

# Matthew 5:14-16 Commentary

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Sermon on the Mount

MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." 2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."



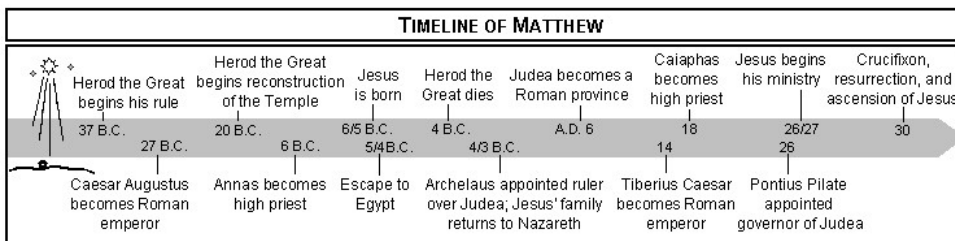
Click chart to enlarge  
 Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
 Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge

Jesus Birth and Early Years  
 Leading up to the Sermon on the Mount  
 Matthew 1-7



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot \* be hidden; ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Humeis este \(2PPAI\) to phos tou kosmou. ou dunatai \(3SPMI\) polis krubenai \(APN\) epano horous keimene: \(PPPNSF\)](#)

**Amplified:** You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

**NLT:** You are the light of the world—like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Philips:** "You are the world's light - it is impossible to hide a town built on the top of a hill. ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

**Wuest:** As for you, you are the light of the world. A city is not able to be hidden, situated on top of a mountain.

**Young's Literal:** 'Ye are the light of the world, a city set upon a mount is not able to be hid

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT	
An Simple Outline	
Chapter	Subject
Mt 5:3-9	Character
Mt 5:10-12	Conflict
Mt 5:13-7:27	Conduct

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: [Humeis este \(2PPAI\) to phos tou kosmou](#)

- Pr 4:18; John 5:35; 12:36; Ro 2:19,20; 2 Cor 6:14; Ep 5:8-14; Philippians 2:15; 1Th 5:5; Revelation 1:20; 2:1
- Matthew 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## YOU ARE THE LIGHT!

**You are the light of the world** - Great privilege carries with it great responsibility! "Jesus gives the Christian both a great compliment and a great responsibility when He says that we are the light of the world, because He claimed that title for Himself as He walked this earth (John 8:12 and John 9:5)." (Guzik)

Paul adds "you were formerly darkness (NOT JUST "IN" DARKNESS BUT ACTUALLY "DARKNESS!" AND HOW DARK WAS THAT DARKNESS IN ADAM, IN SIN! WOE!), but now you are Light in the Lord; **walk** (present imperative = not possible naturally! Only possible as we rely on the supernatural enabling desire and power of the Spirit!) as children of Light for (AND AS THE SPIRIT OF JESUS EMPOWERS US AND SHINES THROUGH US THE WORLD ENSHROUDED IN DARKNESS WILL SEE...) the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth." (Ephesians 5:8-9+). (BUT DON'T EXPECT EVERYONE TO LOVE YOU! SEE JESUS' DESCRIPTION OF THE EFFECT OF LIGHT ON THE WORLD - John 3:19-20).

In a parallel passage Paul wrote "Do this (SPIRIT ENABLED LOVE - Ro 13:10), knowing the **time** (NOTE ALL THE **TIME PHRASES** IN THIS PASSAGE!), that it is **already** the **hour** for you to awaken from sleep; for **now** salvation is **nearer** to us than **when** we believed (NEARER BECAUSE OUR ALLOTTED TIME ON EARTH IS ALMOST OVER AND ALSO NEARER BECAUSE WE ARE ONE DAY CLOSER TO HIS GLORIOUS RETURN). The **night is almost gone**, and the **day is near** (RETURN OF OUR "BLESSED HOPE"). Therefore (O, WHAT A WONDERFUL TERM OF CONCLUSION BASED AS IT IS ON THE PRECEDING GLORIOUS TRUTHS!) let us lay aside (NOTE MIDDLE VOICE = WE INITIATE AND PARTICIPATE IN LAYING ASIDE) the deeds (ERGON = WE ACTIVELY WORKED AT THE DEEDS) of darkness (THIS SIGNIFIES THAT WE ARE "WEARING" SOME OF THESE "DIRTY DARK RAGS" OF CLOTHING!) and put on the armor of light (PARALLEL WITH V14 THE IDEA IS PUT ON JESUS - IMITATE HIM - INCLUDING HIS RELIANCE ON THE SPIRIT FOR SUPERNATURAL POWER! SEE [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)). 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But **put on** (Aorist imperative = DO NOT DELAY! TO DELAY IS TO DISOBEY! RELY ON THE SPIRIT TO OBEY!) the

Lord Jesus Christ (HE IS LIGHT [Jn 1:5, 8, 9+, Jn 8:12, 12:46] AND IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL - 1 Jn 1:5+), and **make no provision** (present imperative with a negative - DO NOT TRY TO DO THIS RELYING ON YOU OLD NATURE, BUT BY RELYING **WHOLLY** ON THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF THE **HOLY** SPIRIT! AND NOTE CAREFULLY THE ORDER -- SET YOUR FOCUS FIRST ON JESUS! THEN IN THE LIGHT OF HIS GLORY, THE TRIFLING TRINKETS OF THIS PASSING WORLD WILL LOSE THEIR SPARKLE! SEE [The Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)) for the flesh in regard to its lusts." (Ro 13:11-14+)

**You** ([5210](#)) (**humeis**) is emphatic (first in the Greek sentence) which conveys the sense of "*you yourselves*". Note that you is plural and in the context of the rest of the NT would be applicable to the Church. Therefore this verse could be paraphrased "As for you, you are the light of the world." (Wuest)

**Phil Newton** - The "**you**" is emphatic in the Greek text, so that we might translate it "You, and you alone are the light of the world." We know that Jesus uses the same language of Himself in John 8:12, "I am the Light of the world." That passage speaks of light in an originative sense. He is the origin of such light so that He can add, "He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." Christians are light in a derivative sense in that the light we have comes as a result of relationship to Jesus Christ. We do not produce the light, but like the moon that reflects the light of the sun, we too reflect the light of His indwelling life. ([The Power of Christians as Light](#))

## **YOU ARE LIKE A WINDOW LETTING IN THE LIGHT**

**Ray Pritchard** tells this story "A little boy was sitting in church with his mom one day. As he looked up at the beautiful stained glass windows, he saw faces in the glass. "Mom, who are those people in the window?" he asked. "Those are the saints," she answered. The little boy thought for awhile and then said, "Oh, I know who the saints are. They're the ones that let the light in." I spoke earlier of the moral decay going on all around us. Let no one despair. The darker the night, the brighter the light shines. ([The Salt and Light Brigade](#))

Observe that the verb **are** is in the **present tense** signifying that citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven are continually lights ("*mobile lighthouses*" if you will) in this spiritually dark world. **Are** is also in the **indicative mood** which is the **mood of reality**. In other words, believers really **are** the **light of the world!** And don't forget to observe the context to help accurately interpret the meaning of Jesus' **metaphor** of "**light**". In other words, from the preceding context, what does the "**light**" look like for those who are in Christ (and He in them cp Col 1:27-note, Ro 8:9, Jn 8:12)? Does not the "**light**" which is to shine forth the character traits of the "*be attitudes*" Jesus has just described in Mt 5:3-12? And if Jesus is the ultimate "**light of the world**" (Jn 8:12), and He is in us by His indwelling Spirit (Ro 8:9-note), should not our daily desire be that Jesus be increasing in us, and that we be decreasing, so that they see daily see more of Him and less of us? (Jn 3:30-note, 2Cor 2:14,15,16!). Note that we don't have to **MAKE** ourselves light (or salt)! Paul explains that while we were "formerly darkness (not just *in* darkness, but *actual* darkness!), but now (we) **are light in the Lord**" and this great truth (and privilege) should motivate us to desire to obey the command to "**walk** (present imperative = command to continually behave this way - only possible as we surrender to the Spirit's enabling *desire* and *power* - Php 2:13NLT-note) as children of light." (Eph 5:8-note, 1Th 5:5-note, 1Th 5:8-note, cp Ps 27:1-note)

## **BEHIND US IS OUR TRUST BEFORE US IS OUR HOPE**

**Charles Spurgeon** in his sermon on Titus 2:11-14 comments on the two appearances of Christ and how this truth should motivate us to let our **light shine before men**....

**Behind us is our trust; before us is our hope.** Behind us is the Son of God in humiliation; before us is the great God our Saviour in his glory (Titus 2:13+). To use an ecclesiastical term, **we stand between two Epiphanies**: the first is the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh in dishonor and weakness; the second is the manifestation of the same Son of God in all his power and glory. In what a position, then, do the saints stand! They have an era all to themselves which begins and ends with the Lord's appearing....

We are living in **the age which lies between the two blazing beacons of the divine appearances**, and we are called to hasten from one to the other....

**We have everything to hope for in the last appearing, as we have everything to trust to in the first appearing**; and we have now to wait with patient hope throughout that weary interval which intervenes....

Already I have given to you, in this description of our position, **the very best argument for a holy life**. If it be so, my brethren, ye are not of the world even as Jesus is not of the world (John 17:14). If this be so, that **before** you blazes the supernatural splendour of the Second Advent, and **behind** you burns the everlasting

light of the Redeemer's first appearing, what manner of people ought ye to be! If, indeed, you be but journeying through this present world, suffer not your hearts to be defiled with its sins; learn not the manner of speech of these aliens through whose country you are passing. Is it not written, "**The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations**"? (Nu 23:9KJV) "**Come out** (ED: aorist imperative - speaks of urgency. To obey we must rely on the enabling power of the Spirit, not our natural, fleshly power!) from among them, and **be ye separate** (ANOTHER aorist imperative), **touch not** (present imperative with a negative - DO NOT TRY TO DO THIS RELYING ON YOU OLD NATURE, BUT BY RELYING **WHOLLY** ON THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF THE **HOLY SPIRIT!**) the unclean thing," (2 Cor 6:17) for the Lord hath said, "**I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.**" (2 Cor 6:18, cf PAUL'S EXHORTATION IN 2 Cor 7:1+) They that lived before the coming of Christ had responsibilities upon them, but not such as those which rest upon you who have seen the face of God in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6+), and who expect to see that face again (1 Jn 3:2+). You live in light which renders their brightest knowledge a comparative darkness: **walk** (ED: present imperative = only possible as we rely on the Spirit!) as children of light (Eph 5:8+).

**You stand between two mornings** (see 1 Pe 1:11+), between which there is no evening. The glory of the Lord has risen upon you once in the incarnation and atonement of your Lord (Isa 60:1-2): that light is shining more and more, and soon there will come the perfect day (Pr 4:18KJV), which shall be ushered in by the Second Advent. The sun shall no more go down (Isa 60:20),, but it shall unveil itself, and shed an indescribable splendour upon all hearts that look for it. "**Put on therefore the armour of light.**" (Ro 13:12+) What a grand expression! Helmet of light, breastplate of light, shoes of light—everything of light. What a knight must he be who is clad, not in steel, but in light, **light which shall flash confusion on his foes!**

**There ought to be a holy light about you, O believer in Jesus, for there is the appearing of grace behind you, and the appearing of glory before you.**

**Two manifestations of God shine upon you. Like a wall of fire the Lord's appearings are round about you: there ought to be a special glory of holiness in the midst.** "**Let your light so shine** (ED: aorist imperative - speaks of urgency. To obey we must rely on the enabling power of the Spirit, not our natural, fleshly power!) before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Mt 5:16+) That is the position of the righteous according to my text (Titus 2:11+), and **it furnishes a loud call to holiness.** ([Titus 2:11-14 The Two Appearings and the Discipline of Grace](#))

## **YOU ARE LIKE A "DIVINE" WATERMARK**

A **watermark** is "*a faint design made in some paper during manufacture that is visible when held against the light and typically identifies the maker.*" (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 11th ed.) Beloved disciple of Jesus, His "mark" is in us, and becomes visible through us! We are no longer our own but have been bought with a price and belong to Him. We as His disciples are to stand ready to lovingly obey His command to let our life be seen in such a way that they might see His "Watermark," that they might see Him, not us, that they might believe His Gospel and be saved eternally. Play the soul stirring song below by the group Watermark and prayerfully ponder the "Bibliocentric" lyrics which are guaranteed to make you want to stop and praise Him...

### **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

Giver of creation  
Bringer of salvation  
Word of God, Eternal Life  
Praise the Son of God

Promised One of Heaven  
To bring us to your kingdom  
Rescued us from darkness  
Praise the Son of God.

Jesus, light of the world  
Shine on us, Shine on us  
Word of Life, spoken for love  
Breathe on us. Breathe on us.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD  
KING JESUS!

Jesus is saying that those who possess "spiritual light" are to be light transmitters! As believers, we are to let our actions speak louder than our words. Our "Gospel" life should open doors of opportunity for our lips to speak the Gospel (cp 1Pe 3:15-note). We must "speak" the Gospel with our lives so that it will validate the Gospel we speak with our lips! What is the "Gospel" your life is proclaiming to all you encounter?

## YOU ARE LIKE A MOON WHO REFLECTS THE SON

**Think of the believer's light this way** - When Jesus walked the earth, He was the light of the world (Jn 8:12, 9:5, 12:35, 36, 1:4, 9). He was like the sun. He was the Source of all spiritual light. But just as the sun goes down and is followed by the rising moon which reflects the light of the sun, so too believers are now to be "moons" who reflect the light of the Son! His light shines on us and in us and we shine forth His light to a spiritually dark world (Php 2:15-note). Jesus left, but He did not leave us alone. He sent His Spirit to "energize" His light in and through us. Believers should be like the veritable "[energizer bunnies](#)" as portrayed in the classic Eveready battery commercial!

