

## ***This Little Light of Mine...***

The youth of our church had just gotten home from an amazing weekend retreat and were fired up! The theme? WE are lights for Jesus! Dressed in their black shirts with a flame on the front, they climbed off the bus...exhausted but ready to let their lights shine...in their schools, in their homes, in their part-time jobs after school. One teenage had her commitment tested shortly after arriving home, when her mother (not a Christian) woke her up at midnight to help her fix a dripping sink! "Ugh! It's 12:00!" she thought. But immediately she was reminded of her commitment to let her love and faith shine to her family. She came into the kitchen to find her mom half-hidden in the cupboard, struggling to hold...a flashlight! Yes! This girl was able to both literally and spiritually hold a light for her mom as she came along side her in a moment of need!



### ***Fellowship***

1. How have you been able to be a light to an unsaved person this week?
2. Have you ever met a person and seen a "light" in them to such an extent that you "had a feeling" they were saved? Did your hunch turn out to be correct?



### ***Discipleship***

The passage we will look at today is the same one the youth were challenged by on their retreat. It's Matthew 5:14-16. Let's read it together.

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

Christians are compared to 2 things. First, we are the "light of the world". This may seem like a large and daunting role to play! You may say, "How can I be a light to the entire world? I come from a small town, don't get out much, and really...I'm pretty shy." That's OK. Not everyone is created to be a huge, powerful spotlight. God has given us different talents and personality traits. But if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have a light *and* daily opportunities to let it shine. Evangelist DL Moody said, "We may not be able to do any great thing; but if each of us will do something, however small it may be, a good deal will be accomplished for God." Put lots of candles together, and soon you'll have a bonfire. And, an exciting thing about living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the global

community we live in! You may have your home in the smallest and most insignificant town in your country, but chances are, you have access to the World Wide Web...and therefore have the potential to impact the world! How many desperate and seeking people visit chat rooms or discussion forums to seek advice? You may be the light and voice of truth that God has ordained for them. You have people silently watching your life even when you aren't aware, and are a light in your family, workplace, and city. Verse 14 also says that we are a "city set on a hill that cannot be hidden." That's good news! Although it may feel uncomfortable for us to be "different" and stick out in a crowd of non-believers, God will do His part in providing those people who need Him to see our lights.

Where is light *meant* to be lit? In the darkness! I still struggle with feeling overwhelmed if I know I'm the "only" Christian at a party, social engagement or classroom. It is so much easier to be among Christians who "understand" us and whom we have something in common with. But God has left us to be His hands and feet and has declared us now His witnesses! He has commissioned us to go and make disciples, and the first step is to have a lit lamp and then to let it shine. Have you ever been in a pitch black room? It is amazing how one candle will illuminate and dispel the darkness! That's amazing power God has given us!

Let's read verse 16 again.

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

It has a very important command: the word "let". A flame will not be able to give light if it is hidden. We can cover up effectiveness and hinder others from seeing God by things like secret *and* obvious sins, characteristics that are *not* godly, and disobedience to God in sharing when He has told us to. It takes a daily walk with the Giver of Light to keep the flame burning brightly and to be sensitive to His promptings in offering it to others.

One little boy was praying at bedtime, and his mom asked him if he had any problems they should pray about. He couldn't think of any, even though mom could think of a number! She pressed the point and asked, "Don't you have any problems at school?" "No," he replied quite firmly. "Don't the kids give you a hard time because you're a Christian?" Again the answer was "No." Thinking back to her own traumatic school days, she said, "But kids always give you a hard time if you let them know you're a Christian." His reply was frank beyond belief: "All the more reason you don't let them know!" And quite happily he turned over to sleep.

We may chuckle, but it's a bit convicting, isn't it? We want to fit in and "belong". But the joys of a brilliant and obedient life far outweigh all else!

Charlie Hainline is a layman at a church in Florida. He is a man who radiates the love of Christ, and is serious about sharing his faith with others. One year, his goal was to lead 1650 people to faith in Christ (5 a day)!! Once, he was out witnessing with a couple of

other folks, and though he didn't share the gospel, he sat there and smiled broadly as a teammate talked. When the teammate was finished and asked if the person would like to trust Christ and receive the gift of eternal life, the person replied, "If being a Christian would make me like him (as he pointed to Charlie), I want it!"

Charlie's life wasn't a bed of roses by any means. His daughter was kidnapped, killed, and her head was found floating in a canal. But he had a light and was willing to let it shine. When the murderer of his daughter was caught and convicted, Charlie went to jail in order to witness to the man.

If you don't already have a passion for the lost, pray for it! God will delight to give it to you!



## *Ministry*

3. Does sharing your faith come easily to you? What is the greatest challenge?
4. Read Matthew 4:13-16. What are both attributes of "salt" and "light" that could help those in your sphere of influence?
5. What are the rewards of obeying this passage, both mentioned and unmentioned in the verses?



## *Evangelism*

6. Commit to God and to the group of one step you will take this week to more actively let your light shine.
7. Telling people about this small group is a perfect conversation opener, opening the door to inviting the unsaved to join in and see the Light! Brainstorm about who you would like to invite.



## *Worship*

8. Spend some time thanking God that you have been chosen and have His light in you! During a time of prayer, think back to how it felt to have no hope after death, and use that as a springboard to praise Him...and to pray for the unsaved on your list in #7!

And remember to take some time to plan your celebration night next week!

