
LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Let Your Light Shine

Lights are symbolic of celebrating Christmas. There is the star that might go on your Christmas tree, reminding us of that bright star that led the wise men to the birth of Jesus that first Christmas. Or, maybe it's an angel that adorns the top of your tree reminding us that on that dark and cold night while the shepherds watched their flocks, an angel appeared and the glory of the Lord shone around them – this great and magnificent light of God's glory piercing the darkness.

In non-religious terms light can symbolise hope, goodness, wisdom, knowledge. In the Bible, it is very much the same. Throughout the Bible you can find lots of verses about light that are linked to purity, truth, knowledge, revelation and hope, and opposed to sin, ignorance and lack of direction. But non less important than the true light, Jesus (John 1:1-5).

Jesus declares Himself to be the Light of the world, pointing to His unique divine identity and purpose (John 8:12). In declaring Himself to be the Light of the world, Jesus was claiming that He is the exclusive source of spiritual light.

As His followers we are given two promises. First, that we will never walk in darkness and secondly, that we will reflect the Light of Life. Just as He came as the Light of the world, He commands us to be "lights" too (Matthew 5:14-16).

Moon Light

The moon has no light of its own, it simply reflects the light of the sun. When Jesus says we are the light of the world, we are a little bit like the moon. We have no real light of our own. Our light source is Jesus, it's His Holy Spirit at work in us reflecting God's light, His glory to the world around us. The light is evident to others by the good deeds we do in faith and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The instruction is that we are to be shining brightly for God's glory just like a city on a hill or a lamp on a stand. Don't hide your light, darkness needs the light.

How Can We Serve as the Light of the World?

+ *We need to have bold faith so that God's light is visible.*

We should seek to be bold and open in our love for Jesus, joyously sharing what God has done for us so that others may know Him too.

Boldness isn't a license for insensitivity. God desires for us to be mature in how we shine His light. This means discerning each unique interaction with people as it unfolds and practicing godly wisdom (see Hebrews 5:14; James 3:17; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

+ *Don't allow the world to dim your light.*

God's light shines brightest when we have been in His presence, and we choose to then live our lives through the everyday choices we make that reflect His character and allow His glory to simply shine through us.

+ *God's light shines when we do good deeds.*

We are not saved by works – but we are saved for works (Ephesians 2:8-10). It means constantly asking ourselves, "What good can I do?" and it includes all the ways and works that honour God by helping people.

We Are the Light of The World for The Glory of God

We don't shine for our own sake but for God's glory. When we do good for others, we should not do them to glorify our profiles or gain personal credit (Matthew 6:1). Instead, we serve as the light of the world to ultimately point others to God.

To be the light of the world is to draw people's attention to the greater truth that "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

God truly loves each of us like none other! But we also need to remember that it's not all about us. Our goal as the light of the world is to glorify Him and bring His hope to all who are searching.

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What an awesome responsibility, to be the ones through whom God would shine His divine light and dispel the darkness from around others. In announcing His own coming, Jesus said, *"The people who live in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the shadowland of death, light has dawned"* (Matthew 4:16).

There was no ignoring Jesus' arrival on earth! The light really did step down into the darkness. Everywhere Jesus went, God's truth was boldly proclaimed, people were healed, hypocrisy was exposed, and sinners found forgiveness. The world was never the same once the Father introduced His light through His Son.

Do our co-workers, our fellow students, our neighbours and friends recognise the light that is within us? Does the presence of Jesus radiate from your home in your community?

When God's light is allowed to shine unhindered through our lives, the darkness around us will be dispelled. This isn't supposed to draw attention to ourselves, but instead, glorifying our Father in heaven.

How will you let His light shine through you in this Christmas season?

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:14-16.
2. What evidence of darkness do you see in the world?
3. What ways of the world shadow the effect of God's light shining through you?
4. Referring to the evidence of darkness, how can you be the light? What specific good works has God prepared beforehand that you should walk in them?
5. How can we shine like a town on a hill and lamps on stands so that people see our good works, yet avoid the sins of Matthew 6:1-17?
6. In what ways do our good works cause others to glorify God? How can we ensure that our works do not backfire and glorify us instead?
7. Pray together.