

Introduction: What is Mullet Theology?

“Business in the front, and party in the back.” This has been the longstanding mantra of the mullet. This haircut’s claim to fame is that you can have it all at the same time. However, one big problem is that life isn’t lived as a two-dimensional photograph. In real life, you can’t hide the party in the back. Eventually, everyone will know.

Somehow, the mullet continues to survive. It seems like a style that would have died out by now, but it has hung on for decades. Most people think of the mullet as a caricature and joke. It’s the style people boldly wear then deeply regret.

As people who were born and raised in the monogrammed buckle of the Bible belt, Derek and I have observed a deep correlation between this daring hairdo and what is commonly known as cultural Christianity. We’ve come to call it Mullet Theology. Instead of “business in the front, and party in the back” Mullet Theology is better described as “Jesus in the front, and party in the back.” This way of life has just enough “Jesus” to look religious or even Christian to the untrained eye... in a photo... with the use of optimal lighting. But a closer look reveals the party going on behind those ears. The mullet may be a tragedy of style, but the bigger tragedy is those who are so immersed in cultural Christianity that they have bought into the lie of trying to live in two opposing realities at once. Cultural Christians want the comfort of Jesus *and* the pleasure of living life the way they want. Jesus is just a cute accessory to their lives.

Our hope is that in reading this book, our readers will see that Jesus should *be* everything we want rather than a means to *give us* everything we want. We hope to expose some ugly truths about our own culture while giving real hope to those deceived by its enticing lies.

Overview

Some mullets are more memorable than others. Chances are, you can think of a few famous/infamous mullets. We have chosen a few of our favorites, and we use them as teaching tools to help identify unique characteristics of cultural Christianity. Each chapter is named after a mullet.

Chapter One: The Monster Ballad Mullet
Chapter Two: The ‘Merica Mullet
Chapter Three: The Wrastlin’ Mullet
Chapter Four: The Billy Ray Mullet
Chapter Five: The Picture Day Mullet
Chapter Six: The Slater Mullet
Chapter Seven: The ‘Dega Mullet
Chapter Eight: The Joe Dirt Mullet

After we describe each mullet, we get out the trimming tools. What better cutting apparatus than the Sword of the Spirit? It’s pretty sharp.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **Hebrews 4:12**

Each chapter includes practical tips designed to strengthen your spiritual life and help you live out a more authentic faith. That’s our hope and our goal. We want to help you live a more God-honoring, Christ-centered life. The book ends with Chapter Nine: Time for a Haircut. The final chapter is designed to help you take the hard but necessary steps to shape up your theological hairstyle.

Definitions

It might be helpful if we define a few terms before diving in.

Cultural Christianity: a type of pseudo-Christianity based more on the traditions of a culture than the gospel. Cultural Christianity uses biblical language, Christian symbols, and Christian rituals, but it is severed from the real power of the gospel.

Cultural South: the region of the United States which houses traditional southern culture. The cultural south is located in the geographical south, but not all of the geographical south is part of the cultural south. For instance, Miami, Florida is in the

geographical south, but it is not part of the cultural south. There are many ways to distinguish the cultural south from the rest of the United States. Here are a few of our favorite:

- If you can order sweet tea and grits at a restaurant without getting a funny look, you're probably in the cultural south.
- If your grandmother makes better biscuits than Cracker Barrel, she's probably from the cultural south.
- If you think eating healthy means more fried vegetables, you're probably from the cultural south.
- If you watch Forrest Gump and don't think it's that strange of a story, you're probably from the cultural south.
- If you're thinking about Jeff Foxworthy right now, you're probably from the cultural south.

Southern Cultural Christianity: the cultural Christianity of the cultural south. It is marked by positive features like conservative politics, conservative morality, strong feelings of patriotism, support for local churches, and support for prayer in public venues. It is also marked by a surface level version of real Christianity. It does not really engage with Scripture, and it does not take discipleship seriously. It's relationship with Jesus is more superficial than serious.

Theological Mullet: any theology or lifestyle that claims some level of allegiance to Jesus while holding onto aspects of an unbiblical lifestyle.

A Warning

Let me warn you. We are pretty honest about cultural Christianity. We love the people and culture of the south. We are both southern born and southern bred. We love the salt of the earth people that call the cultural south home, and we love southern hospitality, southern food, southern traditions, and southern style. We believe the world can learn a lot from the cultural south. But we also believe that every culture has its blind spots. The cultural south is no exception. Mullet Theology is our attempt to lovingly expose some of the blind spots we see in the culture we call home.

We pray you will be encouraged, challenged, and more like Jesus after reading this book.