

# NOT OPEN

Spiritual  
V  
Win the Invisible Culture War

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# What the Not Open Remnant Takes Back: The Six “I Wills”

**W**E HAVE BEEN RUNNING, retreating, apologizing, adapting, chasing, fearing, and squirming long enough. It is time for us to take some ground back from the Kingdom of Darkness.

Recently Howard Schultz, the CEO of Starbucks, stirred up controversy when he challenged one of his company’s investors who was questioning Starbucks’ support of a gay marriage initiative. At a shareholder’s meeting when his company’s reduction in earnings was noted, Shultz was quoted as proclaiming, “Not every decision is an economic decision.” Shockingly, his shareholders, who of course are all about profit, erupted into a round of applause. Not wavering off his course, Mr. Schultz went on to declare to the gay marriage-opposing investor that he was invited to “sell [the] shares . . . and buy shares in another company. Thank you very much.”<sup>1</sup>

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Wow! I, of course, totally disagree with Mr. Shultz's position on the issue of gay marriage, but it is rather refreshing to see someone stand up sacrificially for what they believe. We need some Christians with even stronger backbone and tenacity than Shultz to stand for our righteous God and His ways.

As long as our fear of man is exceeding our fear of God, we are in danger of being ensnared (Proverbs 29:25). When the Open crowd is our friends, colleagues, and peers, it is harder to blow a distinct sound of warning. Our cost and risk are great. Someone is going to get upset, somebody else is going to get mad, and somebody else is liable to walk away from us, leaving us holding our job/friendship/church/family alone. This is why Jesus told the wise builder to assess the costs before he begins his new construction (Luke 14:28). Apparently Mr. Shultz had done just that. He seemed ready and willing to lose money.

What are the potential costs to us of the Not Open Remnant life? Here are those I have thought of but perhaps you see others:

- Reputation
- Friendship
- Misunderstanding
- False Accusation
- Business
- Ridicule
- Scorn
- Family Strife
- Job
- Career Promotion
- Status
- Comfort
- Finances

## What the Not Open Remnant Takes Back

But on the other hand, the potential benefits of the Not Open Remnant are:

- Approval of God (Galatians 1:10)
- Eternal Rewards (Romans 2:7, Matthew 6:9-21)
- Knowledge of the Truth (John 16:13)
- Satisfaction for Assignment Completion (Proverbs 13:19)
- Souls Helped to Heaven (Proverbs 11:30)
- True Peace (Matthew 11:28-30)
- Complete Joy (John 15:11)
- Fellowship of His Sufferings (Philippians 3:10)
- Provision (Philippians 4:19)
- Intimacy with the Father (James 4:8)

I personally believe the benefits far outweigh the costs. But no one ever said Not Open would be easy. In fact Matthew 11:12 says, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (KJV). That scripture helps us understand that the kingdom of heaven will be resisted, and those advancing the kingdom of heaven will need to use the right kind of godly force to make advancement. *Force* here can mean work, sacrifice, cost, effort, courage, tenacity, bravery, and boldness. It’s the stuff of knights and warriors and heroes and rescuers, the traditional imagery that has always made the storybooks and the movies shine.

Isn’t it interesting that these very images of “force” seem somehow counterintuitive to our coffee shop, chill out, discuss it and don’t rock any boats or be too restrictive or controversial

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image of modern Open Christianity? Eric Ludy, in his book *The Bravehearted Gospel*, says it like this:

I believe the “manly stuff” has been unconsciously removed from the body of Christ today. We are missing the manly input, potency, force, influence, and strength in Christ’s body. Some may feel uncomfortable that Jesus was a man, but there is no way around the fact that He was. And yet His body, the church, is strangely lacking the evidence of this fact in our modern Christian world. Jesus has suddenly gone metrosexual in America. He’s male, but He’s a male that seems ashamed of His masculinity . . . We talk about love, joy, peace, victory, and blessed happiness, but few in our ranks actually exhibit these basic evidences of the Christian faith. And what is disconcerting, is the fact that even fewer within the church show concern over this gross hypocrisy in our global representation of Jesus Christ. As a group, we Christians are soft, mushy, and lax. There seems to be a serious shortage of the majestic, intrepid, daring, just, and durable qualities the church once possessed. The steel of a man is strangely lacking.<sup>2</sup>

If we are to be mighty ark builders, we will need the spiritual “manly stuff” of Jesus! It will take bravery and strength to take back our word definitions from chapter 5.

