

Letting Our Lights Shine

Introduction; Light is important

- A. We need light to see to do things.
1. God recognized this in the beginning and made light for man.
 2. *Gen 1:16-18 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.*
 3. Most of man's work is done in the daytime since the moon and stars supply limited light. When the night sky is overcast or it is a new moon there has usually been little activity by men.
 4. Modern man can work 24/7 because he is able to make his own light. In many places it is as bright at night as in the day.
 5. Man has always made light. Candles, torches, oil lamps and things like that provided limited light. Now things are different. We can make bright light at night that covers large areas.
 6. Man makes more and more light for several reasons.
 - a. He is afraid of the dark. He is not in control and imagines dangerous things that go bump in the night.
 - b. He wants to be able to work around the clock and do more and make more money.
 - c. He wants more time for pleasure. Many do not want to stop having fun just because the sun goes down.
- B. Christians are the 'light of the world'.
1. *Mat 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*
 2. We are supposed to let our lights shine before all men. They should be attracted by our light. Our light is not physical but spiritual and moral.
 3. We show the world a better way of life. We stand out because we are different. We are a special people called by the Lord to do what is right.
 4. We are not the light of the church or the home but the world. We should be just as much a Christian on the job or on the golf-course as at church on Sunday morning.
 5. *Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*
 6. *Matt 4:13-16 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."*
 7. Our good deeds should draw attention to God and not ourselves. Folks should know we live and behave the way we do because we are followers of Jesus Christ.
- C. Letting our lights shine before men is not 'shinning our lights in men's faces.'
1. *1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*
 2. We do not sound a trumpet before men when we do a good work. We do not pray on the street corner to be seen of men —Matt 6. We do not brag of our good deeds. Folk like this embarrass God rather than glorify Him.
- D. Today we will talk about ways we should let our lights shine before men.

I. Our Clothing

A. Scripture teaches us to dress modestly.

1. *1 Tim 2:9-10 ...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*
2. *1 Pet 3:3-4 Do not let your adornment be merely outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel; 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*
3. These two verses teach modesty and decency. They also teach that character and behavior is more important than fine clothes. We should let our lights shine by our good deeds, not our fine clothes.

B. Dressing nicely is not wrong.

1. Lydia was a seller of purple —Act 16:14. She sold a valuable purple dye to the rich. She evidently was well off and probably dressed nicely, at least for her customers. Paul did not make her stop selling the purple dye.
2. *Prov 31:21-22 She is not afraid of snow for her household, For all her household is clothed with scarlet. 22 She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.*
3. The worthy woman dressed well and dressed her family well because she worked hard and had self-respect.
4. *Exod 19:10-11 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people."*
5. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt just a few months before. Now they were at God's mountain and Jehovah was going to speak to them. They were to wash their clothes and look as decent as they could.
6. Several religious groups (Amish for example) distinguish themselves by certain kinds of clothing. They stand out in society by the peculiar kind of clothes they wear.
7. This is not how it should be among Christians. Their clothing does not particularly draw attention to them. It is their deeds that make them shine before men.

C. Our clothing should not distract from our spiritual light before men —whether by too much or too little.

II. Our Language

A. Scripture teaches us to watch our language.

1. *Mat 12:36-37 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*
2. *Eph 5:3-4 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*
3. The N.T. teaches very plainly that we can be condemned by our words. There are many ways in which our speech can be wrong.
 - a. **filthiness**; filthy language or talking about filthy things —Col 3:8
 - b. **foolish talking**; bragging, talking about silly and worthless things... foolishness
 - c. **coarse jesting**; dirty jokes or obscene language, languages that is suggestive or has a double meaning, vulgar, lewd...
 - d. **blasphemy**; speaking against God or speaking evil of spiritual things, denying the Bible as the word of God —Col 3:8
 - e. **lying**; half-truths to deceive, taking advantage of others, used-car salesman —Col 3:9
 - f. **gossip**; talking about others to speak against them or tear them down, oftentimes to make ourselves look big —Prov 16:28
 - g. **meanness**; malice, to hurt others, to discourage others, to try to make them feel guilty —Col 3:8
 - h. **anger & wrath**; abusing someone with our speech, uncontrolled speech, accusations—Col 3:8
 - i. **cursing**; wishing evil to come upon someone; pronouncing an evil judgment against a person —Matt 5:44

B. Our speech should be positive and good and show Christ in us.

1. *Rom 15:2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.*
2. *Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it*

may impart grace to the hearers.

3. *Acts 11:23 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.*
4. This does not mean we never condemn sin nor warn folks of the consequences of sin. We must do this, but in the right way.
5. It means we warn them and condemn them to let them know there is a better way to live and a better hope to have in heaven. Our goal is to encourage folks to obey their Savior.