**W A Criswell** explained it this way - "A small problem confronts the interpreter who discovers that Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 5:14, "Ye are the light of the world." Yet in John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." What appears to be a contradiction is not one at all. The moon provides light for the earth just as the sun does. Yet, the actual source of light for both the sun and the moon is the sun. The moon only reflects the light of the sun. By the same token, Jesus, the God-man, is the source of all light. His disciples become reflectors in a darkened world, transmitting through their lives the true light of the eternal Son of God. ([LIGHT OF THE WORLD](#))

Believers now have the light for as Paul wrote it was "God, Who said, '**Light** shall shine out of darkness,' is the One Who has shone in our hearts to give the **light** of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2Cor 4:6note)

Let **Solomon's** proverb encourage you to walk as a child of light...

**But (term of contrast** - don't "miss" these opportunities to observe and meditate on the passage! You can always ask at least one question!) the path of the righteous is like () the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day. (Pr 4:18-[William Arnot's comments on Proverbs 4:18, 19 = The Path of the Just](#))

**Light of the world** - **C H Spurgeon** makes the point that...

THIS title had been given by the Jews to certain of their eminent Rabbis. With great pomposity they spoke of Rabbi Judah, or Rabbi Jochanan, as the lamps of the universe, the **lights of the world**. It must have sounded strangely in the ears of the Scribes and Pharisees to hear that same title, in all soberness, applied to a few bronzed-faced and horny-handed peasants and fishermen, who had become disciples of Jesus. Jesus, in effect, said, — not the Rabbis, not the Scribes, not the assembled Sanhedrim, but ye, my humble followers, ye are the light of the world.

He gave them this title, not after he had educated them for three years, but at almost the outset of his ministry; and from this I gather that the title was given them, not so much on account of what they knew, as on account of what they were. Not their knowledge, but their character made them the light of the world. They were not yet fully trained in his spiritual school, and yet he saith to them, "Ye are the light of the world;" the fact being, that wherever there is faith in Christ there is light, for our Lord has said "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not walk in darkness." "The entrance of thy word giveth light."

Genuine faith in Christ turns a man from darkness to marvellous light, and transforms him into "light in the Lord"; his aims and objects, his desires, his speech, his actions, become full of divine light, which illuminates all the chambers of his soul, and then pours forth from the windows so as to be seen of men.

The believer is appointed to be a lighthouse to others, a cheering lamp, a guiding star. It is true that his light will be increased as he learns more of Christ, he will be able to impart more instruction to others when he has received more, but even while he is yet a beginner, his faith in Jesus is in itself a light; men see his good worlds even before they discover his knowledge.

The man of faith who aims at holiness is a light of the world, even though his knowledge may be very limited, and his experience that of a babe.

I mention this at the outset in order that every Christian may see the application of the text to himself. It is not spoken to the apostles, or to ministers exclusively, but to the entire body of the faithful — "Ye are the light of the world." Ye humble men and women whose usefulness will be confined to your cottages, or to your workshops, ye whose voices will never be heard in the streets, whose speech will only be eloquent in the ears of

those who gather by your firesides, you, even you, noiseless and unobserved as your lives will be, — ye are the true light of the world. Not alone the men whose learned volumes load our shelves, not alone the men whose thundering tones startle the nations, or who with busy care for God's glory compass sea and land to find subjects for the kingdom of Jesus, but you, each one of you, who are humbly resting upon the Savior, and lovingly carrying out your high vocation as the children of God, and followers of his dear Son.

Let us never forget that **light** must first be imparted to us, or it can never go forth from us. We are not lights of the world by nature; at best we are but lamps unlit until the Spirit of God comes. Enquire, therefore, my hearer, of thyself whether God has ever kindled thee by the flame of his Spirit. Hast thou been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into light? Has the flame immortal of the divine life touched thee? If so, thou hast light in thyself, and light towards others, and thy light will work effectually in many ways. It will reveal the darkness of those who are round about thee. Thy light will show the darkness how dark it is.

Even as Christ's life judged upon the men of his age, so does the faith of Christians expose the evils of unbelief, and the holiness of believers reveals the wickedness of sin.

Our light also reproveth the deeds of darkness, and condemns them. Even though we were never to use a severe word, a godly life would be a stern rebuke of sin.

Hence it comes to pass that we must expect to be opposed, for "he that doeth evil heareth the light." The world does not understand us, "for the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness understandeth it not"; and, therefore, it misrepresents us, and rages against us. In a certain sense the saints are day by day the judges of mankind; they avoid all censoriousness, for they know who has said, "judge not, that ye be not judged," but unconsciously to themselves their godly, holy, and devout lives accuse and condemn the wicked, and the Spirit of God through them full often convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment...

Why doth God make men to be lights to other men? There are three answers; first, it averts from the light-givers themselves many evils; secondly, it bestows upon them many benefits; and, thirdly, it has an encouraging aspect towards the light receivers — those who are meanwhile sitting in darkness and needing the light. (See **Spurgeon's entire sermon for amplification of each of these points [The Light of the World](#)**)

**Charles Simeon** writes...

IF we had not been authorized by God Himself, we should never have presumed to designate the saints by such honorable appellations as are unreservedly given to them in the Scriptures. Of all the objects in the visible creation, the sun is the most glorious; nor is there any thing, either in this terraqueous (consisting of land and water) globe or in the firmament of heaven, which does not partake of its benign influence: yet even to that are the saints compared; "Ye are the light of the world." That all the parts of our text may come easily and profitably under our view, we shall consider,

**I. The office to which God has destined His people**— Strictly speaking, neither Prophets nor Apostles could arrogate to themselves the honour which is here in a subordinate sense conferred on all the saints: it belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the Sun of Righteousness;" (Malachi 4:2) and who says of himself, "I am the light of the world." (Jn 8:12) St. John, speaking of the Baptist, (who was greater than all the prophets,) expressly declares, that "he was not that Light; but that Christ was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (Jn 1:8, 9) In this view, the name of stars would rather befit us, because we shine only with a borrowed lustre; reflecting merely the rays which we have received from the Lord Jesus: but, as exhibiting to the world all the true light that is in it, God has been pleased to dignify us with that higher name, "The light of the world." He has sent his people to fulfil that office in the moral, which the sun performs in the natural world. (**Read the entire sermon - [Matthew 5:14-16 Christians the Light of the World](#)**)

**You are the light** - Not "a" light, but "the" light. God has left each of us here, to shine for Him, to shine His Gospel for His Kingdom and for His glory. Dear disciple of Jesus, **never** underestimate your value in the eyes of your Heavenly Father or of your value and integral role in His Kingdom Work! Is this Scriptural? The apostle **Paul** would answer that "**we** are **His workmanship**" ("masterpieces," "works of art," "poems" - Greek = poiema), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10-note)

**Alexander Maclaren** emphasizes the "power" for a disciple's light noting that...

We shall be '**light**' if we are 'in the Lord.' It is by union with Jesus Christ that we partake of His illumination. A sunbeam has no more power to shine if it be severed from the sun than a man has to give light in this dark

world if He be parted from Jesus Christ. Cut the current and the electric light dies; slacken the engine and the electric arc becomes dim, quicken it and it burns bright. So the condition of my being light is my keeping unbroken my communication with Jesus Christ; and every variation in the extent to which I receive into my heart the influx of His power and of His love is correctly measured and represented by the greater or the lesser brilliancy of the light with which I reflect His radiance. Ye were some time darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' Keep near to Him, and a firm hold of His hand, and then you will be light. ([Matthew](#))

**Comment:** While I thoroughly agree with Maclaren, one needs to ask in the New Covenant age, the Church Age, what provision has Jesus made for His disciples to be "energized?" I would submit that it is via His indwelling Spirit, the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9), the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7). Not only did the church have to wait for the "power" to be turned on so to speak (Acts 1:8, 2:1-4), but throughout Acts we see the repetitive theme of the power of the Spirit of Christ. For example see the Spirit and His association with power (dunamis) - Acts 1:8, Acts 4:7-8, 33, Acts 6:5, 8, Acts 10:38, Eph 3:16, Luke 1:35 Ro 15:13, Ro 15:19, 1Cor 2:4-5 (cp Description of the "Kingdom of God" in 1Cor 4:20 with Ro 14:17). See also the references to filled with the Spirit - Acts 2:4. Acts 2:14, Acts 4:8, 31, Acts 9:17, Acts 13:9, 52, (compare "abundant grace" = Acts 4:33), Stephen - Acts 6:5, 8, 10, Acts 7:55, 56, 57, 58

**Light** ([5457](#)) (**phos** from **pháo** = to shine) speaks of luminousness which may be a literal light but more often as in this verse is figurative.

### **Light Penetrates and Dispels Darkness** (John 1:5ESV)

Light is that which enables you to see or which makes vision possible. Light goes with sight. Light illuminates, exposes, guides, and directs. Light gives life (to vegetable and animal).

The opposite of light is dark or darkness which speaks of obscurity, delusion, confusion, camouflage, gloom, murkiness, shadows, nightfall and death.

**Dwight Pentecost** reminds us that "The nature of light is to shine. There is no such thing as light that does not communicate itself. There is no such thing as self contained light. Light may originate in a distant star and travel a span of light-years, but it does not get tired of shining and cease to shine. Its nature is to shine. Christ says He has made us lights in the world, and we are not self-contained. It is the nature of the child of God who has been made light to communicate the light given to him. ([Pentecost, J. D. Design for living: Lessons in Holiness from the Sermon on the Mount. Kregel Publications](#))

Jesus while in Jerusalem and having just cried out that He alone could quench their spiritual thirst (John 4:1, 14, 15, John 7:37-39), then declares to the Jewish audience that He is the Light of the World - "Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

John had earlier recorded of Jesus that " In Him was life, and the life was the light of men (cf 1John 1:5 "God is light" thus Jesus is God). And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (katalambano = take eagerly; possess, attain, seize with hostile intent. Thus translated variously with ideas of extinguish it, overcome it, put it out, understand or perceive it). There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John (John 5:35). He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (John 1:4-9)

Jesus called **John the Baptist** a **light** declaring that "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. (John 5:35)

Now He turns to His audience and tells them "You and you alone are the Light of the world." These words must have come as quite a shock for "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT, AND TO THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED. (Mt 4:16, from Isaiah 9:1).

And yet now that His Light had dawned on them, He was declaring that they themselves were "the light". **And how could they be the light?** In the last week of His life in John 12:35-36 Jesus explains how one can themselves become light declaring "Jesus therefore said to them, "For a little while longer the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them." (John 12:35-36)



Luke adds that Jesus charge to Paul was to go to be a minister and a witness (especially through the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles) "to open their eyes so that they may turn **from darkness to light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:18)

What Jesus has just presented in the eight beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12) is the character of men and women who belong to the Kingdom of Heaven, and are the ones who are to be the light of the world "those who were poor in spirit, mourned over sin, were meek not mean spirited, hungered and thirsted for a truly righteous life instead of self-righteousness, were merciful (and willing to forgive as they had been forgiven), were pure in heart with a single minded focus on God, were peacemakers and as a result of being all the above, were persecuted for the sake of God's righteousness lived out in their everyday lives.

As true citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven these men and women would be the lights who would shine into the darkness of the kingdom of this world (Luke 4:5-6, 1Jn 5:19).

Believers who are surrendering to the **power of the Spirit** (Eph 5:18-note, Eph 3:16-note, Eph 3:20-note, Gal 5:16-note) are thereby (and only thereby!) enabled to live out the reality of the "*be attitudes*" and in do doing shine forth like the light of a city on a hill or a lamp on a stand. We must not try to hide from the world but let our lives count for Christ in such a way that God will get the glory for the good (God) deeds (Spirit initiated and enabled deeds, "John 15:5 deeds" if you will) in our lives.

Notice that it is the distinctiveness of our Christian character, conduct, and conversation which inevitably and naturally points men to Christ. It is not our winsome programs but our regenerate, Spirit empowered, holy lives that expose the moral morass of our culture.

**Are you a living light where Christ has placed you as His ambassador that you might have an opportunity to speak forth the word of reconciliation** (2Cor 5:20-note) ?

In **Ephesians** Paul exhorts us...

Therefore (term of conclusion - always pause and ponder with some 5W/H questions!) (See Eph 5:1-2-note, Eph 5:3-4-note, Eph 5:5-6-note, Eph 5:7-note) do not be partakers with them (the sons of disobedience, Eph 5:6); for you were (past tense - "*were*" is emphatic - you really were! is the idea) formerly darkness, but now you *are* light (not a lamp but light itself) in the Lord; walk (command to make this our lifestyle = **present imperative**) as **children of light** (for the **fruit of the light** consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of **darkness**, but instead even **expose** them (this is the purpose of citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven - expose the deeds of darkness, but don't expect the darkness to thank you, cf Mt 5:10-12); for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But **all things become visible** when they are **exposed by the light**, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then **do not be foolish**, (present imperative) but **understand** (present imperative) what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** (present imperative) with the Spirit" (see **notes** Eph 5:8; 5:9; 5:10; 5:11; 5:12; 5:13; 5:14; 5:15; 5:16; 5:17; 5:18)

When Paul says "**awake** (present imperative) **sleeper and arise from the dead**" one interpretation is that it represents an invitation to those in darkness to enter the light of Christ. The light of the life of a Christian should always be preaching a sermon, always exposing the surrounding darkness. Some will become hostile (cp Jn 3:19, 20, 21), but some will see the light of Christ in us the hope of glory (Col 1:27-note). The other interpretation, which is also reasonable, is that Paul is instructing "sleepy" believers to "Wake up! Quit fixing your mind on the things of this earth! Quit allowing the world to "pour you into it's mold! Quit living like citizens of earth rather than heaven!, etc" (Col 3:2-note, Ro 12:2-note Phillips translation, Php 3:18, 19-note, Php 3:20, 21-note, cp Ro 13:11-note, Ro 13:12-note, 1Th 5:6-7-note)

**Warren Wiersbe** reminds us that "Christians are not sleeping in sin and death. We have been raised from the dead through faith in Him. The darkness of the graveyard is past, and we are now walking in the light of salvation. Salvation is the beginning of a new day, and we ought to live as those who belong to the **light**, not to the darkness. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Note that in describing who we were before Christ in Ephesians 5:8, Paul does not say you were "*in darkness*" or "*of darkness*" but that you "**were darkness**" itself! Our total existence, including our being and our behavior, was totally characterized by darkness. There was no other aspect to our spiritual life other than that of darkness. As "*sons of disobedience*" we were children of darkness. Note also that we were not simply "innocent" victims of the Evil One, Satan the Prince of darkness, but we were actually contributors to the darkness. Our very nature was characterized by darkness and sin which is the rotten fruit of darkness. Thus the striking contrast in this verse and the incredible proclamation by Jesus that those who once were literally the essence of darkness now have

the glorious privilege to be **light in the Lord**.

