of idols." vs. 16

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"What is this babbler trying to say?" vs. 18

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Vacuity

Acts 17:21 All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.

True Fruit of Skepticism

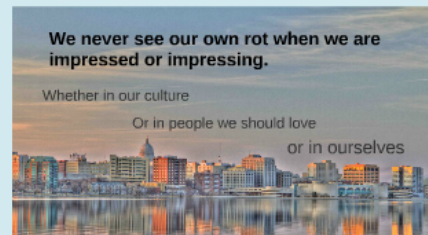
The Elites	The People
Stoics and Epicureans	"All of them"
Skepticism and Pragmatism	superstitious religion and brutal laws
When the leaders believe in nothing	The people believe everything
(After skepticism produces the opposite of its intent)	

We never see our own rot when we are impressed or impressing.

Whether in our culture

Or in people we should love

or in ourselves



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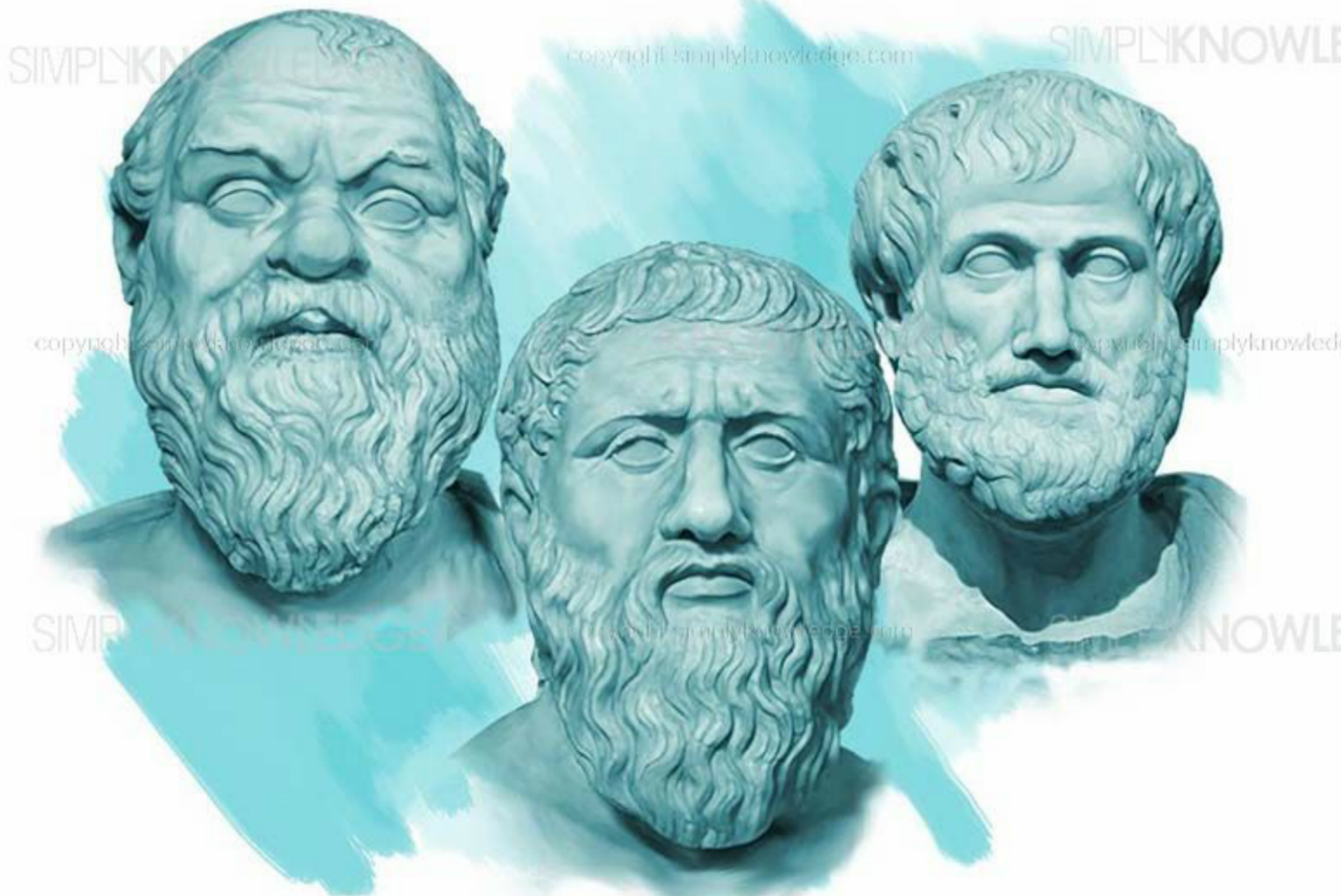
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The more impressive Jesus becomes for you - the less impressed you are with other things - and yet the MORE you care about them.









Most People: Super Impressed, wanting to be impressive, hated those smug jerks

"Are you the only ones who have not heard about the busybodiness of the Athenians? The people are chatterboxes and a litigious bunch, and in the harbor countless informers will ask who we are and from where we bring this freight. Wicked suspicion will lay hold of those malicious men. The Areopagus is right there, and its officials are more severe than tyrants. We ought to fear the Athenians more than the Syracusans." (1.11.6-7)

This quotation is from the pirate Theron in the novel of Chariton of Aphrodisias (mid 1st century)

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True Fruit of Skepticism

The Elites

Stoics and Epicureans

Skepticism and Pragmatism

When the leaders
believe in nothing

The People

"full of idols"

superstitious religion
and brutal lives

The people
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(elite skepticism *produces the opposite* of its intent)

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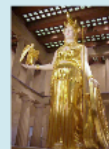
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How we Respond

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Faithful Response

Grace and truth: “contextual witness.”

Gracious Hospitality: means caring about your guest's condition and feelings, and then tailoring your action as a host to make them feel welcome, comfortable, safe, and that they belong.

Gracious Witness: means understanding another person's thinking, what they assume and what they find believable and why. Then hospitably welcome them to the truth.

Context MUST lead to witness

1. There's a human need for context
 2. A truly faithful witness is contextual
 3. That witness must be a witness to the truth
 4. Grace listens for context through immersion
- The witness to the truth is a witness to the truth



Paul in context...

Studied their city

Quoted their writers

Understood their objections

1. The witness to the truth
2. The witness to the truth
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We can't all be cultural apologists - but we can all be curious and perceptive.

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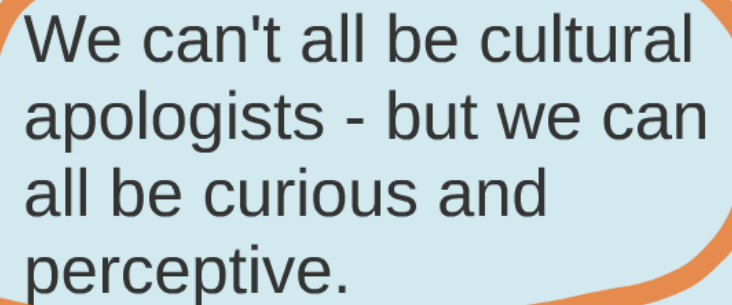
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Context MUST lead to witness

1. There being only one God  The IS ONLY ONE GOD- and you actually already know it
2. A Divine Judgment for people everywhere  The *is* a Judgment
3. That natural revelation is clear  God's creation and providence are clear- and you should have reached out to him
4. Special revelation of Christ through resurrection  The Resurrection is real- and it point to Jesus

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When you aren't impressed or impressing - you see human need for gracious truth

Grace listens for context

Witness offers the truth

Contextual witness



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