

Letting Your Light Shine

(Or, How To Be A Christian Without Embarrassing God)

Introduction

- I. “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:13–16).
 - A. This is one of those statements which should cause us to lift up our heads and make us realize once more what a remarkable and glorious thing it is to be a Christian.
 - B. “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).
 - C. We have not only received light, we have been made light; we have become transmitters of light.
- II. Our light is meant to be seen by men.
 - A. 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.
 - B. Jesus did not say “You are the light of the *church*”; he said, “You are the light of the *world*.”
 - C. We live in the world and our Christianity should be evident to all.
 - D. Our good deeds ought to draw attention, not to ourselves, but to God.
 - E. This saying of Jesus is a total prohibition of what someone has called “theatrical goodness.”
- III. Sometimes, instead of “letting our light shine,” men prefer to “shine their lights” in the face of others—forcing people to look at them.
 - A. Instead of behaving like “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Pet. 2:9), some Christians revel in the idea of standing out in the crowd—they become a living “Church Lady” skit from Saturday Night Live.
 - B. Our Lord warns us to not “sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men” (Matt. 6:2, 16–18; 23:1–5).
 - C. Such activities do not cause men to “glorify your Father in heaven”—they serve only as an embarrassment to our Heavenly Father.

Discussion

- I. **Our Clothing**
 - A. God commands us to wear “modest apparel” (1 Tim. 2:9–10), He did not command us to dress like freaks from the last century.
 - B. The Amish of this country are known by their clothing—it is certainly modest and unassuming, but they go out of their way to stand out in society and draw attention to themselves.
 - C. Lydia was a “seller of purple” (Acts 16:14).
 1. The “purple” was a dye derived from purple shellfish.
 2. Such dye was very expensive, so Lydia was evidently a woman of considerable means.
 - D. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 was adorned in “fine linen and purple” (Prov. 31:21–22).
 - E. You do not have to dress like a refugee from a concentration camp in order to be pleasing to God!

II. Our Language

- A. God condemns “course jesting” (Eph. 5:4); He did not ban all humor.
- B. “Course jesting” is “vulgar” or “lewd” joking or language.
- C. Christ did use humor in His teaching (Matt. 23:23–26).

III. Our Prayers

- A. God commands us to pray give thanks for our daily bread (Matt. 6:11); He does not expect us to put our “piety” on display.
- B. Some turn their prayers into a display at restaurants (Matt. 6:5–6).
- C. Can you honestly say you are “giving thanks” when you can’t even hear what is being said by the one leading in prayer? (cf. 1 Cor. 14:16).

IV. Our Money

- A. God commands us to be good stewards of our resources (1 Pet. 4:10; cf. Titus 1:7); He did not command that we live like monks.
- B. There is nothing wrong with enjoying life (Eccl. 2:24, 3:9–13, 5:18–20).
- C. “Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.” (Eccl. 11:9).

V. Our Music

- A. Jesus warns us to be careful “how we hear” (Luke 8:18); He doesn’t command that we all become tone deaf and burn our radios.
 - 1. Parents often fight a losing battle with their children over music.
 - 2. The volume and beat of the music are inconsequential.
 - 3. The *words* of the songs are where we need to focus—you might not like the beat or the volume, but those are not religious issues!
- B. What we meditate upon is what we become (Psa. 1:1–6).
- C. Remember the words of David, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Psa. 119:11).

VI. Our Calendar

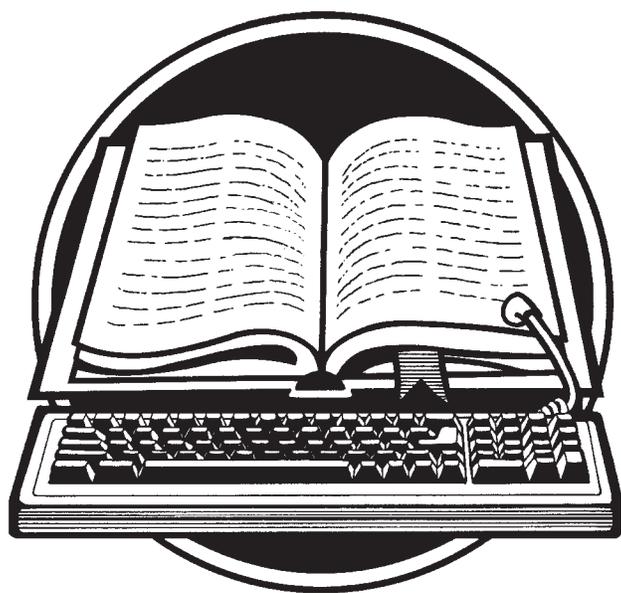
- A. God prohibits the church from establishing holy days (Gal. 4:9–11); He doesn’t prohibit you from reading the calendar or observing traditions and customs that are a part of our culture.
- B. Some preachers leave you with the impression that if you smile during the month of December you have somehow sinned—and heaven help you if you say “Happy Holidays.”
 - 1. Christmas is a civil holiday, not a religious holy day—even atheists get the day off from work with pay.
 - 2. I don’t know of anyone who can get through December without observing some part of Christmas (meals, football, travel, lights).
- C. Individual Christians have the liberty to “observe” special days unto the Lord—but they can’t bind them on others (Rom. 14:4–8).

VII. Our Worship

- A. God commands order in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:40); He doesn't require the worship service to look like a funeral service.
- B. The Israelites were commanded to serve God with "joy and gladness of heart" (Deut. 28:45-48; cf. 1 Kings 8:66; Ezra 6:22).
- C. We are to "delight in the Law of the Lord" (Psa. 1:1-2).
- D. "Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord" (Psa. 27:6).
- E. "And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation" (Psa. 35:9).
- F. "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your generous Spirit" (Psa. 51:12).
- G. We are to receive the Word with joy (Matt. 13:20, 44; Acts 8:8, 39).
- H. We need to be able to say "Amen" (1 Cor. 14:16; Neh. 8:6).
- I. If Christianity makes you miserable, then you do not have Christianity, just a poor substitute for your dried up soul.

Conclusion

- I. God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.
- II. We are living in the midst of people who are in a state of spiritual darkness.
 - A. They will never find light anywhere in the world except from you and me and the gospel we believe and teach—they are watching us.
 - B. Are our lives a silent rebuke to them?
- III. Do we so live so as to lead them to come and ask us, "Why is your life so peaceful? How is your life so balanced?"
 - A. If they ask, we can tell them that wondrous, amazing news that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."
 - B. Christ came to give us life and make us the children of God.
 - C. Christians are the light of the world—let us live and function as the children of light.



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