**In Ephesians 5:8, Paul is teaching an incredible truth** - believers are not simply enlightened ones (which we are) but even more he teaches that we are now actually light! Somehow our incorporation into Christ allows us to some extent to **be light**, however imperfect. Our light is still derived from Him, and not a ray of it comes from ourselves, but this light is more than simply **reflected** light (see illustration below from Dr Barnhouse). Peter teaches that we are actually "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2Pe 1:4 [note] - note that this truth does not make us "little Christs" as some have falsely taught!). This is indeed a glorious, albeit mysterious truth that is difficult to fully comprehend (cf 1Cor 13:12, cf 2Cor 3:18). Somehow believers shine with the light of Christ, that radiates forth with life-changing effect. Jesus is the Light of the world, a world which is dead in darkness and His life in and through us as believers somehow transforms us into the lights of the world in His stead and for His Father's glory! If you are a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven you will shine somehow, some way. Don't try to hide what you are by nature. Now your conduct is to continually conform to your essential character (light).

**Peter** echoes the truth that we are to let our light shine and "Keep (present tense = continually = only possible as we yield to the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ!) your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good (Spirit enabled) deeds, as they observe them, glorify (give a proper opinion of) God in the day of visitation. (see note 1 Peter 2:12)

**Hugh Latimer** was an English martyr, a light to the world, who said to his fellow martyr to be, **Nicholas Ridley**, as the the fire was lit to burn them at the stake "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day **light such a candle by God's grace** in England as shall never be put out. ([click](#) for more detail)

**Kent Hughes** explains how believers are lights noting that "Dr. Barnhouse, the master of illustration, used to explain it this way. He said that when Christ was in the world, he was like the shining sun that is here in the day and gone at night. When the sun sets, the moon comes up. The moon, the church, shines, but not with its own light. It shines with reflected light. When Jesus was in the world he said, "I am the light of the world." But as he contemplated leaving this world, he said, "You are the light of the world." At times the church has been at full moon, dazzling the world with an almost daytime light. These have been times of great enlightenment, times such as those of Paul and Luther and Wesley. And at other times the church has been only a thumbnail moon, with very little light shining upon the earth. Whether the church is a full moon or a new thumbnail moon, waxing or waning, it reflects the light of the sun. (Hughes, R. K. [Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom. Crossway Books](#))

The implication of the need for light in the world is that there is darkness. **Phil Newton** gives a nice discussion of darkness explaining that "Darkness impairs vision. In a spiritual sense, the kind of darkness that the Bible speaks of impairs a person morally. He cannot see. He does not understand the effects of sin or even the root of it in the depravity of the human heart. His entire way of thinking is warped by the darkness. His understanding has been switched off when it comes to grasping moral issues related to his own life. And so he joins organizations that go to great lengths to protect snail darters or endangered fish or certain species of animals but then supports the abortion of an unborn child. In his mind a snail or a mouse or a whale has as much value as a human being that has been made in the image of God. His thinking is warped by the darkness. He shakes his head in disgust over the gunning down of eight innocent people then plugs in his music that advocates killing, immorality, and drugs or sits down to three hours of non-stop violence in front of the television. Darkness has blinded his ability to see his own hypocrisy. A politician having an affair with an intern or a serial rapist being released from prison appalls him, but then he sits down in front of a screen and indulges his mind in pornography on the Internet. Darkness has twisted his thinking so that he has no objective standard of morality or a sense of approaching judgment. ([The Power of Christians as Light](#))

#### RELATED RESOURCES:

- American Tract Society [Light](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Light](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Light](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Light Divine Light of Nature](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Light](#)
- Spurgeon's Illustration Collection [God: Is Light](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Light, Light of the World](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Light](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Light Light and Darkness](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Light](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Light](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Light of Truth Light and Air Light](#)
- Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature [Light](#)

- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Light](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Light](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Light](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Light](#)

**World** (2889) (**kosmos**) means orderly arrangement (thus our English word "cosmetics"! and in this context refers to the human race in general (which is interesting for as we look at our "world" it looks to be in moral and spiritual chaos!). It should also be noted that **kosmos** refers to world in a spiritual sense of the man-centered, Satan-directed system (1Jn 5:19, Jn 12:31) of this present age, which is alienated from and hostile toward God and God's people (cf Mt 5:10, 11, 12).

It is intriguing that in Matthew, the most "Jewish" of all the Gospels, Jesus enlarges His audience's sphere of intended influence to the entire "world" and not just the community of Jews in Israel. This truth is paralleled in Jesus' Great Commission

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **Go** therefore (term of conclusion = Ask "Why are we to go?" or "What is the basis for His commission?") and **make disciples** (matheteuo in the aorist imperative = the only command in the commission) of **all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them **to observe all that I commanded you** (Notice that real believers, genuine disciples, really obey, validating with their lives the profession of their lips!); and **lo**, I am with you always (How will He be with them always? His indwelling Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, Acts 16:7, Lk 24:49, Acts 1:8-note), even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

**Comment:** Don't miss what Jesus is saying - we can only "go" in the power of the "lo" (the provision of His presence and power through His Spirit!)

**Kosmos** often is used in the NT to describe the self-centered, godless value system and mores of fallen mankind. The goal of the "world" is humanistic, exaltation of man, self-glory, self-fulfillment, self-indulgence, self-satisfaction, and every other form of self-serving (cp Paul's description of the last days - 2Ti 3:1-4 **notes** 2 Ti 3:1-2; 3:3-4).

**John** explains that...

We know that we are of God, and the whole **world** lies in the power of the evil one. (1John 5:19)

In **Revelation** we read about the eventual fate of this present darkness...

And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The **kingdom of the world** has become the **kingdom of our Lord**, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." (See note [Revelation 11:15](#))

### His Lamps

God's lamps we are,  
 To shine where He shall say:  
 And lamps are not for sunny rooms,  
 Nor for the light of day;  
 But for the dark places of the earth,  
 Where shame and wrong and crime have birth,  
 Or for the murky twilight grey,  
 Where wandering sheep have gone astray,  
 Or where the Lamp of Faith grows dim,  
 And souls are groping after Him.  
 And as sometimes a flame we find,  
 Clear-shining through the night,  
 So dark we do not see the lamp  
 But only see the Light,  
 So may we shine, God's love the flame,  
 That men may glorify His Name  
 --Annie Johnson Flint

- Genesis 11:4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Revelation 21:14-27
- Matthew 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**City** ([4172](#)) (**polis**) in Scripture usually referred to a city enclosed with a wall.

Citizens of the Kingdom of Christ now reside as aliens and strangers (see notes 1 Peter 1:1, 1 Peter 2:11) in the "Kingdom of this World" (See note [Revelation 11:15](#)) but our King instructs us

"You do not live in some spiritual ghetto! No, No! You illuminate the darkness of the Kingdom of this World wherever you reside!"

What a privilege we have beloved. Does the Church really grasp what the King is proclaiming is true about us?

### **There is no such thing as an invisible believer!**

It is difficult for modern readers to understand the importance of Jesus' statement, for we have lights everywhere at night. Not so in ancient Palestine. And if one was traveling at night, he did not have freeway lamps, but was dependent on the glow of the lamp lights in the windows of houses in the cities to help direct him on his journey.

**Set** ([2749](#)) (**keimai**) means to be in a place frequently in sense of `being contained in' or `resting on' as in the present context of a city set on a hill

**Hill** ([3735](#)) (**oros**) describes a relatively high elevation of land and contrasts with the Greek word **bounos** which also means `hill' albeit somewhat lower. Jesus' point is that this is not a city down in the deepest valley but is clearly visible, in view of all to see.

**Cannot** is the combination of **not** ([3756](#)) (**ou** = absolutely not) + **can** ([1410](#)) (**dunamai**) see in depth study of related word **dunamis** which means to be able or to have power by virtue of inherent ability. What Jesus is saying that just as it is impossible for a city set on the side of a hill to be hidden so too it should be true of every genuine believer -- the Spirit of "the Light of the world" inhabits their body so they have the inherent power to shine, but still must make that choice daily. Will I shine or will I shy away? A city absolutely cannot be hidden and neither should a genuine follower of Jesus.

**Dwight Pentecost** writes that "One who travels the Holy Land is impressed with the fact that multitudes of villages were built on the tops of the hills... When night came, the light in the houses on the hill could not be hidden. From a great distance, one knew the location of the next village because of the light from that hilltop." ([Pentecost, J. D. Design for living: Lessons in Holiness from the Sermon on the Mount. Kregel Publications](#))

**Hidden** ([2928](#)) (**krupito** gives us our English "crypt," "cryptic," etc, cp **krupitos**) means to cover, to conceal, or to keep secret (either protectively or for selfish reasons)

And neither can a genuine believer hide the fact that they have a real relationship with Jesus Christ. This begs the very pithy, very personal question for all of us (2Cor 13:5-note)...

**Am I really walking with Jesus?**

**Is my relationship genuine?**

**Or my profession just that?**

(cp Jesus' words- Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22,23-note)

**Alexander Maclaren** emphasizes that...

The nature and property of light is to radiate. It cannot choose but shine; and in like manner the little village perched upon a hill there, glittering and twinkling in the sunlight, cannot choose but be seen. So, says Christ, 'If you have Christian character in you, if you have Me in you, such is the nature of the Christian life that it will certainly manifest itself.' Let us dwell upon that for a moment or two. Take two thoughts: All earnest Christian conviction will demand expression; and all deep experience of the purifying power of Christ upon character will show itself in conduct...

all deep experience of the purifying power of Christ upon character will show itself in conduct. It is all very well for people to profess that they have received the forgiveness of sins and the inner sanctification of God's Spirit. If you have, let us see it, and let us see it in the commonest, pettiest affairs of daily life. The communication between the inmost experience and the outermost conduct is such as that if there be any real revolution deep down, it will manifest itself in the daily life. I make all allowance for the loss of power in transmission, for the loss of power in friction. I am glad to believe that you and I, and all our imperfect brethren, are a great deal better in heart than we ever manage to show ourselves to be in life. Thank God for the

consolation that may come out of that thought—but notwithstanding I press on you my point that, making all such allowance, and setting up no impossible standard of absolute identity between duty and conduct in this present life, yet, on the whole, if we are Christian people with any deep central experience of the cleansing power and influence of Christ and His grace, we shall show it in life and in conduct. Or, to put it into the graphic and plain image of my text, If we are light we shall shine...

there is yet a solemn possibility that men—even good men—may stifle and smother and shroud their light. You can do, and I am afraid a very large number of you do do, this; by two ways. You can bury the light of a holy character under a whole mountain of inconsistencies. If one were to be fanciful, one might say that the bushel or meal-chest meant material well-being, and the bed, indolence and love of ease. I wonder how many of us Christian men and women have buried their light under the flour-bin and the bed, so interpreted? How many of us have drowned our consecration and devotion in foul waters of worldly lusts, and have let the love of earth's goods, of wealth and pleasure and creature love, come like a poisonous atmosphere round the lamp of our Christian character, making it burn dim and blue?

And we can bury the light of the Word under cowardly and sheepish and indifferent silence. I wonder how many of us have done that? Like blue-ribbon men that button their great-coats over their blue ribbons when they go into company where they are afraid to show them, there are many Christian people that are devout Christians at the Communion Table, but would be ashamed to say they were so in the miscellaneous company of a railway carriage or a table d'hote. There are professing Christians who have gone through life in their relationships to their fathers, sisters, wives, children, friends, kindred, their servants and dependants, and have never spoken a loving word for their Master. That is a sinful hiding of your light under the bushel and the bed.

[\(Matthew\)](#)

**IVP Commentary** - Until my conversion in 1975 I professed to be an atheist in part because I looked at the roughly 85 percent of my fellow U.S. citizens who claimed to be Christians and could not see that their faith genuinely affected their lives. I reasoned that if even Christians did not believe in Jesus' teachings, why should I? My excuse for unbelief—and the excuse of many other secularists I knew—continued until God's Spirit confronted me with the reality that the truth of Christ does not rise or fall on the claims of his professed followers, but on Jesus himself. The faith of nominal Christians may appeal to non-Christians who can use it to justify their own unbelief, but such "Christians" will have no part in God's kingdom. Instead they will be thrown out and trampled (Mt 5:13). (Craig Keener)

**Guzik...**

The purpose of light is to illuminate and expose what is there. Therefore light must be exposed before it is of any use - if it is hidden under a basket, it is no longer useful. Cannot be hidden: Just like a city that is set on a hill, it goes against the very nature and purpose of light for it to be hidden. When a Christian hides his light, he fights himself and the Holy Spirit by never letting his light so shine before men.

A key thought in both the pictures of salt and light is distinction. Salt is needed because the world is rotting and decaying and if our Christianity is also rotting and decaying, it won't be any good. Light is needed because the world is in darkness, and if our Christianity imitates the darkness, we have nothing to show the world.

To be effective we must seek and display the Christian distinctive. We can never affect the world for Jesus by becoming like the world.

The figures of salt and light also remind us that the life marked by the beatitudes is not to be lived in isolation. We often assume that those inner qualities can only be developed or displayed in isolation from the world, but Jesus wants us to live them out before the world.

Jesus points to a breadth in the impact of disciples that must have seemed almost ridiculous at the time. How could these humble Galileans salt the earth, or light the world? But they did.

Jesus never challenges us to become salt or light. He simply says that we are - and we are either fulfilling or failing that responsibility. ([Matthew 5 Commentary](#))

**Illustration of the Power of a Spirit Filled "Light"** - Have you ever looked out of a plane flying on a cloudless night? You can see pinpoints of light miles and miles away. This explains why it was necessary to have blackouts during the war to prevent enemy pilots from seeing the smallest evidence of light and thus find their targets.

