

LETTING YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Text: Matt. 5:13-16

INTRO: Christians have been enlightened by the gospel of Christ & by that same gospel, they have been charged with the responsibility to reflect that light in their every day lives.

Eph 5:8, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Phil 2:14-16, Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless & harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked & perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Obviously, properly discharging that duty involves balance & the use of good judgment which comes with exercise, spiritual growth & maturity. Your judgment will not always be the same as mine. It will probably sometimes be much better. Sometimes it may not be as good. But we must seek to strike the proper balance, use good judgment, behave with spiritual maturity & discretion.

Heb 5:14, Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

A Christian should be just as much a Christian in his place of employment, the schoolroom or the golf course as he is while sitting in the assembly of the saints. We are not the light of the church but the light of the world.

We are not to “perform” our religion to be seen of men, Matt 6:2ff, but we must not hide our religious convictions from the world. We are to **BE** Christians & that **FACT** will be reflected in what we say & do. It is not an act, a performance—it is our life.

I. OUR CLOTHING.

A. The Bible recognizes that different clothing is proper for different occasions. For instance, it mentions:

1. Attire of a judge, Judg. 5:10
2. Attire of a bride, Jer 2:32
3. Attire of a harlot, Prov 7:10
4. Best robe, LK 15:22

B. God commands Christians to wear “modest apparel.”

1 Tim 2:8-10, I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; 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, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

1. Modest apparel is apparel that covers enough flesh to help a good man not think impure thoughts.
2. It is also apparel that is not gaudy, not unduly expensive. A godly person should be attractive because of what he is, not what he wears.
3. This does not mean a Christian cannot have & wear good quality clothing if he can afford to do so. The “worthy” woman of Prov 31 wore fine linen & purple. Jesus’ clothing was of such quality that the Roman soldiers gambled to possess it, LK 23:34. If He had dressed as a pauper or “street person” it is unlikely that any self-respecting soldier would have wanted His clothes.
4. “Is this shirt too dirty?” Yes. “Does this blouse show too much flesh?” Yes. “Is this skirt too short?” Yes. “Is the slogan on my t-shirt improper?”

II. OUR LANGUAGE.

- A. In this world we are going to be exposed to filthy, vulgar language & our reaction, if any, will probably

need to be determined by the situation. Sometimes it may be proper to censure; other times, it may be more proper to remain silent.

B. But as for our own language we must be careful to remember that we are “lights.”

1. Profanity, vulgarity, using God’s name in any light & flippant way. These should be avoided.
2. Having a sense of humor is not wrong but course jesting (dirty jokes) detract from our ability to be lights in a dark world.

Eph 5:3-4, But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting...

Col 3:8, But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

Eph 4:29-30, Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers & do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

III. OUR ENTERTAINMENT.

A. Most movies today are filled with filthy language & immoral behavior. There are a few exceptions but the Christian should be careful concerning what he stores in his mind & perhaps even more so what he permits his children to see and hear.

B. Our music. There has always been a generation gap in music appreciation. The beat & volume is of little or

no importance but the WORDS (messages) are crucial. Songs that **glorify** violence, vulgarity, abuse of alcohol & other drugs, adultery & other forms of immorality should be eliminated as much as possible from the Christian's entertainment menu. Music videos which feature entertainment stars in vulgar attire & suggestive gyrations should also be avoided.

IV. OUR PERSONAL OBSERVANCES, TRADITIONS, ETC.

- A. The Lord's church recognizes no special "holy days" other than the 1st day of the week when the disciples assemble for worship, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2.

Gal 4:8-11, But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

- B. But the Bible gives us liberty to determine what, if any, value we assign to national & family traditions so long as we behave in keeping with our relationship with the Lord.

Rom 14:4-10, Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, & no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; & if we die, we

die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Col 2:16, So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

- C. Each person must make up his own mind, use the best judgment he can with regard to such matters--& allow others to do the same. I see no Biblical reason why a faithful Christian can't do the same thing in December that he can do at any other time of the year—visit with friends & relatives, exchange gifts with them send greeting cards, eat turkey, listen to seasonal music, watch parades or sporting events on tv, etc. If I choose NOT do to day of these things, so be it. If I feel my influence as a Christian would be better if I refrain from such activities, then I should refrain from them. If I am not convinced that such is the case, then please excuse my exercise of liberty in such areas & leave the judgment to the Lord. To the Lord I must live, in the Lord I must die, & by the Lord I will be judged.

CONCLUSION: We need one another's help, prayers & encouragement as we seek to serve as lights in a dark world. May God help us all serve Him acceptably.

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, December 22, 2002.
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, August 26, 2005 (meeting)