

LETTING YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Text: Matthew 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 behavior.

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 and 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,

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 and do. It is not an act, a performance – but 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. Attired of a bride, Jer. 2:32
3. Attire of a harlot, Prov. 7:10
4. Return of the prodigal, “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 & 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 that 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 value 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 garment.
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, and 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 always be avoided.
2. Having a sense of humor is not wrong, but coarse 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. And 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, and perhaps even more so what he encourages his children to see and hear.

B. Our music. There has always been a generation gap in music appreciation. The beat & the volume is of little or no importance but the WORDS (message) are crucial. Songs that **glorify** vulgarity, abuse of alcohol & other mind-bending drugs, violence, 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 first day of every week when the disciples assemble for worship, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.

Gal 4:8-11, 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 & beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days & 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; & he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, & 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 & rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Col 2:16, So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

C. Each person must make up his own mind, use the best judgment he can with regard to such matters -- & allow other Christians 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 and/or exchange gifts with them, send greeting cards, eat turkey, listen to seasonal music, watch parades or sporting events on tv, etc., etc. If I choose NOT to do any 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 must be judged.

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