John describes the **New Jerusalem** which has a Light which will never "be hidden" writing that "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. (Rev 21:23-[note](#))

**Spencer** - Every Christian is placed in a centre, of which the globe is the circumference; and each must fill that circumference, as every star forms a centre, and shines through the whole sphere; and yet all meet and mingle, forming one vast field of light.

**Spurgeon** - Poor world, poor world, it is dark, and gropes in midnight, and it cannot get light except it receives it through us!... To be the light of the world surrounds life with the most stupendous responsibilities, and so invests it with the most solemn dignity. Hear this, ye humble men and women, ye who have made no figure in society, ye are the light of the world. If ye burn dimly, dim is the world's light, and dense its darkness.....Christ never contemplated the production of secret Christians,—Christians whose virtues would never be displayed,—pilgrims who would travel to heaven by night, and never be seen by their fellow-pilgrims or anyone else.....What a lamp-stand was found for Christianity in the martyrdoms of the Coliseum, in the public burnings by pagans and papists, and in all the other modes by which believers in Christ were forced into fame.....The text says that the candle gives light to all that are in the house. Some professors give light only to a part of the house. I have known women very good to all but their husbands, and these they nag from night to night, so that they give no light to them. I have known husbands so often out at meetings that they neglect home, and thus their wives miss the light.....The venerable Bede, when he was interpreting this text, said that Christ Jesus brought the light of Deity into the poor lantern of our humanity, and then set it upon the candlestick of his church that the whole house of the world might be lit up thereby. So indeed it is.

**D L Moody** said

- Poor world! What a faint light it receives from most Christians!
- The lighthouse, if its light is not burning, is a peril instead of a safeguard.
- Men do not stumble when the lamp shines brightly.

**Matthew 5:15** [nor](#) does anyone [light](#) a [lamp](#) and [put](#) it [under](#) a [basket](#), but on the [lampstand](#), and it [gives light](#) to [all](#) who are in the [house](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [oude kaiousin \(3PPAI\)](#) [luchnon kai titheasin \(3PPAI\)](#) [auton hupo ton modion all' epi ten luchnian. kai lampei \(3SPA\)](#) [pasin tois en te oikia.](#)

**Amplified:** Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a peck measure, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

**NLT:** Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Philips:** Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bucket. They put it on a lamp-stand and it gives light for everybody in the house ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

**Wuest:** Neither do they light a lamp and place it under the bushel but upon the lamp stand, and it gives light to all those who are in the house. ([Wuest: Expanded Translation: Erdmans](#))

**Young's Literal:** nor do they light a lamp, and put it under the measure, but on the lamp-stand, and it shineth to all those in the house;

**NOR DO MEN LIGHT A LAMP, AND PUT IT UNDER THE PECK-MEASURE BUT ON THE LAMPSTAND:**[oude kaiousin \(3PPAI\)](#) [luchnon kai titheasin \(3PPAI\)](#) [auton hupo ton modion all' epi ten luchnian](#)

- Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33

**Nor do men light a lamp and put it under the peck-measure but on the lampstand** - Now think about this statement for a moment. Jesus is explaining the **metaphor** of a believer as a light (thus we do not have to imagine His intended meaning by picturing us as lights - this is always one of the dangers of **figurative language** - to let our imagination run wild! Context should always be our guide!) Is it not ridiculous? No would would ever even think about lighting a lamp and then hiding the light it produced. That makes no sense whatsoever. The lamp would utterly fail at fulfilling its intended function. By analogy, a believer who is light in the Lord and yet who chooses to put himself or herself under a basket so to speak is absurd. And yet is this not the problem with many believers today. How often I have heard someone say that they worked with "so and so" for years and years and just today

discovered they were a believer. What's wrong with this picture? If another member of the same family cannot recognize a brother or sister in Christ in the real world, how can those in darkness recognize that person? As many Christian leaders would attest, we are failing miserably at letting our lights shine. And yet the tragedy is that we are the only lights most of the world will every see. Stated another way, believers are the only "Bible" most folks will ever "read"!

**Lamp** ([3088](#)) (**lychnos** from **leukos** = brilliant, shining white) refers to a portable lamp fed with oil, not a candle

**Basket (Peck-measure)** ([3426](#)) (**módios**) refers to a Roman measuring basket of various sizes to measure dry material and was large enough to cover a light, perhaps about a fourth of an American bushel or up to 2 gallons. Jesus uses the **peck-measure** (or grain-measure) to indicate a familiar object which is found in every house.

**Guzik** -Even as lamps are placed higher so their light can be more effective, we should look for ways to let our light shine in greater and broader ways.

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** has warned that "If we find in ourselves a tendency to put the light under a bushel, we must begin to examine ourselves and make sure that it really is 'light.'" (Ouch!)

**Lampstand** ([3087](#)) (**lychnia** from **lychnos** = portable lamp fed w oil) is the stand in a house where the light was placed.

The KJV translates it as **candlestick** but in all the other NT uses it refers more accurately to a lampstand. This was a part of the furniture of every house and in Jesus' day usually there was only one in each house.

**Ray Pritchard** has pithy comment...

The year was 1970, the tail end of the wild period of modern American history. Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the famous Methodist missionary/author/evangelist, was asked to name the number one problem of the church. He replied quickly that the number one problem was irrelevance. He went on to say that 3/4ths of the opposition to the church stems from disappointment. We promise to make men different, but the promise goes largely unfulfilled.

Dr. Jones went on to tell the story of a multimillionaire who said, "If brother Stanley cannot convert me, I will sue him." He said it half in jest and half in truth. Dr. Jones said that this is in truth what the world is saying to us, "If you Christians cannot convert us, we will sue you for breach of promise. You promised this, now fulfill it. Show us that you can and will convert us. There is no hope from any other direction."

Twenty-five years have passed and I am sure that what Dr. Jones said is more true today than it was when he first said it. The number one problem of the church is irrelevance. Take a look around Oak Park this morning. Add up the attendance of all 55 churches in the village. Roughly 80% of the village won't be in any church today. On a very good day—like Christmas or Easter—all the churches together will reach perhaps 25% of the village. On a normal day—like today—it will be closer to 20%.

Put simply, the church has lost its influence in the community. There are many reasons why this is so, but one reason stands out above the rest. The church has lost its influence because Christians have neglected their responsibility to be salt and light in the world. As we have neglected to be what God has called us to be, the world has decided to ignore us. And the flip side of that is also true. When Christians decide to be salt and light, the world pays close attention to what we say and do. Let me say it simply: When we are salt and light, the world listens to us. When we aren't, they don't. ([The Salt and Light Brigade](#))

See **Robert Morgan's sermon** entitled - "[Glow in the Dark Christians](#)."

**AND IT GIVES LIGHT TO ALL WHO ARE IN THE HOUSE: kai lampei (3SPAI) pasin tois en te oikia**

- Exodus 25:37; Numbers 8:2

**Gives light** ([2989](#)) (**lampro**) means to radiate brilliancy, beam or shine.

The logic is clear and direct - just as the function of a household lamp is to give light in the house, so too believers are to provide illumination to all they encounter in this spiritually dark world. How? By witnessing with the evangelistic methods they've been taught in church? Yes, sometimes. But even more foundational than having evangelistic methods is the knowledge that we are in fact witnesses for the Light in every place we are. **The point is that witnessing is not so much what you do but what you are.** If the beatitudes are truly being your attitudes, beloved, you are light in the Lord. You are a living epistle, a walking testimony of the New

Life that lives in you and shines forth in the darkness. You are illuminating the truth of the gospel by your life and lips because your light is so **dramatically different from the darkness** of this world. The lost see the gospel at work in your character and conduct and some (not all) will want to know what makes you different (1Pe 3:15-note). They are like one of the men in a class I led who had come to Christ only 6 weeks earlier. He stated that the reason he hadn't become a Christian earlier was because he was looking for and waiting to meet someone who was a genuine Christian! One day he did meet one who was letting his light shine, and not long after this encounter, the man gave his life to Christ. Are you convicted. I was, especially when he ask the entire class, "*Where were the rest of you guys all that time?*" Maybe our lights were under bushel baskets! Or maybe our lights were dim, dingy and dirty because of sin in our lives or because of compromises we had made with the darkness of this world (which will quench the fire of the power of the Spirit!). It is not more or better evangelistic programs that the body of Christ needs. The greatest need is for believers to live like genuine citizens of the kingdom to which they belong, the Kingdom of Heaven!. **How are you doing dear citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven?** (cp description of us as aliens, strangers - 1Pe 1:1-note, 1Pe 2:11-note, et al) Jesus has given us His "program" for lighting the world.

**How does the light function?** John alludes to this writing...

"And this is the judgment, that the **light** is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the **light**; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the**light**, and does not come to the **light**, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the **light**, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." (John 3:19-21)

**What does light do?** John says it exposes one's deeds, either evil in those who hate the light or as deeds wrought by God in those who practice the truth. Have you ever been in an unfamiliar place in the dark, and after fumbling around you discovered the light switch only to discover the room was far different than you had imagined it in the darkness? Light also gives life and health. Take a person out of sunlight (and away from vitamin fortified products) and their supplies of active Vitamin D would wilt away with potentially serious consequences for the integrity of their skeletal system (rickets in children, osteomalacia in adults - see interesting article on [Vitamin D](#)). Light awakens us and allows us to see where we are going.

We could go on, but what Jesus is talking about is **spiritual light**. As John explains above, the Light of Christ (when He was here physically) and now His light in and through us, brings light to spiritual darkness making possible a clearer **distinction** between **evil** and **good**. (cf Isa 5:20) So what are we to do? Simply shine forth from whatever "lampstand" God has strategically placed you.

**Phil Newton** has the following illustration...

R. L. Dabney told a story of a very worldly-minded attorney in the 19th century that had nothing for Christianity. After years of ungodly living and scorning of Christians, as he grew old he went to live with his sister who happened to be a Christian. Her son was a pastor, and he had opportunity to engage the old man in conversation about Christ and even recommend some books to him. Some time later, ill in health, the old attorney asked to confess his faith in Christ publicly. The nephew was eager to get the full story and wondered if his conversation had been the instrument of turning the callused man's heart to Christ. But as the story unfolded he discovered that it was not the pastor's words or even the books that he recommended that the man read, but it was the godly life of the pastor's sister, still living at home and around the old man. He saw her godliness and radiance as a Christian in every situation, and it caused him to seek the Lord to know that same relationship to Jesus Christ. Dabney adds,

**"The light of a holy example is the gospel's main argument"**

[Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney, vol. I, 114]. Is your life a good argument for the gospel? [The Power of Christians as Light](#) (Bolding added)

### **The Light of Boris Kornfeld**

One is reminded of the Russian Jewish doctor, Boris Kornfeld, who one night in prison in Siberia sat up with a man who was desperately ill and told him the story of his conversion to Christ, shining forth the light and love of Jesus. That listening man's name? The future Nobel Prize winner, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who later came to saving faith in Christ. In his modern classic [The Gulag Archipelago](#) Solzhenitsyn recalls **the Dr Kornfeld's light** and how it paradoxically shown forth in an almost completely dark room

...

Fervently he tells me the long story of his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. I am astonished at the conviction of the new convert, at the ardor of his words.

We know each other very slightly, and he was not the one responsible for my treatment, but there was simply no one here with whom he could share his feelings. He was a gentle and well-mannered person. I could see



nothing bad in him, nor did I know anything bad about him. However, I was on guard because Kornfeld had now been living for two months inside the hospital barracks, without going outside. He had shut himself up in here, at his place of work, and avoided moving around camp at all.

This meant that he was afraid of having his throat cut. In our camp it had recently become fashionable to cut the throats of stool pigeons. This has an effect. But who could guarantee that only stoolies were getting their throats cut? One prisoner had had his throat cut in a clear case of settling a sordid grudge. Therefore the self-imprisonment of Kornfeld in the hospital did not necessarily prove that he was a stool pigeon.

It is already late. The whole hospital is asleep. Kornfeld is finishing his story:

"And on the whole, do you know, I have become convinced that there is no punishment that comes to us in this life on earth which is undeserved. Superficially it can have nothing to do with what we are guilty of in actual fact, but if you go over your life with a fine-tooth comb and ponder it deeply, you will always be able to hunt down that transgression of yours for which you have now received this blow."

I cannot see his face. Through the window come only the scattered reflections of the lights of the perimeter outside. The door from the corridor gleams in a yellow electrical glow. But there is such mystical knowledge in his voice that I shudder.

Those were the last words of Boris Kornfeld. Noiselessly he went into one of the nearby wards and there lay down to sleep. Everyone slept. There was no one with whom he could speak. I went off to sleep myself.

I was wakened in the morning by running about and tramping in the corridor; the orderlies were carrying Kornfeld's body to the operating room. He had been dealt eight blows on the skull with a plasterer's mallet while he slept. He died on the operating table, without regaining consciousness.

That very night Kornfeld had shone so brightly the light of Christ, he was clubbed to death. We must shine wherever and whenever the Lord gives us a venue, redeeming the precious moments for the days are evil (cf **notes** Ephesians 5:15; 5:16; 5:17; 5:18)

Beloved, have you ever had someone who saw the light of Christ in you later turn to the Lord? It is a wonderful, glorious, mysterious gift of grace to experience. Dr Kornfeld knows this today in glory in a way that we cannot even imagine.

Peter addresses believers explaining that

you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, **that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. (see **notes** 1 Peter 2:9; 2:10)

In a parallel passage (the context is the Great Tribulation), Daniel explains that "shining now" will have impact on "shining in heaven" writing that...

"those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness (like Dr Boris Kornfeld), like the stars forever and ever." (Daniel 12:3)

**John MacArthur** explains **Daniel 12:3** this way...

To shine in glory is a privilege of all the saved (cf. the principle in 1Thessalonians 2:12 [note]; 1 Peter 5:10 [note]). Any who influence others for righteousness shine like stars in varying capacities of light as their reward (as in 1 Cor. 3:8). The faithfulness of the believer's witness will determine one's eternal capacity to reflect God's glory. ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**J Vernon McGee** adds that Daniel 12:3 teaches that...