- Normal
- Marriage



## What the Not Open Remnant Takes Back

- Love
- Hate
- Family
- Judge
- Cursing
- Christian
- Truth
- Simple-minded

Bottom line, we are going to have to crush—not just modify—our whole Open-Minded love affair and replace it with the truth of Romans 12:2 that says, “Do not *conform* any longer to the pattern of this world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

**Open-Mindedness is not biblical.**

Do you see it here? We were never supposed to be striving toward *Open-Mindedness*. That is not biblical. We were supposed to be striving toward *Renewed-Mindedness*! No wonder we got so off course.

Renewed-mindedness is a totally different concept. It is completely dependent on the word of God. Whatever the Bible says is what we think. Our thought processes are made new by sowing the scriptures into the foundations of all reasoning. Everything that does not line up with God’s word is rejected as false.

Uh-oh. I could just imagine some internal bristling right now as I just explained that. Be honest. What are you thinking to

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yourself right now? Are you thinking, “Lisa, you are sounding very \_\_\_\_\_ when you say that!” Now what word did you just put in that blank?

- Fundamentalist
- Conservative
- Evangelical
- Simplistic
- Bible-thumping
- Pharisaical
- Religious
- Law-Oriented
- Rigid
- Close-Minded
- Old-Fashioned
- Strict

Or did you come up with some others? Folks, this is part of our pressure! Did you know each of those labeling words I just used above is hitting alarm bells in the airwaves all around us? So much so that I have found myself tempted to hide, sometimes under the guise of humor. I don't want to be known as one of *those* types of Christians. We find ourselves dancing around and moving back from labels or hiding them on our websites and bios just so...just so what? So we won't be rejected? So we won't be scorned? So we won't be laughed at? So we won't be thought uncool? So we won't be identified with the people who wore those labels and then fell into sin and embarrassed us?

## What the Not Open Remnant Takes Back

Do you see the depth of our danger here? If we are going to try and use the Open definitions and ideologies to define us, we will be conformed to the world!

James says, “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:4). And the Apostle John says, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

Folks, I am shouting louder now! We MUST NOT CONTINUE this wimpy path! We were never supposed to make the world our citizenship. We were never supposed to live Open. And now we must stand up and shut the doors we have opened. We will do it one situation, one battle, and one day at a time.

To my college-age daughter who asked me for advice about the normalized gay man who was running in her circle of peers: isn’t it time to calmly pull that young man aside and have a talk? You see him every day, do you not? *Dave, I appreciate your right to choose whatever lifestyle you want. But each of our choices has consequences. I need to warn you, according to God’s word, that your path has consequences too. God loves you. He really does. And His word and His arms are open wide with love for you. Homosexuality is not an appropriate lifestyle to God. So I will not be able to celebrate your new relationship or call your new relationship a marriage. I will be praying for you and honoring your right to choose for yourself, but I will not be able to*

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*hide the truth from you as I consider you a friend. I hope you can understand that we needed to get that clear in our relationship.*

Does that seem hard? You bet! Does it seem dangerous? Well, yes. But does it seem necessary? Absolutely. Someone is going to have to shut the open doors! And that someone is us!

Do you get the idea? What if our pastors started preaching a clarifying word even now? What if we didn't smile and stay silent when our friend announces she's moving in with her boyfriend? What if we walked out of a movie when we were with friends because we knew Jesus would have to leave if he were there too? What if we were okay with a little persecution? Is it just possible we would start building our ark?

**What if we were okay with a little persecution?**

For the next six chapters we will be learning the six "I Wills" necessary for the Not Open Remnant Warrior. I will warn you in advance that they are not mushy or easy, but they are going to be exciting! Here is a sneak peek at where we are headed.

### The 6 Not Open "I Wills"

- I Will Come Out of the Closet
- I Will Fear the Right One
- I Will Hate . . . and Be Hated
- I Will Love Truthfully
- I Will Judge Righteously
- I Will Fight the Real Enemy

## Millennial Moment

I remember when I was training to make the all-conference team in the Missouri Valley Conference. It required so much of me that many of my friends couldn't understand my dedication. They would be going to see movies while I was pounding away the miles. One time a group of us were leaving for a mission trip overseas at 5:00 a.m. and everyone thought I was crazy for waking up at 3:00 in the morning to do a twelve-mile run before our departure. You see, I had a vision and a calling. So I sacrificed in order to be successful.

**The Not Open  
Remnant is not for the  
fainthearted but rather  
the Bravehearted.**

It is hard to stand alone. God has destined His Remnant for greatness, but we must count the cost if we want to join this “dream team” God is preparing. It is going to take some hard training and difficult sacrifices in order to make the cut.

The Not Open Remnant is not for the fainthearted but rather the brave hearted: those who are willing to lay everything on the line to remain pure before the Father. But you will not be alone! There are many others like you and me who have seen the impending danger and are choosing to answer the call of God... now!