C. Our speech should not darken the light we shine as children of God.

III. Our Prayers

A. Prayer is talking to our heavenly Father.

1. Prayer is communication with God. It is a child of God speaking to his Father and pouring out his heart to Him.
2. God teaches us to pray regularly and often.
3. *Matt 6:9-11 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread."*
4. *1 Thess 5:16-18 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*
5. Asking for 'daily food' means we pray at least daily. Rejoicing, praying and giving thanks always (without ceasing) means we pray regularly and often.
6. Daniel had set times of prayer. He prayed without ceasing. He did not let a law made by his enemies to not pray stop him from praying. He still went to his room and prayed.
7. *Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.*
8. Today prayer is not completely outlawed. There are many places where public prayer or times of prayer is not allowed —public schools for example.
9. Despite this we can still pray. Daniel excused himself and went to his room. Men knew he prayed there but he did not make a public exhibition of his prayer.

B. Some abuse their prayers and do not glorify God.

1. On several occasions Jesus condemned the religion of His day. He condemned it because of their abuses and their glorifying themselves and not God.
2. *Matt 6:5-6 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."*
3. We see that the folks of Jesus day made a show of prayer. They were more concerned with how they looked than how God looked.
4. Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time."
5. We may think we are glorifying God when we make long, loud prayers in restaurants and other places. We may fool many people into thinking we are very religious. Yet many will see through us.
6. Again, Daniel went to his room to pray. Men knew he prayed but he did not make a public display. Jesus often went to the mountain alone to pray. He went a stone's throw from the disciples to pray —Luke 22:41.
7. Public prayer is good and certainly has its place. It is unfortunate that our society is trying to remove all public prayer. Whether public or private we are talking to God and must glorify Him.

C. Our prayers should shed light in the world and glorify our Lord and Savior.

IV. Our Money

A. Jehovah expects us to work and make money.

1. *Eph 4:28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*
2. *1 Thess 4:11-12 ...that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.*
3. We are to work for many reasons.
 - a. to support ourselves
 - b. to support our family —1 Tim 5:8
 - c. to help other in need —Gal 2:10, Jam 1:27
 - d. to support the church —1 Cor 16:1-2
 - e. to pay taxes —Matt 22:21, Rom 13:6, 7
 - f. to be a good example before others and let our lights shine —2 Thess 3:6-10
4. When someone won't work they are looked down on by society. They do not honor God and His church by their laziness.

B. There is nothing wrong with enjoying life —in proper ways of course.

1. *Ecc 5:18 Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.*
2. God did not intend for man to just live a life of bondage, misery and doing without. God placed Adam and Eve in a Paradise.
3. Yet we must keep in mind that life is short and eternity is forever. Therefore this thought must limit our seeking of pleasure and joy.
3. *Ecc 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.*
4. We need to use our money wisely to, 'lay up treasures in heaven' —Matt 6:19-21. We must not just seek pleasure as many do but seek God's approval.
5. Those who are wasteful with their money are not as respected as those who are disciplined and save for the future.
6. We must also make sure we do not do good deeds or religious deeds to be seen by men and honored by them. Again we can fool some folks sometimes. In the long run we will be found out and our lights darkened.
7. *Matt 6:1-2 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."*

C. Our use of our money can glorify God or please ourselves.**V. Our Music****A. Almost every society and generation has its own music.**

1. Quite often the younger generation rejects the music of the older generation. Usually the older generation condemns the music of the younger one as evil, immoral and degenerate.
2. Sometimes this is true. We are commanded to be careful what and how we hear.
3. *Luke 8:18 "Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."*
4. Jesus is talking to His disciples. The light of His word will reveal all things —vs 17. They must be careful that they listen carefully and use what they learn.
5. We can make an application to many things. What do we listen to? This can be music, movies, the radio and TV and talk shows. What we regularly listen to can affect us.
6. *1 Cor 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*
7. *1 Cor 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*
8. Parents often fight a losing battle over what their children listen to. God never commanded us to be tone-deaf and burn our radios. The volume and beat of the music are inconsequential. They are not religious

issues.

9. It is the words of the songs we listen to that we need to focus on. Probably every genre has some songs that are inappropriate.
10. Some kinds of music though is built on things that are immoral, violent and wrong. These need to be avoided, ignored and even spoken against—consider ‘rap’ music.

B. We need to mediate on righteous things.

1. *Psa 1:1-3 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*
2. *Psa 119:15 I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways.*
3. *Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.*
4. What we fill our time and minds with affects who we are and what we become. We need to avoid the things of the world and concentrate more on spiritual things.
5. Even much of the world recognizes that violent and immoral music and music that glorifies criminal acts is wrong. Christians must avoid these kinds of music.

C. We must glorify God by even the music we listen to.

Conclusion; We are lights in the world.

A. How bright is our light?

1. What do men see when they look at us. Do they see a mature, self-disciplined person who tries to do what is right?
2. Or do they see a gay, carefree friend of the world? Or a wicked person who glorifies in doing wrong?

B. Are we ready to stand before God?

1. We begin to let our lights shine when we believe, repent and are baptized to be a Christian.
2. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*