God's servants in the dark days of the Great Tribulation will shine as lights. **Believers are to do the same thing today, by the way.** ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Bolding added)

Paul explains also alludes to the believer's call to be the **light of the world** in his letter to the saints at Philippi writing...

Do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, **among whom you appear as lights** in the world holding fast to the Word of life (see **notes** Philippians 2:14; 2:15)

**Note carefully** that neither Jesus nor Paul tell us to be **searchlights** or **spotlights** but like lights in lighthouses in the dark spiritual

night of this world and that by so doing we might prevent tragic shipwreck and eternal loss of some who have eyes to see the light of Christ! How is the light in your lighthouse shining? Remember that we are not here to get used to the dark but to shine as lights.

The eye is a fascinating organ and when exposed to a dark room will gradually adjust so that it sees more in the darkness. That is good physiology but it makes for bad spirituality. Dear believer, watch what you watch in this world, lest you get more comfortable with the darkness.

**One question you might be asking is this** - I understand Christians are light in the Lord and that we are not to hide our light from the world, but is there any way we can assure that we stay bright, clear beacons of light? Kent Hughes tells the following story that illustrates how this is possible writing that...

A man returning from a journey brought his wife a matchbox that would glow in the dark. After he gave it to her, she turned out the light, but it could not be seen. Both thought they had been cheated. Then the wife noticed some French words on the box and asked a friend to translate them. The inscription said:

"If you want me to shine in the night, keep me in the light."

So it is with us! We must expose ourselves to Jesus, delight in his Word, and spend time in prayer soaking up His rays. (Hughes, R. K. [Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom. Crossway Books](#))

Paul gives us the perfect "formula" in his second epistle to the Corinthians writing that...

we all, with **unveiled face** (the day we believed and received the Spirit Who opened the eyes of our heart to spiritual truth) **beholding** (continually, making it the habit of our life -present tense) as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (best seen in His pure Word, see Ja 1:23-25), are **being** (passive voice = the Holy Spirit's power) **transformed** (continually - present tense) (metamorphoo = transfigured, being changed on the outside, this change proceeding from and being truly representative of our inward character and nature, i.e., Christ in us the hope of glory, see note Colossians 1:27) into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

When we as "**lights in the Lord**" constantly behold the glory of the Lord as we read His Word, this act of **beholding** results in God's Spirit changing us from one degree of glory to another... until one day "when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." (1John 3:2)

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**Lights in the World** - It's easy to see that we live "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil 2:15). We are continually reminded that we live in a fallen world by our own sinful tendencies, by newspaper headlines that report horrifying crimes, and by a society that is growing accustomed to gross immorality.

Against this backdrop of darkness, followers of Jesus are told to be "lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). Yet our conduct often reflects a dim and distorted image of Him. That's why Paul warned us against "complaining and disputing" (Php 2:14) and urged us to put our salvation to work with reverence for God (Php 2:12-13).

We may wonder why the apostle didn't mention something more scandalous than complaining. But relatively few of us are guilty of "headline" sins, while all of us have been guilty of the smugness, pride, and self-centeredness that erupts in murmuring and quarreling. And these "lesser" sins can be just as destructive.

Paul knew that we need to be spiritually alert to evil and nip it in the bud. By heeding these exhortations we will "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault" (v.15). Then we will be sure to shine as lights in this dark world.

Darkness seems so overpowering  
In our world today;  
Help us, Lord, to keep on shining  
Till the break of day.  
—Hess

**It's the life behind our words  
that makes our testimony ring true**

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Matthew 5:16 **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** (NASB: Lockman)

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**Greek:** [houtos lampsatoo \(3SAAM\) to phos humon emprosthen ton anthropon, hopos idosin \(3PAAS\) humon ta kala erga kai doxasosin \(3PAAS\) ton patera humon ton en tois ouranois.](#)

**Amplified:** Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

**NLT:** In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Philips:** "Let your light shine like that in the sight of men. Let them see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven." ([New Testament in Modern English](#))

**Wuest:** In the same manner let your light shine before men in order that they may see your good works and in order that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

**Young's Literal:** so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father who is in the heavens.

## **LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN: houtos lampsatoo (3SAAM) to phos humon emprosthen ton anthropon**

- Pr 4:18; Is 58:8; 60:1, 2, 3; Ro 13:11, 12, 13, 14; Ep 5:8; Php 2:15,16; 1Th 2:12; 5:6, 7, 8; 1Pe 2:9; 1Jn 1:5, 6, 7

**Your light** - If you are a believer you are a supernatural "light". And you are responsible for letting **your** light shine forth. Stop complaining about how others are not letting their light shine! Focus on **your** light. You are unique and reborn by the Spirit to with the express calling to glorify God.

**Spurgeon** put it this way...

I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.

**Let ... shine** - Jesus does not make a suggestion but as discussed below issues a command "Since you are light, then shine!" Shining is not optional for believers who are to light the way so that others might see the highway that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven and its King. When a light bulb is switched on it fulfills its purpose. When a Christian is filled with (controlled by - Ep 5:18-note, Col 1:9, 10, 11, 12-notes Col 1:9; 10; 11; 12) the "electricity" of the Spirit (Ep 3:16-note), he or she is enabled to fulfill their purpose. **Are you fulfilling the purpose for which God has "re-created" you?**

As **John Piper** remarked that "This is not an admonition to do God a favor. It is a command to align our lives with His eternal goal. He created us for His glory. God's great aim in creating and governing the world is that He be glorified. "I created you for My glory. I formed you, I made you." (Read his full message [God Created Us For His Glory on Isaiah 43:1-7](#))

### **LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE OUT**

**Fanny Crosby**

O let your light, tho' little, shine out,  
Our Lord's command fulfilling,  
To live for Him wherever we go,  
And seek His will to do.

#### ***Refrain***

***Shine on, little light, shine on,  
Shine on so bright and clear;  
Shine on, little light, and bring  
A smile for ev'ry tear.***

O let your light shine steadily on,

That all the world, beholding,  
May glorify your Father above,  
And praise His boundless love.

**Refrain**

O let your light shine cheerfully on,  
When cloud and storm are breaking,  
Its beams may lead some sorrow-oppressed  
To yonder Ark of Rest.

**Refrain**

O let your light shine peacefully on  
Till earthly cares are ended,  
And night and gloom shall vanish away  
In joy's eternal day.

**Refrain**

**New English Bible** phrases it "And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows".

This sentence literally reads begins "**so let your light shine before men**". The idea is "in this way", "in this manner", "in like manner", referring to what Jesus had just said. Marvin Vincent explains that this is "Often misconceived, as if the meaning were, "Let your light shine **in such a way** that men may see," etc. Standing at the beginning of the sentence, it points back to the illustration just used. "**So,**" even as that lamp just mentioned, let your light shine. Wycliffe has apparently caught this correct sense: So shine your light before men." (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament Vol. 1, Page 3-39)

**The Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew** agrees noting that "**So** means "**in such a way.**" Here it refers back to the **lamp** on the **lampstand** in verse 15. TEV makes this clear with "In the same way." Translators can also say "Similarly," "Just so," or **The light you produce should also be like that. Let it shine before people ...**" ([UBS handbook series - United Bible Societies](#)) (Bolding added)

**BE A RAY OF SUNSHINE**

Be a ray of sunshine everywhere you go,  
Shining for the Savior with a steady glow;  
Bringing smiles to sad ones, wiping tears away,  
Make yourself a blessing every passing day.

*Refrain*

*Be a ray of sunshine everywhere you go,  
Shining for the Savior with a steady glow;  
Be a ray of sunshine filled with Heaven's light,  
Sending forth a message beautiful and bright.*

Be a ray of sunshine everywhere you go;  
Comfort bring to others, stoop to raise the low;  
Kind words cost but little, smiles bring pleasures, too;  
They may lift a burden; let them not be few.

**Refrain**

Be a ray of sunshine everywhere you go;  
Cheerfulness is needed, this you can bestow;  
Help to chase the shadows from this world away,  
Bringing joy and gladness like a shining ray.

**Refrain**

Be a ray of sunshine everywhere you go;  
Stars will shine the brighter in your crown, I know;  
Sunshine brought to others will reflect on you,  
Heav'n will be the sweeter—keep the end in view.

## Refrain

**Light** (5457) (**phos** from **pháo** =to shine) speaks of luminousness which may be a literal light but more often as in this verse is figurative.

**Your light** may be *“the light you produce,” “the light that shines from you,”* or *“the light you are.”*

Jesus is the light of the world and we are called and empowered to be little reflections of Him to both unbelievers and believers.

**Let... shine** (2989) (**lampo**) means to radiate brilliantly or beam forth. Jesus gives His loyal subjects an command to do this right now and do it effectively (**aorist imperative** - can even convey the idea of urgency). This is a permissive imperative which means to permit your light to shine. Don't do anything that will cover it, hide it or snuff it out. To shine is not optional! If we fail to obey our Lord's command we will fail to fulfill His purpose for us in His glorious plan.

**Ray Pritchard** notes "The dictionary defines light as “a source of illumination.” That provides the key to our definition. To be the light of the world means illuminating the darkness so that others may see reality. ([The Salt and Light Brigade](#))

**Pritchard** quotes the following poem...

I'd rather see a sermon  
than hear one any day.

I'd rather one would walk with me  
than merely tell the way.

The eye's a better pupil  
and more willing than the ear.

Fine counsel is confusing  
but example's always clear.

The best of all the preachers  
are the men who live their creeds.

For to see good put in action  
is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it,  
if you'll let me see it done.

I can watch your hands in action,  
your tongue too fast may run.

The lectures you deliver  
may be very wise and true.

But I'd rather get my lessons  
by observing what you do.

For I might misunderstand you  
And the high advice you give.

But there's no misunderstanding  
how you act and how you live.

As **Alistair Begg** once quipped "If you can't shine, at least twinkle!"

Note that Jesus is not saying here for us to go out and "witness" (we may have that opportunity but that is not His primary focus). What Jesus intends is for believers to live out the Christ life which is in them (Col 1:27-note, Col 3:4-note, etc), a way and quality of life that is so different from that of the world (including the religious world, cf the reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus!) and so distinctive that it shines light into the darkness. Let the character of Jesus, the character of His beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12), shine forth.

Darkness is the absence of light; and darkness alone cannot dispel the light, but the smallest light can dispel the greatest darkness. One match in a dark football coliseum can easily be seen from the opposite side of the building.

**Dr. Oswald J. Smith** used to say "The light that shines the farthest will shine the brightest at home."

**G. Campbell Morgan** said that the church did the most for the world when the church was the least like the world. Today, many churches have the idea they must imitate the world in order to reach the world. A nation will not decay and collapse because of the people who peddle pornography or illicit drugs, but because of Christians who are no longer as salt and light. Sinners will act like sinners. When saints begin acting like sinners, their compromise hurts not only themselves and their families and churches, but also contributes to the decay of the entire nation. Are you convicted yet?

**Before (1715)** (**emprosthēn** from **en** = in + **prósthēn** = in front of, before) means in front of, in the presence of, in the sight and speaks primarily of place or position. Jesus is clearly not advocating isolationism (like some so called "Christian sects" do) or a monastic lifestyle. We are to be like cream which separates from milk and yet is still in contact with it.

Before **men** echoes "**by men**" of Mt 5:13.

When others see evidences in a believer's life which only be explained by the supernatural work of God's Spirit, these "divine reflections" will cause some (not all) in the world to give glory to our Father in heaven.

As **John Piper** says "When the people of God are set free from the compulsion of self-exaltation and self-justification and self-preservation, so that we live for the eternal good of other people, then we become the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and people notice in us the reality of God and give Him glory (Matthew 5:14, 15, 16). (Read his full message [Those Whom He Predestined He Also Called, Part 1](#))

As **Augustine** declared "What I live by, I impart."

The renowned American evangelist, **D. L. Moody**, once said "A Christian is the world's Bible — and some of them need revising... It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. We are told to let our light shine, and if it does we won't need to tell anybody it does. The light will be its own witness. Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire cannons to call attention to their shining--they just shine.

Spurgeon - To be the light of the world surrounds life with the most stupendous responsibilities, and so invests it with the most solemn dignity. Hear this, ye humble men and women, ye who have made no figure in society, ye are the light of the world. If ye burn dimly, dim is the world's light, and dense its darkness.....Christ never contemplated the production of secret Christians,—Christians whose virtues would never be displayed,—pilgrims who would travel to heaven by night, and never be seen by their fellow-pilgrims or anyone else.....What a lamp-stand was found for Christianity in the martyrdoms of the Coliseum, in the public burnings by pagans and papists, and in all the other modes by which believers in Christ were forced into fame.....The text says that the candle gives light to all that are in the house. Some professors give light only to a part of the house. I have known women very good to all but their husbands, and these they nag from night to night, so that they give no light to them. I have known husbands so often out at meetings that they neglect home, and thus their wives miss the light.....The venerable Bede, when he was interpreting this text, said that Christ Jesus brought the light of Deity into the poor lantern of our humanity, and then set it upon the candlestick of his church that the whole house of the world might be lit up thereby. So indeed it is. - Spurgeon

In a similar vein **Spurgeon** once said "The sermons most needed today are sermons in shoes."

### **SEND OUT A LIGHT**

**Mary Bernstecher**

Send out a light as you go your way,  
A beacon of hope when shadows are gray;  
Send out a light that for Jesus will shine,  
Proving to others God's mercy divine.

### ***Refrain***

***Send out a light, a radiant light,  
That will pierce thro' the gloom  
Of someone's dark night,  
Send out a light, a bright beaming light,  
Send out a light for Jesus.***

Send out a light when your burdens press,  
And show to the world that Jesus will bless;  
Thro' darkest sorrows and bitterest pain,

Send out a light—it will not shine in vain.

**Refrain**

Send out a light unto those who stray,  
All heedless along destruction's highway;  
Point them to pathways of purer delight,  
And let your life daily send out a light.

