

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Matthew 5:14-16

***“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*”**

Last month we unpacked **Matthew 5:13** focusing on the hidden influence of salt. Jesus said His followers **are** the **salt of the earth**, the spice of life so to speak, that penetrates and preserves culture, enhances flavor and creates thirst. This month we look at verses **:14-16** where Jesus told His followers that they **are** the **light of the world**—the visible influence they have on their culture. As **salt**, believers are a moral preservative slowing down the process of society going bad. As **light**, believers are spiritual illuminators directing society back to God. Jesus is telling believers if they will **be** what they **are**, they will have a significant impact for good on society, both morally and spiritually.

In the beginning, God brought light into darkness and saw that it was good (**Genesis 1:3-4**). The elimination of darkness begins with the introduction of light. Man was born in the light, but chose to sin and plunged himself into darkness breaking his relationship with God. David said in **2 Samuel 22:29** that the Lord was his lamp, turning his darkness into light. David also tells us that the discontented people were looking for someone who could show them good prospects (material wealth, health, security, peace). His response was to ask God to shine the light of His face upon them (**Psalm 4:6**). The Scriptures tell us that **God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)**. God sent His Son, Jesus, *the Light of the World* (**John 8:12**) to purchase our salvation by becoming the sacrifice for our sin on the cross, making it possible to reestablish the relationship that had been broken (**Psalm 27:1**). He called His people out of darkness into His wonderful light (**1 Peter 2:9**). Then, God sent His Holy Spirit to indwell His followers, causing His light to shine in their hearts (**Psalm 118:27a; 2 Corinthians 4:6**). Every believer is to radiate the light of His goodness, righteousness, and truth to a lost world (**Ephesians 5:8-9**). Now that God’s light is in every believer, they just need to let it shine.

Isaiah 2:5 says, **“Come,....let us walk in the light of the Lord.”** How are we to **“walk in the light of the Lord”** and radiate His light in our society so they will be encouraged to praise our Father? I’d like to use the acrostic **L-I-G-H-T** to suggest five ways to introduce the light of Christ to our world:

“L” – Love: Be a person who loves God and your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39).

We should be gripped by the love of God to such an extent that we are compelled to share with unbelievers the coming judgment of God and the love of Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:14-16**). The test of the believer’s love is not in indifference, but in sharing God’s love found in His Word, and demonstrating that love in meeting the needs of others (**Romans 15:1-2**).

“I” – Integrity: Be a person of integrity (Proverbs 11:3).

The Biblical idea of integrity is that of completeness or wholeness of the entire person. One who is righteous and honest inside and out. Our great need for integrity is directly linked to our lost world. Although unbelievers may cultivate and promote deception, deep down many long to escape pretense and embrace the faith of believers who model honesty and integrity to them.

“G” – Growth: Be a person who grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18).

It is God’s grace that saves (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) and it is God’s grace that strengthens (**2 Timothy 2:1**). God provides grace for every situation and every challenge in life. To grow in grace is to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. We must grow in knowledge as well. Not just knowing our Bible, but knowing Christ, the central person and theme of the Bible.

“H” – Humility: Be a person of humility (James 4:10).

Paul describes in specific terms the Christ-like character we are to display when he says, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (**Ephesians 4:1-2**). In humility, value others above yourself (**Philippians 2:3**). The example we set is a powerful influence in our society. Radiating God’s light is not for attracting attention to ourselves, but that people might see God through our attitudes and actions, and praise Him.

“T” – Truth: Be a person who speaks and shares truth (Ephesians 4:15).

We live in a world that has exchanged the truth of God for a lie (**Romans 1:25**). Light exposes that which is not the truth. Man can only be saved by obedience to the truth found in His Word and in accordance to God’s will (**John 17:17**). Love shapes truth into words and ways that are winsome because love is patient and kind (**2Timothy 2:24-26**). We are to speak the truth in love, for love of God is the desired result of sharing truth (**1Timothy 1:5**).

Next month I plan to dig deeper into these five ways of letting our light shine by offering practical ideas and examples for engaging the culture.

Application:

May it be said that because of you people who walk in darkness have seen a great light – the light of Christ shining through you (Isaiah 9:2) and causing them to offer praise to God, the fitting response to a changed life.

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