

ChallengeNet.net

We Are the Light

Written by: James Travis

Written on: November 9, 2005

We all need light, without it we would be unable to see. So when Jesus tells us we are to be the light of the world [Mathew 5:14] it is no small task. If we are the light of the world and we fail to show our light, the ones depending on our light will be in complete darkness.

It seems to me then that we should learn how to be the best light that we possibly can be. So for this months' spiritual article we will learn how to make our light shine like the Son!

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior and are interested in doing so I encourage you to read the article I have written entitled [Accepting Jesus](#).

Now we've all had power-outages and other situations where we were left with no light. It becomes a real adventure to try and navigate even the familiar territory of our homes when we can't see what is in-front of us. Light, something usually taken completely for granted, now becomes a precious resource. We are the precious resource of the world, because we have something that the world needs; we carry the light of truth... and not just any truth, but the truth of Jesus, of salvation.

God has given us a lot of instruction in His Word about how to most effectively let our light shine in the world, and that is what we will be studying, so without delay let's jump right in.

"If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well."

(James 2:8)

This is the most basic, and ironically the most difficult part for most people to follow. We as humans tend to make judgments about the way other people look, or the color of their skin instead of looking at people the way God looks at them, at their hearts. You'd be surprised how many people look at me and only see my wheelchair, and immediately dismiss me as some vegetable with no mind of my own; it's the same principal for everything else.

If we don't like to be around people, or don't love them the way Jesus loves them, even if we never admit it with our mouths, we send off a negative signal that other people can (and do) pick up on. Call it a vibe, call it energy, whatever you want... it's there, I've felt

it, and I have witnessed others feel it too. I believe that God designed it that way as a kind of warning signal; and it is real.

Also you'll find that someone who does not love people tends to not want to be around others. Instead of wanting to attend social events, the person will withdraw into privacy. The problem with that is, if you're never around people and you don't love them as Jesus does, then you will never have any light, nor any opportunity to let it shine even if you did have it. The Bible says it this way:

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

I try to take every opportunity to let my light shine. Whether I am working at my job, helping at my church or just hanging-out with friends, I like being around people. Honestly, how many people actually enjoy being alone? I can't think of many.

Now I am not trying to say that we should never have "alone time". We all need it sometimes. What I am talking about here are the people who have forgotten to as the Bible says "love their neighbor as themselves" and that Jesus requires us to "let our light shine".

Everyone one of you (as Christians) has an incredible testimony of how the Lord has helped you... and what a shame it would be if your story was never heard because your light was placed "under a basket" where no-one could see your light.

Recognizing common things which block our light

Now let's take a look at some of the most common "baskets" that can hide our light.

First and foremost, one of the most common baskets that can hide our light is fear. This is one I have a lot of personal experience with. Fear of acceptance, and fear of failure.

As someone who uses a wheelchair, let's be honest, I look different than most people I am around. They're standing, I'm sitting, it's really not that huge of a difference, but because of my fear, my light was under a basket for many years. I was afraid that people wouldn't accept me and I was afraid that I wouldn't be "good enough". So I hid my light.

Now that I have stepped-out in faith and realized that my fear was actually holding me back instead of protecting me, I can see how fear was just a basket in disguise and that my fear was the work of the enemy, trying to keep my light hidden; and it's the same with everyone. God has not given us the spirit of fear [2nd Timothy 1:7].

Another common basket is laziness; we simply don't feel like doing this or that, we make excuses to stay away from where God wants us to be if it requires effort on our part. Yet

the Bible tells us to not grow weary of doing good [Galatians 6:9]. You will also find that work done for the Lord with a joyful and pure heart can actually be quite enjoyable. I speak from personal experience... The first time I actually felt God tell me to do volunteer work at a church, I was both scared and frustrated because I didn't want to give my valuable time doing work that didn't pay me anything (yes I was young and arrogant). However, once I actually began doing the work, I found myself enjoying both the work itself, and the company of the other people I was with, and I also found many opportunities to share the love of Jesus. So while I didn't get paid with money, I was richly rewarded in other ways.

There is one other common basket that we need to expose, and that is ego. There are many Christians out there with inflated egos. Those who believe that they are far too good, moral and holy to spend time with other people because they feel the other people are too far beneath them. Unfortunately this is a sickness that has spread far and wide in recent years, and it needs to be stopped. The Bible teaches that we are all sinners [Romans 3:23] and these egotists are no exception. Jesus made it quite clear when He said it like this:

“And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners’ .” (Matthew 9:10-13)

Our job is to shine the light of Jesus on the dark world. We can't do that if we never want to associate ourselves with the people who need us. Now of course, we must make sure that we do not get sucked into the same sins that ensnare others while we are trying to shine. (e.g. don't go to witness at a bar and end up getting drunk). However we should not be so “holy-egocentric” that we make ourselves useless.

Let your light shine!

I would like to close with a challenge... I challenge each and every Christian reading this to let their light shine to at least three people every week. It has been my experience that when I make myself available to God, He always finds ways to use me and for me to let the light of Jesus shine through me. It doesn't have to always be something big, it could be as simple as a few kind words or a helping hand to a stranger, but make a conscious and sincere effort.

And of course, if you have never accepted Jesus' sacrifice as payment for your sins, I would challenge you to do so right now. There is simply no reason to wait when the consequences of sin are so very real and eternal. The simple fact is that all sin must be paid for. It can either be paid by you, or through Jesus. Heaven or Hell, where do you want to spend eternity?

I encourage; you to read another article of mine entitled [Accepting Jesus](#). I have tried to make it as concise and encompassing as possible so all of your questions would be answered, and you can always contact me if you have any questions not covered in the article.

May you all continue to Rise to the Challenges in your life.

James