**Refrain**

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**Letting the light of God shine through** - One Sunday on their way home from church, a little girl turned to her mother and said, "Mommy, the preacher's sermon this morning confused me." The mother said, "Oh? Why is that?" The little girl replied, "Well, he said that God is bigger than we are. Is that true?" The mother replied, "Yes, that's true honey." "And he also said that God lives in us? Is that true, Mommy?" Again the mother replied, "Yes." "Well," said the little girl, "if God is bigger than us and He lives in us, wouldn't He show **through**?" (Amen! or Oh my!)

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**Dr Paul Chappell** reminds us of two important principles in regard to a believer letting God's light shining through, first reminding us that...

God should show through our life, but sadly sometimes our life's bulbs can be dirty, dimming His light. Think about these two factors that can dim God's light:

**Unconfessed Sin.** Just as dirt accumulates on a light bulb, so the dirtiness of sin can accumulate in your life. If you are not careful to keep your heart clean through daily confession and repentance, unconfessed sin can keep your life from shining God's light.

Have you ever known a Christian who you wondered about their heart's condition? They showed no signs of spiritual fruit and lived in open sin. While we cannot know a person's heart, we can see his light. Allowing sin to go unconfessed can dim God's light and hinder the effectiveness of a life's testimony.

**Fear of Men.** How often have Christians hidden their lights because of a fear of the opinions of others? We all want to be accepted and appreciated by our peers, yet our world tells us that talking about Christ and faith is taboo. We are told that religion is for Sunday, and Monday through Saturday is a different life. But God desires that you would allow His light to shine through you every day of the week. As the children's song goes,

"Hide it under a bushel?

No! I'm going to let it shine."

[\(Listen to the Kingston Trio's "This little light of mine"\)](#)

How clean is your life's bulb today?

Has unconfessed sin dimmed the light of Christ?

Or are you purposefully hiding your light for fear of what others think?

Christian, would you fear man's opinion so much that you would allow someone to die not ever knowing Christ?

Take time today to inspect your life. Ask God to reveal any dimming sin or actions that are keeping your life from brightly showing God's light. Also ask God to give you strength to shine for Him even when others would hide their lights out of fear. ([Daily in the Word the daily devotion and radio ministry of Dr. Paul Chappell](#))

**IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS: hopos idosin (3PAAS) humon ta kala erga**

- Mt 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5,16; 23:5; Acts 9:36; Ep 2:10; 1Ti 2:10; 5:10,25; 6:18; Titus 2:7,14; 3:4,7,8,14; He 10:24; 1Pe 2:12; 3:1,16)

**In such a way** - Don't miss this divinely inspired caveat. It is vitally important, for as someone has said "We are not Christ's lawyers; we are his witnesses!"

**Rieu** phrases it "*see the beauty of your life*".

**John Piper** writes that "We are saved for the sake of God-exalting good works. This is the aim of our justification—not the ground, but the aim and the fruit. (Read his full message [Bethlehem Break Forth Like the Dawn](#))

The Puritan writer **Thomas Brooks** wrote that "A Christian's life should be nothing but a visible representation of Christ."

**See** (3708) (**horao** > **eido** which is the verb derived from **horao**) refers not merely the act of seeing, but also the actual perception of object with the mind and the senses. It can convey the idea of taking special notice of something, with the implication of concerning oneself with the object seen. For example, when John uses it of seeing God (cf Jo 6:46, 14:7, 9), he emphasizes the figurative meaning of to know Him or to be acquainted with Him.

Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven must conduct themselves in a such a way that their life and influence is visible and obvious, not secret or hidden. As H W Cragg put it...

The Christian is the visual aid which God brings on to the stage when he begins to speak at an unconverted person.

Believers are not to live incognito or in "spiritual disguise", camouflaging their devotion to Christ, but living out His life as those poor in spirit and dependent on His power to allow the true colors of the King and His Kingdom to be seen.

Someone has well said that...

The real mark of a saint is that he makes it easier for others to believe in God.

**John Piper** adds that **Matthew 5:16** "doesn't only refer to believers testifying by their lives to unbelievers. It also refers to that spiritual transaction between two believers, one of whom reflects like a mirror the light of God's love in his life so that the other believer sees it and leaps for joy. Great experiences of joy come immediately from seeing the beauty of God's forgiveness, power, wisdom, and trustworthiness reflected in His children. (Read his full message [To See You Fills Me With Joy](#))

**Good** (2570) (**kalos**) means lovely, beautiful, helpful, honest, useful, and well adapted to its purpose or end. **Kalos** does not so much emphasize quality (though that is important) as it does attractiveness, beautiful appearance. Originally, it referred to beauty of form. It was used of a beautiful woman, of a safe harbor, of good fruit, or good seed. **Kalos** stresses the outward appearance and the usefulness of something to fulfill its purpose. There is another word the NT uses for **good** which is the Greek word **agathos**. **Agathos** is that which is practically and morally good; but **kalos** is not only practically and morally good, but also aesthetically good, lovely, winsome, and pleasing to the eye.

**Good works** - Good works are God works, and thus are beautiful and attractive works.

**Works** (2041) (**ergon**) refers to a task, employment, a deed, actions or acts or that which is wrought or made. **Works** then can refer to our work, employment, our craft, etc. Regardless of the specific application, the point is that our **works** are to be done **in such a way** that they, in a winsome manner, attract and point men to God the Father.

**Piper** writes that "doing good deeds before an onlooking world is a necessary part of declaring God's marvelous works and making Him a Name on the earth (see his full message [Good Deeds and the Glory of God](#))

**Good works** are works that show the beauty the Lord has worked in us. How do we do good works? Part of the answer (a vitally important part) is through the intake of the Word of God as we see in the following passages "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (see **notes** 2 Timothy 3:16; 17)

So how are God's men and women prepared to perform good works? Clearly it is by the intake of God's profitable Word. Do you maintain the discipline of a steady, daily intake of God's Word? If you do not, then you short circuit God's mode of making you adequate for every good work. The corollary is that you may be doing many "good works" but they are really your works and not His works through you.

Good works then are really God's works through His "instruments" (believers). Genuine good works must be done with such integrity that all who see them have no choice but to credit our Father in heaven.

Jesus commands us to let our light shine through beautiful and attractive works! Herein lies the danger. Jesus is not saying we are to produce fleshly works of our own making but works wrought by His indwelling Spirit as we abide in the Vine by letting the Word of Christ richly dwell within us. The works then come forth like fruit on the Vine, as Christ's lives His life through such surrendered saints. The works are performed in His power, not ours. To see good works by us is to see Christ in us (Col 1:27-note). Good works are not something we create or make up, but something we allow the Lord to do through us. It is His light but it is our responsibility and choice to let it shine.

**John Piper** - According to Jesus the good deeds of His disciples are the window in this world through which people come to see and adore the glory of God. (Read the full message [The Local Church: Minimum vs Maximum](#))



As **Barnhouse** once said (alluding to our good works before a lost world) "Men may not read the gospel in seal-skin, or the gospel in morocco, or the gospel in cloth covers; but they can't get away from the gospel in shoe leather... Every believer is a witness whether he wants to be or not.

The early church father **Tertullian** wrote of the light shone by early Christians "But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. 'See,' they say, 'how they (believers) love one another,' for they themselves (non-believers) are animated by mutual hatred; 'see how they are ready even to die for one another,' for they themselves will rather put to death"

Jesus presents us the **opposite of good works** warning us to "**Beware** (present imperative = be continually on the look out for this slipping into your life) of practicing **your** righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." (see **note** Matthew 6:1)

His warning is against righteousness which glorifies self not God.

**Newman** comments on "**good works**" noting that "The focus now shifts from the **character** of the disciples to their **good works** which result from this **character**. **What** the disciples are must be evident to all, but in such a way that it reveals the **true origin of the good works** that they do (cf John 15:5, see study of **Good Deeds**). These works may be characterized as deeds of **mercy** (cf Mt 5:7-note) and of **reconciliation**, (cf Mt 5:9-note) a conclusion supported both by the Gospel itself (see notes Mt 5:38, 39, 40ff-notes; 25:31-46) and by the Jewish concept of **good works**. The phrase **good works** is found only one other time in Matthew's Gospel; it appears in Mt 26:10 in the singular "good work." More frequently the expression "good fruit" is used (Mt 3:10; Mt 7:17, 18, 19-see notes Mt 7:17; 18; 19; Mt 12:33). Your good works may be translated "your good actions" or "your good deeds." Barclay has translated **the lovely things you do**. ([Ibid](#)) (Bolding added)

**AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN: kai doxasosin (3PAAS) ton patera humon ton en tois ouranois.**

- Isaiah 61:3; Jn 15:8; 1Co 14:25; 2Co 9:13; Ga 1:24; 2Th 1:10, 11, 12; 1Pe 2:12; 4:11,14
- Mt 5:45; 6:9; 23:9; Lk 11:2

The final purpose of Jesus' charge is succinctly expressed in the Latin phrase...

**Soli Deo Gloria!**  
**All glory to God!**

**This is our supreme purpose in this present as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. To bring glory to God and to Him Alone.**

My heart is full of Christ, and longs Its glorious matter to declare!  
Of him I make my loftier songs, I cannot from his praise forbear;  
My ready tongue makes haste to sing  
The glories of my heavenly King.  
---Charles Wesley

**Glorify** ([1392](#)) (**doxazo** from **doxa** = glory) means to give a proper opinion of. For example in 1Co 6:20 Paul reminds the saints at Corinth that they are not their own but have been bought with a price and therefore now are to glorify God in their bodies. In other words, believer now are to walk in this dark world which is devolving not evolving and are to let others see God in and through us. Believers now live with the high and holy purpose of rendering glory to God so that He is honored, exalted and recognized for Who and What He is. It means we are to render conspicuous and glorious the divine character and attributes of our Father in heaven. They should see Him, not us.

Am I truly living a life different from unbelievers? Is there anything about my life which one might recognize as supernatural? Am I giving a proper opinion of my Father by the way I live? As John Stott explains...

Nothing shuts the mouth, seals the lips, ties the tongue, like the poverty of our own spiritual experience. We do not bear witness for the simple reason that we have no witness to bear.

**John Piper** in a sermon on **Isaiah 43:7** says that...

The glory of God is the beauty and excellence of His manifold perfections. It is an attempt to put into words what God is like in His magnificence and purity. It refers to His infinite and overflowing fullness of all that is good. The term might focus on His different attributes from time to time—like His power and wisdom and mercy and justice—because each one is indeed awesome and beautiful in its magnitude and quality. But in

general God's glory is the perfect harmony of all His attributes into one infinitely beautiful and personal being.

Now when God says that He created us for His glory, it cannot mean that He created us so that He would become more glorious, that His beauty and perfection would be somehow increased by us. It is unthinkable that God should become more perfectly God by making something that is not God. It is a staggering but necessary thought that God has always existed, that He never came into being, and that everything which exists which is not God is from His fullness and can never add anything to Him which did not come from Him. That is what it means to be God; and it should humble us, O, how it should humble us, when we ponder his reality!

But this means that when God says He made us for his glory, He does not mean he made us so that he could become more glorious in himself. Instead what Isaiah 43:7 means is that He created us to display His glory, that is, that His glory might be known and praised. (Read full message [God Created Us For His Glory on Isaiah 43:1-7](#))

**Father** (3962) (**pater**) is spoken generally of men and in a special sense of God as in this context. It is used to mean the one by whom one is begotten. **Pater** is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic word **Abba**. Aramaic was the language which the Jews spoke in Palestine in the first century.

**Stuart Weber** observes that "This is the first time Matthew calls God **Father**. It is a wonderful, new emphasis on personal intimacy for the believer. Matthew used this word forty-five times. And while the fatherhood of God was not unknown in the Old Testament, here it is endowed with a very personal sense (Mark 14:36; Ro 8:15 [note]; Gal. 4:6). The king wants His people to know that His kingdom involves a deeply personal relationship with God. It is so much more than a religious or organizational connection. ([Weber, Stuart, Max Anders, Ed: Holman New Testament Commentary: Matthew Broadman & Holman](#))

The psalmist parallels Jesus' thought beautifully writing...

**Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Thy name give glory because of Thy lovingkindness, because of Thy truth. (Psalm 115:1)**

[Spurgeon comments](#) = Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory. The people undoubtedly wished for relief from the contemptuous insults of idolaters, but their main desire was that Jehovah himself should no longer be the object of heathen insults. The saddest part of all their trouble was that their God was no longer feared and dreaded by their adversaries. When Israel marched into Canaan, a terror was upon all the people round about, because of Jehovah, the mighty God; but this dread the nations had shaken off since there had been of late no remarkable display of miraculous power. Therefore Israel cried unto her God that he would again make bare his arm as in the day when he cut Rahab and wounded the dragon. The prayer is evidently tinctured with a consciousness of unworthiness; because of their past unfaithfulness they hardly dared to appeal to the covenant, and to ask blessings for themselves, but they fell back upon the honour of the Lord their God -- an old style of argument which their great lawgiver, Moses, had used with such effect when he pleaded, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people." Joshua also used the like argument when he said, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" In such manner also let us pray when no other plea is available because of our sense of sin; for the Lord is always jealous of his honour, and will work for his name's sake when no other motive will move him.

The repetition of the words, Not unto us, would seem to indicate a very serious desire to renounce any glory which they might at any time have proudly appropriated to themselves, and it also sets forth the vehemence of their wish that God would at any cost to them magnify his own name. They loathed the idea of seeking their own glory, and rejected the thought with the utmost detestation; again and again disclaiming any self glorifying motive in their supplication.)

**UBS Handbook** adds that "If there is not a good way of saying **give glory to** or "praise" in a language, it may be necessary to say "so that men will say good things about (or, will honor) your Father in heaven" ([UBS handbook series](#))

**John MacArthur** gives us a note of warning writing that "When what we do causes people to be attracted to us rather than to God, to see our human character rather than His divine character, we can be sure that what they see is not His light. (MacArthur, J: [Matthew 1-7 Macarthur New Testament Commentary Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**John Piper** - Obedience is the irrepressible public relations project of those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Matthew 5:16).

