

FOLLOW ME

Week of November 15

When the Lord said, “Let there be light,” His presence immediately illumined the darkness. Christ in God spoke those words four days before He created the sun, moon, and stars (Genesis 1:3, 14-19), confirming that He is that light shining in the darkness. In His presence all is exposed and at His command the forces of darkness are rendered powerless. Christ dwells in the most majestic place of honor, at God’s right hand, and all of creation bows to His authority. The fact that Christ holds the position He does, is what allows this world to be inhabitable (see Hebrews 1:1-3).

It is no wonder then, that once the Lord illumines the hearts of His children, He expects them to make a difference in this dark world. Christ-followers make a difference not by pointing to themselves, but by pointing others to the Source of light. Jesus said: “No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father” (Matthew 5:15-16). When we influence others for Christ we are being the salt and light Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount.

Read Matthew 5:13-16

1. Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth.” How can a follower of Christ add God-flavor to this world?

Jesus quickly goes on to say, “But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor?” How does a Christ-follower become bland?

What keeps a Christ-follower from becoming bland?

Being salt means bringing out the God-flavor in others and seeing people as Jesus did. As we value other persons and genuinely seek to *add* value to their lives, people will enjoy being around us. The person of Christ, His ways, His truth will become attractive to those who do not yet believe. Christ calls us not to repel others, but to be a conduit of His magnetic love.

2. When have you seen a Christ-follower become a conduit of God’s magnetic love, and as a result, others were personally drawn to His love and grace?

What do the following Scriptures have to say about—

(1) doing good – “being light”

(2) being winsome – “being salt” in our interactions with people?

Colossians 4:5-6

Titus 2:6-10

1 Peter 3:13-17

It is true that at times we may suffer for doing what is right, but the Lord still calls us to remain faithful. The righteous will live not by the whims and ever-changing currents of this world, but “by their faithfulness to God” (Habakkuk 2:4b). Jesus said, “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way” (Matthew 5:11-12).

Notice these words of Jesus directly precede His admonition to be salt and light. Although it seems skeptics are always close by—they were for Jesus, they will be for us—the Lord helps us keep our eyes on the bigger picture by focusing on the one lost sheep. And just as the Lord faithfully pursues lost sheep, He calls us to do the same, no matter what the critics have to say.

3. The Plain Truth states: “We are drawn to people who value us and who *add* value to us – so do likewise.” Why are we drawn to people who value us?

How is genuinely valuing someone a true attribute (reflection) of the Lord?

Jesus not only valued those around Him, He added value to their lives by seeing what they could become through His love, grace, and healing power. When have you seen a person “loved” into becoming a new person?

4. Re-read vv15-16 of Matthew, chapter 5. In the space below describe what it means *for you* to place your lamp “on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.”

What would it look like *for you* to “let your good deeds shine out for all to see?”

Jesus concluded this section by saying, we do this not to bring glory to ourselves, but for this one reason: “so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” The joy of being a fully devoted follower of Christ is to point people to the Source of Light, Christ Himself. Jesus said: “And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” (John 12:32). There is no way we can draw another person to the foot of the cross. Jesus alone does this through the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you’ve ever been to the Billy Graham Library, you have noticed the unique door leading into the center. It is a giant window in the shape of a cross with double doors at the bottom of the glass. Billy Graham said he wanted everyone to remember we all get to Jesus the same way, through the foot of the cross.

5. What is humbling about bowing at the foot of the cross?

Why is it impossible to bring our pride to the foot of the cross?

What do you find at the foot of the cross?

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead a lamp is placed on a stand where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”
(Matthew 5:14-15)

One Year Bible Reading

Nov. 15: Ezekiel 31:1-32:32, Hebrews 12:14-29, Psalm 113:1-114:8, Prov. 27:18-20
Nov. 16: Ezekiel 33:1-34:31, Hebrews 13:1-25, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 27:21-22
Nov. 17: Ezekiel 35:1-36:38, James 1:1-18, Psalm 116:1-19, Proverbs 27:23-27
Nov. 18: Ezekiel 37:1-38:23, James 1:19-2:17, Psalm 117:1-2, Proverbs 28:1
Nov. 19: Ezekiel 39:1-40:27, James 2:18-3:18, Psalm 118:1-18, Proverbs 28:2
Nov. 20: Ezekiel 40:28-41:26, James 4:1-17, Psalm 118:19-29, Proverbs 28:3-5
Nov. 21: Ezekiel 42:1-43:27, James 5:1-20, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 28:6-7

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Text: Matthew 5:13-16

The Plain Truth:

We are drawn to people who _____ us and who add _____ to us so do _____.

- 1) Value _____
- 2) Know and Relate to What _____ Value
- 3) Make _____ More Valuable
- 4) Do the Things _____ Values