

## **Living in the Light: Looking Up and Lighting the Way for Others to Follow: Part 1**

*In Your light we see light (Psalm 36:9).*

### **The Value of Created Light**

Light naturally affects everything around it. It is necessary for living and greatly enhances the quality of life.

The loss of sight is devastating. Those who are born blind can learn to live within the confines of the dark and those who become blind later in life can adjust; however, no one ever chose to live in a world of darkness.

Even a blind person depends on certain properties of light for their existence. Light is necessary for the development of food. Photosynthesis starts by taking energy from the sun converting it into something plants use for their life processes. Animals make use of this energy when they eat the plants. This consumption of energy continues all the way to the top of the food chain. Nearly all life on earth benefits from food as a result of a few bacteria and photosynthesis in plants.

Many sighted people, especially children, are afraid of the dark. However, when light illuminates a dark place, fears of the unknown and the unseen are often dispelled. A lamp, a flashlight, a candle or electric lights can expose what is really there. Monsters created in the shadows disappear.

SAD or Seasonal Affective Disorder is a seasonal depression that occurs the same time every year, most often during the cold, dark days of winter. The curative properties of light are the prescription for this malady.

On one of those cold days, there is a vast difference between walking in sunlight and walking in the shadows. Sunlight brings warmth and comfort.

"Einstein said that the reason he could construct the theory of relativity was because there is one thing in the world that is unchangeable. That one thing-the speed of light-is the only constant in this physical, material universe" (Tan, P. L. (1996). Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.). Light brings knowledge and understanding.

Lighthouses have distinctive light patterns, enabling mariners to identify their location. Even though many ships now have GPS capability, their

captains often still trust in lighthouses to give them direction.

## **Spiritual Light**

The value of light is far reaching both physically and spiritually. God is light (1 John 1:5) and His Son is the Light of the World (John 8:12). Jesus said His followers are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). The Apostle Paul said Christians should live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8) and the Apostle John said we should walk in the light as Jesus is in the light (1 John 1:7).

Looking to the Light saves from a life of darkness, provides nourishment, dispels fear, provides healing, warmth and comfort, and gives knowledge, understanding and direction.

## **Light in Scripture**

Light is so important to God that He mentions it thirteen times in the first eighteen verses of Genesis and ends Revelation with references to it. On the first day, He spoke light into existence and separated it from the darkness. On the fourth day, He made two great lights to govern the day and the night.

Throughout Scripture, light is a recurring theme either as eternal light, created light or shared light. The last two chapters of the Bible tell us that the sun or the moon will no longer be needed as light, for the Lamb is the light. The light that God created to shine in the darkness pointed to the Light of the World. He was Light before the foundation of the world, came so that we might see the Light, and will reign forever as the Light of heaven. In the new heaven and the new earth there will be no more night. There will no longer be anything associated with darkness: no more death, no pain, no fear, no sorrow, no impurities.

## **Masquerading Light of Death**

*There is a way that seems right to man, but the end thereof is death*  
(Proverbs 14:12).

The god of this world fools many people of the world with the wisdom of the world. Satan, the father of lies, appears as an angel of light. As Adam and Eve discovered in the garden of Eden, believing his lies results in death. Satan's goal is to keep people from looking to Jesus, the Light of the World, and trusting Him as Savior.

The Age of Enlightenment, a dark period in the history of the world, left God out of the picture. "Enlightenment was a desire for human affairs to be guided by rationality rather than by faith, superstition, or revelation; a belief in the power of human reason to change society..." (Wikipedia: definition by Dorinda Outram). It has become obvious that human reason has not changed society for the better. Without God, there is no understanding of right and wrong. There is no light.

As I travel internationally to teach the Bible, I am aware that many are still ignoring the presence of the Light of God. In many cases, people are creating their own belief systems without checking the validity of God's claims on their lives. Instead of looking up, they are looking inward. Satan, as an angel of light, is very subtle with his temptations. It never occurs to many who listen to his lies that they are doing his bidding because they prefer evil. The Apostle Paul instructed believers to get rid of any deeds of darkness and wear an armor of light. Although Satan continues to lead many astray, God enables His children to live in the light in a world of darkness.

Examine John 1:4, John 3:19-20, Romans 13:12, 2 Corinthians 4:4

### **Living in the Light**

The light of life is a beacon shining throughout the word of God. After his testing experience, Job said, *God has delivered me from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light of life* (Job 33:28 NIV). Since God is the believer's dwelling place (Deuteronomy 33:27 ESV), the light of life is home to His children. David said, *For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life* (Psalm 56:13 NIV).

Christians have an eternal life which began the day of their new birth. They have received the light of life. It is only possible to live in the light if you know the Light. Jesus shared the characteristics of being the Light of the World with His believers. As a result, Christians are also the light of this world and can penetrate the darkness. As lights upon a hill, Christians are to have a Christlike influence on those around them.

### **Lighting the Way for Others to Follow**

As the Light of the World, Jesus provided some unusual leadership principles to equip His believers to light the way for others to follow.

Many leaders in the secular world provide good practical advice on leadership. They command an audience because of their achievement of their business goals. By sharing their expertise, they can lead others to succeed in business.

Christians, however, regard that privilege from a different viewpoint. Emphasis on Christian leadership is based on one model only. Jesus is the example of leadership for Christians. Paul understood that principle well as he encouraged others to imitate him as he also imitated Christ. As the psalmist recognized the written word of God as a lamp to his feet and a light to his path, we also acknowledge that Jesus, the living word of God, is truly the Light worth following.

Even if you don't realize it, you are a leader. Someone is watching you and following your example. It may be a child, a spouse, a coworker or a neighbor. None of us are without influence. If you are a believer in Christ, His expectation is that you will light the way for others to follow Him.

In part two of this Bible study, seven Christian leadership principles founded on the Light of the world are examined.

**For further study:**

Research other scripture on light. Reflect on whether the reference is to eternal light, created light or shared light and how each applies to living in the light.

**For further reflection and/or discussion:**

- How can you recognize true light and masqueraded light?
- Of all the unique statements Jesus made about Himself, what is special about the Light of the World to you?
- Have you noticed a difference in characteristics of leaders in the church and leaders in the business world? If so, what are they? If not, what does that mean?
- There are many movies and books that deal with darkness and light (for example: the Star Wars). What, if any, relevance does that have to God's references to light?
- Have you ever had a sudden understanding of a Biblical concept that you have been researching or wondering about? Did you feel like "a light came on," a revelation in your mind? Examine Psalms for scriptures that might explain what happened to you.