**MacArthur** goes on to give two illustrations of men who let their light shine in a way that glorified their Father in heaven...

It is said of Robert Murray McCheyne, a godly Scottish minister of the last century, that his face carried such a hallowed expression that people were known to fall on their knees and accept Jesus Christ as Savior when they looked at him. Others were so attracted by the self-giving beauty and holiness of his life that they found his Master irresistible.

It was also said of the French pietist Francois Fenelon that his communion with God was such that his face shined with divine radiance. A religious skeptic who was compelled to spend the night in an inn with Fenelon, hurried away the next morning, saying, "If I spend another night with that man I'll be a Christian in spite of myself." ([Ibid](#))

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The story is told of the time when the great missionary to Burma, **Adoniram Judson**, ([or here](#)) was home on furlough, and happened to pass through the city of Stonington, Connecticut. A young boy playing about the wharves at the time of Judson's arrival was struck by the man's appearance. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. He ran up the street to a minister to ask if he knew who the stranger was. The minister hurried back with him, but became so absorbed in conversation with Judson that he forgot all about the impatient youngster standing near him. Many years afterward that boy—who could never get away from the influence of that wonderful face—became the famous preacher **Henry Clay Trumbull**. In a book of memoirs Trumbull penned a chapter entitled:

#### "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson"

That lighted countenance had changed his life. Even as flowers thrive when they bend to the light, so shining, radiant faces come to those who constantly turn toward Christ!

#### **YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

Ye are the light of the world,  
Driving the darkness away,  
Shedding your beams on the lost,  
Changing their night into day.

Then let your light ever shine,  
Showing the right way to go;  
Gladly the lost ones will see—  
God's boundless love they will know.

Ye are the light of the world,  
Causing the clouds to depart,  
Throwing the sunshine of peace  
Down on the poor burdened heart.

Then let your light ever shine;  
Loved ones are panting for rest;  
Sunshine (Son-shine\*\*) their souls will revive,  
Lifting them up to the blest.

Ye are the light of the world;  
Thro' you the true light must shine,  
Calling the lost sons of men  
Home to the Father divine.

Then let your light ever shine,  
Hallow the Name that is love;  
You will each shine as a star,  
Fixed in the orbit above.

---R. J. Craig

\*\* Editorial Addition

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**"Preview of Coming Attractions"** - IN THE movies, there are **previews of coming attractions**. This is where the hot clips of the upcoming movies are shown. The cuts of the movies are always of the most exciting scenes: the fight scenes, the love scenes, or the chase scenes. The moviemakers show you the best clips because they want you to tune in to the whole show. Now, the movie itself may actually be terrible, but you'll never know it by the clips! One day there is a big show coming to town. God is the Producer, the Holy Spirit is the Director, and Jesus is the Superstar. It will be a worldwide production. In the meantime, God has left you and me here as **previews of the coming attractions**. As disciples of Christ, we're supposed to be the hot clips of the upcoming show, so that when people see our clips, they conclude the show must be hot. From watching our previews, people should raise the question, "Where can I buy a ticket to the show?" It is then that we can tell them, "You don't have to buy a ticket; the price has already been paid." (Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations: Stories, Quotes, and Anecdotes)

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**Seeing the Gospel** - A man once asked a new acquaintance in a remote area of the world, "Have you ever heard the Gospel?" "No," the other replied, "I have never heard it, but I have seen it." "What do you mean by that?" the Christian responded. "Simply this," he said, "there is a man in our village whose life has been greatly influenced by a missionary who passed this way. Never have I seen such a change in a person! Before he met the man of God, alcohol ruled his life. He was lazy, neglected his family, and showed no interest in anyone else. Since then, however, his manner of living is completely different. He is no longer a slave to liquor. He works hard and is a good husband and father. I would be proud to have him as my neighbor. Yes, I have seen the Gospel and like it so well I would now like to hear it!" Because the Gospel had been lived eloquently, it could be told effectively.

To be faithful in our witness for Christ, it is essential that the message of His saving grace and transforming power be shown as well as told. If our deeds contradict our words, we might better remain silent. May the example of our lives be so consistent with the testimony of our lips that no one could ever say to us, "Your actions speak so loud that I can't hear what you say."

The walk of the believer should be a living sermon. The world is watching us with a critical eye. Let us be careful, then, making sure that others are "seeing the Gospel" at its very best!

Jesus bids us shine with a clear, pure light, Like a little candle burning in the night, In this world of darkness we must shine, You in your small corner, and I in mine. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus bids us shine, first of all for Him;  
Well He sees and knows it if our light is dim;  
He looks down from Heaven, sees us shine,  
You in your small corner; and I in mine! —Warner

**The only sermon that never wearies us is that of an eloquent life!**

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**J C Philpot** (1802-1869) has a thought provoking devotional on Mt 5:16 noting that...

**To glorify God is the highest ambition of angels.** The brightest seraph before the throne has no higher aim, no greater happiness, than to bring glory to his name. And yet a poor sinner on earth may glorify God as much, and in some way more, than the brightest angel in the courts of eternal bliss. What different views the eyes of God and the eyes of men take of events passing on the earth. What glory is brought to God by all the victories gained by one country over another? I have thought sometimes that a poor old man, or feeble, decrepit woman, lying on a workhouse pallet, fighting with sin, self and Satan, yet enabled amid all to look to the Lord Jesus, and by a word from His lips overcoming death and hell, though when dead thrust into an cheap coffin, to rot in a pauper's grave, brings more glory to God than all the exploits of Nelson or Wellington, and that such victories are more glorious than those of Waterloo or Trafalgar.

It is true that the parish officers will not proclaim such a victory; nor will bells ring or cannons roar at such exploits; but the God of heaven and earth may get more glory from such a despised creature, than from all the generals and admirals who have ever drawn up armies in battle, or sunk hostile fleets beneath the wave. Truly does the Lord say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

It is indeed astonishing that glory should be brought to His great name by what His people do and suffer upon earth; that their feeble attempts to believe, to love, and to hope in Him; to speak well of His name; and to adorn His doctrine in their life and conversation, should redound to His honor and praise. Wondrous indeed is it that a poor, insignificant worm, whom perhaps his fellow-mortal will scarcely deign to look at, or passes by with a shrug of contempt, should add glory to the great God that inhabits eternity, before Whom the highest

angels and brightest seraphs bow with holy adoration!

Well may we say,

*What are all the glorious exploits that men are so proud of, compared with the tribute of glory rendered to God by his suffering saints?*

You may feel yourself one of the poorest, vilest, neediest worms of earth; and yet if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with a living faith, hope in His mercy, love His dear name, and in your vocation adorn His doctrine by a godly, consistent life, you are privileged above princes and nobles, yes, even above crowned heads, and all the glory of man, because you are bringing glory to God.

**It matters not what may be your station in life** You may be a servant, master, wife, husband, child; your rank and station may be high or low; but whatever it be, still in it you may bring glory to God. If a servant, by obedience, cleanliness, industry, and attention to the directions of your master or mistress. If a master or mistress, by kindness and liberality to your dependents, and doing all that you can to render the yoke of servitude light. There is not a single Christian who may not glorify God, though in worldly circumstances he be, or seem to be, totally insignificant. Glory is brought to God by those who live and walk in his fear, and more sometimes by the poor than by the rich. Only adorn the doctrine of God in all things, and you will bring glory to God in all things. (J. C. Philpot. **Daily Words for Zion's Wayfarers**)

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In his pithy, penetrating devotional **Daily Walking with God, Octavius Winslow** (1808-1878) has the following thoughts on Matthew 5:16 and how frail creatures such as we can possibly reflect the glory of the Holy One...

LET your life be a clear reflection of the glory of the Redeemer. The saints of God are the only witnesses to this glory—the only reflectors the Lord has in this dark and Christ-denying world.

Holiness, springing from the fount of the Spirit's indwelling grace, cherished and matured by close views of the Cross, and imparting a character of sanctity of beauty to every act of your life, will be the highest testimony you can bear to the Redeemer's glory.

That glory is entrusted to your hands. It is committed to your guardianship. Seeing, then, that it is so, "what manner of people ought you to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!"

How exact in principles, and upright in conduct—how watchful over temper, and how vigilant where most assailed—how broad awake to the wiles of the devil, and how sleepless against the encroachments of sin—how strict in all transactions with the world, and how tender, charitable, meek, and forgiving, in all our conduct with the saints!

Alas! we are at best but dim reflectors of this great glory of our Lord. We are unworthy and unfaithful depositories of so rich a treasure! How much of clinging infirmity, on unmortified sin, of carelessness of spirit, of unsanctified temper, of tampering with temptation, of a lack of strict integrity of uprightness, dims our light, neutralizes our testimony for God, and weakens, if not entirely destroys, our moral influence!

**We are not more eminently useful,  
because we are not more eminently holy.**

**We bring so little glory to Christ,  
because we seek so much our own.**

We reflect so faint and flickering a beam, because our posture is so seldom that of the apocalyptic angel. "standing in the sun."

We realize so imperfectly our oneness with, and standing in, Christ; and this will ever foster a feeble, fruitless, and drooping profession of Christianity.

"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you, except you abide in me."

Oh, to know more of this abiding in Christ! See how Jesus invites His saints to it.

Are they fallen? He bids them take hold of His strength.

Are they burdened? He bids them cast that burden on His arm.

Are they wearied? He bids them recline on Him for rest.

Does the world persecute them—do the "daughters of Jerusalem" smite them—does the watchman treat them unkindly? He bids them take refuge within the hallowed sanctuary of His own pierced and loving heart.

Do they need grace? He bids them sink their empty vessel beneath the depths of His ocean fullness, and draw freely "more grace."

Whatever corruptions distress them, whatever temptations assail them, whatever adversity grieves them, whatever cloud darkens them, whatever necessity presses upon them, as a watchful Shepherd, as a tender Brother, as a faithful Friend, as a great High Priest, He bids His saints draw near, and repose in His love.

Oh, He has a capacious bosom; there is room, there is a chamber in that heart for you, my Christian reader. Do not think your lot is desolate, lonely, and friendless. Do not think that all have forsaken you, and that in sadness and in solitude you are treading your way through an intricate desert.

There is One that loves you, that thinks of you, that has His eye upon you, and is at this moment guiding, upholding, and caring for you; that one is—Jesus!

Oh that you could but look into His heart, and see how He loves you; oh that you could but hear Him say so gently, so earnestly, "Abide in my love."

Cheer up! you are in Christ's heart, and Christ is in your heart.

You are not alone; your God and your Father is with you.

Your Shepherd guides you; the Comforter spreads around you His wings, and heaven is bright before you. Soon you will be there.

The pilgrim will repose his weary limbs; the voyager will be moored in his harbor of rest; the warrior will put off his armor, and shout his song of triumph.

Then look up! Christ is yours. God is yours. Heaven is yours. If God is for you, who can be against you? And if you find disappointment in created good, it will but endear Jesus; if you know more of the inward plague, it will but drive you to the atoning blood; if you have storms and tempests, they will but shorten the voyage, and waft you the quicker to glory. (Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God)

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**Kent Hughes** offers all citizens of the **Kingdom of Heaven** this charge...

in eternity we will be part of the shining light ourselves... I believe that with all my heart. I do not understand it, but I believe that for us as Christians there is a glory awaiting us that involves, in some way, an even greater shining forth. I do not know if we will be 100 watts or 200, 300, or 1,000! We might be like fireflies or we might be like supernovas. But somehow we are going to enter into the fame and approval of God, and we will be glorious beings, far beyond all imagination.

But at the same time we are light right now. Jesus says, "You [you alone] are the light of the world."

Let us covenant with all our being to shine as brightly as possible in this dark world.

Let us covenant to expose ourselves to the face of Jesus in prayer.

Let us covenant to be visible for Him.

Let us covenant to shine wherever He places us. Let us covenant to do beautiful works.

Let us covenant to remind ourselves that we always will be light - and to live in that reality.

(Hughes, R. K. [Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom. Crossway Books](#))

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**F. B. Meyer** in his book **The Directory of the Devout Life**

### **LIGHTED TO SHINE**

(Matt. 5:16.)

**NOT that Light.** No, not even John the Baptist was that; there is only one true Light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," even He who is the Life of men. We are lights; He is "that Light." We are stars that have no original glory, and if one differs from another in the radiance which he sheds forth, it is only in so far as he reflects more fully the lustre of that uncreated Sun. Centuries ago that Sun shone in this world, without a dimming cloud between His glory and the world of men, save the veil of His flesh; but so far as the world was concerned there was sunset, while it was yet noon, on Calvary, and we have been summoned to

take up His mission and shine as stars in the midnight sky, or as candles in the darkened home, until the first beams of the eternal morning break on the Alpine summits of time, white with the snows of millenniums.

It is interesting to apply the analogy between the Disciples of Christ and candles or lamps. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Pr 20:27). By nature we are like so many unlighted candles. As the candle is adapted to catch the light, but stands dark and cold until the wick is ignited, so have our natures been made to burn and shine with the nature of God, but they are unable to produce light of themselves, and remain cold and dark until kindled from the eternal Nature of Him who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all." It matters little what the nature of the candlestick may be. In your case it may be of gold, silver, or china. It may be exquisitely chased, or of the commonest possible manufacture. The most ornate is incapable of producing the Light, and will be set aside in favour of the commonest dip stuck on the end of a piece of wood if only that has caught the precious Light of which the other is destitute. The Pharisees and Scribes of our Lord's time were like handsome candelabra, which gave no ray of light to the thick darkness of their age; whilst His disciples, humble fishermen, shone with a light which has irradiated all succeeding time.

**"Men light a Candle."** They place the wick against some burning point of light, or they strike a match, or in our days turn a switch, and immediately there is a glow of light which abashes darkness, and enables the housewife to find her lost piece of silver. O soul of man, have you been lighted? Have you come in contact with Christ, or with one of His servants in whom His nature has shown, or with His Word, which may be compared to a box of Lucifer matches, because all the potentiality of fire and light slumbers until called into requisition? If not, stand expectant and eager; cry to Him, "Light me, O Light of Life, and let my nature henceforth have no other purpose than to shine on earth as Thou shinest in the Eternal Glory, emitting a radiance of the same nature and yielding the same prism as Thine own."

**"The Life was Light" (John 1:4).** Notice those words. Christ was the Light of men, not primarily because He wrought miracles and spoke wonderful words, but because He lived! He was the Light of Nazareth, because He lived within the circumference of its hills for thirty silent years. Galilee of the Gentiles "the people which sat in darkness" saw a great Light, because "He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea." The country of the Jews was illumined because "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed." The silent influence of that Life which unfolded itself in the loveliness of perfect deeds has stolen over the world like dawn over the sky; and if the Lord had never spoken a word, the testimony of His life for God and Truth and Love would have been the most remarkable episode in human annals. It must be so with us; we shine by what we are. We shine as there is less of the wick of our own nature, and more of the flame of His. We shine when we are unselfish, when we "do all things without murmurings and disputings"; when we are "blameless and harmless children of God without blemish" (Phil. 2:14, 15, R.V.). Though you were never to speak a word you might still fulfil the greatest mission and ministry of your life, if only you would live as Christ lived.

**"He was a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35).** The Baptist shone because he burnt. His light cost him life. On one occasion he said, "I must decrease"; probably his ministry lasted but a few months. The light he gave was so brilliant that it exhausted him prematurely. There can be no true shining without burning. The light that cost you nothing is hardly worth the giving. You ought to be burning down to the socket, as you spend and are spent for others. Your zeal for God's house should burn you up.

Burning also stands for heat. John was fervent, intense, passionate, in his devotion. His was an ardent nature, that loved as few men love. The love that others give to wife and child and friend, in his case was expended on his Lord. Mary did not more certainly break an alabaster box on the head and feet of Jesus, than he the rich perfume of his lovely nature.

See that there is fervour, ardour, passion, the fire of a burning heart, behind your testimony for the Saviour. Socrates gave light; he shone, but did not burn. Wesley gave light, but he burnt; and it is hardly possible to read a page of his sermons without being warmed at the fire of his intense nature. What shall we say of the Great Apostle whose nature was ignited on the road to Damascus, and who said that whether he seemed beside himself or sober, he was mastered by one passion, and constrained by the love of Christ?

## The Bushel

It would be absurd to take the trouble to light a lamp, and then obscure its rays by placing it beneath the corn-measure. The purpose of ignition would be counteracted and frustrated if any inmate of the house were to cover the light. How many of God's children have placed bushels on the light of their daily testimony for God? The bushel of uncharitable speech! The bushel of peevish and murmuring complaint! The bushel of an unforgiving spirit! The bushel of some conspicuous failing! Any of these is sufficient to counteract the entire effect of our testimony. On one occasion, when a mother was remonstrating with her grown-up son for his not having become a Christian, he replied, "Mother, you have always seemed so afraid of God. Whenever anything has gone wrong in your life, you have been so put out, so fearful about the future, that you have made us think that we can get on as well without religion as with it." Is not this a specimen case of the bushels which cover our light? Whenever you hear men say, "He is a very good man, but; She is a very good woman, only," you may be sure that there is some bushel in the life which is forbidding the outshining of the Life.

Notice what the Master says. "Let your light shine." It is not for you to ignite the flame, to supply the oil, or trim the wick; your simple duty is to guard against anything that may obstruct the outshining of the Life of God from your soul. If only you see to it that everything that might hinder the effect of your testimony and mar your influence is put away, Christ will see to it that your light shall effect the full measure of His purpose. Let those words ring in your heart, "Let your light shine." Allow it to shine; guard against everything which would prevent it shining.

In contrast with the bushel is the stand or candlestick, not under the bushel, but on the stand. What is your stand? Is it not your station in society, your position in the home, the sphere of your influence, your position in that business-house, factory, or workshop?

With infinite care and forethought, God has chosen the very place in which you can do your best work for the world. You may be lonely, but you have no more right to complain than the lamp has, which has been placed in a niche to illumine a dark landing or a flight of dangerous stone steps. The Master of the house may have put you in a very small corner, and on a very humble stand; but it is enough if it is His blessed will. Some day He will pass by, and you shall light His steps as He goes forth to seek and save that which is lost; or you shall illumine some great light that shall shine like a beacon over the storm-swept ocean. Thus the obscure Andrew was the means of igniting his brother Peter when he brought him to Jesus.

What a good thing it is when a man takes his bushel off his light and turns it upside down, and places the light above it! Suppose, for instance, a man's bushel has been the love of strong drink. Let him conquer it, and put it under his feet; let him become an apostle of total abstinence; let him win other drink-cursed lives. Then that which had threatened to extinguish his influence will be the means of extending it, for others who have been cursed as he has been will naturally turn to him for help. It is a blessed thing when the fire of Divine Love kindles the bushels themselves, destroying them and making a conflagration which compels men to turn from the power of darkness towards its attractive glow.

### **The Motive**

Never forget that the one object in Holy Living is not to convince men, but to "glorify your Father which is in Heaven." If you live with your thoughts directed towards men, even though your motive be one of pure beneficence on their behalf, you will have less influence upon them than you will exert if your life be altogether Godward, and your one aim be that He may be glorified.

The glory of the Father was the one motive that occupied the mind of our Lord from the hour when He said, "I must be about My Father's business," to that other when He stood under the shadow of His Cross, and said: "Father, glorify Thy name. I have glorified Thee on earth" (see also Jn 14:13; 15:8). So live, speak, and love, that God may be glorified, and count your life a failure unless men turn from you to Him. It is not enough for your light to shine; it must so shine. Any shining which does not make men glorify God is deficient. Good it may be, but it is not the best. Your light must be so managed that men may not talk about you, but about Him who has made you what you are.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God (1Co 10:31).

God will supply the lamp with oil. After all, we are but wicks, to the edge of which, as upon a ladder, the oil climbs from the cistern. Who could see to read or work by the burning of a wick? No; it is the oil that burns on the wick, whilst the wick slowly chars, as it yields itself to mediate between the fire on the one hand and the oil on the other. Keep on burning, O Christian soul! God will never fail thee, however long life may be, and however dark the night! God will supply thee with the oil that flows from the two olive-trees that set forth Christ's dual work as Priest and King (Lev 24:1, 2, 3, 4; Zech. 4:1, 2, 3).

It is the constant fear of some Christian workers that they will never hold out. But that should not be their care. Christ ever lives, Christ ever loves, Christ is ever and all sufficient. Draw upon Him; let all your fresh springs be in Him; let Him be what God meant Him to be, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

God will certainly have to trim your light. He will leave this sacred business to no other hand than His own; and He reserves for it "snuffers of gold" (1Kings 7:50).

Very often the soul dreads the application of His providences that seems to threaten it with extinguishment. It turns out, however, that the love of God was only cutting away something which was hindering our uprightness, that the true flame might break out more completely. There may be limitation on the area of illumination, but there will be marked increase in the intensity of the radiance. The limitation of Paul's imprisonment meant the lasting power of his Epistles. The snuffers of Bedford Gaol produced "Pilgrim's Progress."

Ask for a radiant life, and trust God to take the best means possible in accomplishing an abundant answer to your request.



## DEVOTIONALS ILLUSTRATIONS

In **Our Daily Walk**, **F B Meyer** has the following devotional

### THE WISE USE OF INFLUENCE

"Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."--Matt. 5:14-16.

INFLUENCE MAY be defined as the flowing in of our soul to enthuse and help, or to debase others. The law of action and recreation, of attraction and repulsion is always at work, in virtue of which it may be truly said that no one liveth or dieth to himself. The position of each atom of sand upon the seashore affects the position of all others, and the quality of our personal character is more pervasive than a good or ill odor. What we are affects others much more deeply than what we say. Probably waves of spiritual influence are continually going forth from our inmost nature, and it is the impact of these upon those around us which makes it easier or harder for them to realize their highest ideals.

The first circle which we can touch and influence is that of our friends. Our counsel may be sweetness or bitterness, but whatever we do or say, we must see that we are absolutely true and faithful (Prov. 27:6-9). Sincerity means to be without the wax which the cabinet-maker may put into the cracks of the wood to make it appear sound. It is the true and pure soul that most readily and forcibly helps another. Do not be selfish in your friendship, but always give out as much and more than you expect to receive. Love is a tender plant, and needs culture. We must not suppose that it is able to thrive without light and truth.

The second circle of influence is that of our associates. The great world of men may not appreciate our reproduction of the Beatitudes of the Kingdom, but still reproach, persecute, and say all manner of evil falsely; nevertheless, we must continue to bless the world by the silent and gracious influence of holy living. Reviled, we must bless; persecuted, we must endure; defamed, we must entreat. We must be as salt to our persecutors and as light to our defamers. It is wonderful how love, and consistent, patient, prayerful influence finally prevail.

We are to be as salt; i.e. our consistent holy living will act as antiseptic to arrest evil. We are to be the light of the world. Inconsistency and cowardice are like bushels which are put over the lamp. Let us put all these hindrances away, that the light which is within us may shine out on the dark world.

PRAYER - Grant, we beseech Thee, O God, that our behaviour may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. May the savour of Christ be in our influence, His light in our face, His love in our hearts. AMEN.

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**Putting Love Into Practice** - Mt 5:11-16 - In his book *Christians in the Marketplace*, Bill Hybels says that people outside the faith often say, "Show me" before they say, "Tell me."

I knew a young man in Germany named Wolfgang who modeled Hybels' principle at a building site where he worked. As an enthusiastic believer, Wolfgang always read his Bible during lunch. Though his fellow workers jeered, he didn't stop his daily reading. He simply prayed for a way to demonstrate Christ's love to them.

When the workers went home at night, they always left their muddy boots behind. Wolfgang began staying late after work to clean their boots. The men were puzzled at first but then realized that Wolfgang was the only one among them who would perform this humble service. Not only did they come to respect him, but sometimes they even asked him to read the Bible to them. Only eternity will reveal the full effect of Wolfgang's shining life. But this we know: When his co-workers saw his good works, they started listening to his God.

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may ... glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). If you long to lead the people around you to Jesus, radiate His love by doing practical deeds for God's glory alone.— Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread](#), [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My life was dark until the Light shone in,  
That Light was Christ, who saved me from my sin;  
His light that I've received I long to share  
In loving deeds for people everywhere. —Hess

## A Christian's life is a window through which others can see Jesus.

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**AMAZING LIGHT** - ... now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light. Ephesians 5:8

Light can do startling things! One single burst from a laser beam can drill a hole through a diamond. Such a ray of concentrated and amplified power can melt steel plate in a fraction of a second. A laser beam aimed at the retro-reflector placed on the moon by the astronauts has given the scientists greater accuracy in measuring the distance between the earth and the lunar surface. Medical science too is broadening its field in the use of light. A tiny laser aimed at cells diseased by cancer will in a split second destroy a great number of them. What amazing energy! I remember seeing (or was it hearing?) music transmitted on a ray of light in one of the "Sermons from Science" conducted by Keith Hargett of the Moody Institute of Science. That was an interesting demonstration — an uninterrupted flow of sharply focused electrons carrying a beautiful melody!

And divine Light—who can tell its great effect? Every child of God is not only the possessor but the reflector of it. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world."

Light must be concentrated and directed, however, to be most effective. Lives controlled by God's Spirit will shine with a glowing witness, bringing spiritual health and blessing to others. Indeed, heavenly harmonies will be transmitted when the Lord Jesus shines in and through us. As the hymnwriter reminds us:

Out in the highways and byways of life, many are weary and sad  
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife, making the sorrowing glad.

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may ... glorify your Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Is your life a shining witness  
With a testimony true?  
Could the world be won to Jesus  
Just by what they see in you?  
— Adams

**The light that shines farthest shines brightest at home.**

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**LIVING WINSOMELY** Matthew 5:16 -The early followers of Jesus were charged with breaking up homes, dishonoring their parents, lacking patriotism, practicing cannibalism, and engaging in gross immorality. It was true that Christians rejected the religious rituals of their pagan parents, that some family units were broken when young people chose to be driven from home rather than renounce their faith. Believers also refused to offer a pinch of incense to the Roman emperor and did not purchase images. But it was not accurate to say that they ate human flesh and drank blood at their communion service, or that they were immoral.

What were these Christians to do? Should they issue vehement denials? No! Peter, in our Scripture reading for today, exhorted them instead to look upon themselves as strangers unable to accept the standards of this world. They were to make their conduct among the unsaved so attractive and winsome that their lives would answer every charge made by their enemies. Do you know what happened? The behavior of the early believers was so pure and good that thousands of pagans were saved. Even those who hated the Gospel couldn't help but admire the way Christians lived. And when a period of intense persecution came almost two centuries later, Christians were accused of ignorance, superstition, and a lack of patriotism, but they were no longer denounced as immoral, cruel, or dishonest. If we who know Christ today would be lovely and winsome in our behavior, we too could make a greater impact upon the world about us. Let's try, and watch the Lord work!

Would you shine for Jesus 'mid the careless throng?  
Imitate His graces as you pass along?  
Make no weak surrender to the coarse and vile;  
Keep yourselves from evil and your tongue from guile.  
—Anon.

**In regard to Christian living—one example is worth a thousand arguments!**

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**SINNERS MADE INTO SAINTS** - Roddy Roderique had served seventeen years of a life-sentence and was appealing for an early release before the high court in Montreal. His pastor, Charles Seidenspinner, was testifying on his behalf.

"Why should this man be released?" asked the Crown Attorney.

"Because God has come into his life, and changed him, and will hold him steady" replied the pastor.

"What do you mean `God has come into his life?'" asked the judge. He listened thoughtfully as the pastor shared in detail how Christ transforms a life. The judge then asked a loaded question: "Suppose this man is released. Would you want him for a neighbor?"

"Your Honor," said the pastor, "that would be wonderful! Some of my neighbors need to hear the same message that changed his life." Roddy was released, and today he's living for the Lord and is active in his church. —D. J. De Haan

**The world judges your faithfulness not so much by what you PROFESS,  
as by what you PRACTICE!**