

## The Light

### *Lighting the Way*

There are 31,102 verses in the Bible most of us use, and it takes us all the way to the third verse to encounter light. It is the first thing God creates, after making the heavens and the earth.

*“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.”*  
– Genesis 1:3-4a. Light has been associated with God from the very beginning. Light is foundational to life.

Here in Seattle, where the CVM home office is located, it’s easy to verify light being good. On the first sunny day of spring, running paths become suddenly more used. Parks become full. A local radio station host advocated that everyone should be given the day off, as the first warm, sunny day arrived after a few months of gray drizzle. Where the sun once set before 5pm, it is around 9pm. Light makes us feel better. But light carries more meaning than just making us feel better.

In the previous verse in Genesis, light is associated as good and one of the first things God creates. Light continues to be associated with God, and that carries over to Jesus. In John 1:4, around this year’s theme verse, we read that *‘in Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.’* Jesus verifies this out of his own mouth, testifying about himself, in John 8:12 *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follow me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”* Lastly, and more practically for you and me, the association with light is transferred to those who follow Jesus. Once again, from Jesus’s own mouth during the Sermon on the Mount: *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* – Matthew 5:14-16. So, with us in mind, I’d like to suggest a few ways to be and to use light.

**Light is a revealer.** Light reveals things. If I turn on a light in a room, I will be able to see what is there. Light did not create the objects in the room-it merely revealed them. I think one of the most important things we can do is shine a light in some areas of our lives that may be a little bit in darkness. Some might be more comfortable shining a light on others in this world, but I’m encouraging us to set a good example as believers and always be learning at the feet of Jesus. I recently hit the wrong button on my television and turned ‘closed captioning’ on and it made me think ‘wow, I’m glad all my thoughts and inner dialogue is not written out for the world to see.’ I’m glad I’m not the center of a reality show where my whole day is filmed for all to see. I’m guessing I’m not alone in that. It’s both humbling and wonderful that God can and does see our thoughts and know our motives – and he loves us fully anyway. Allowing light to reveal dark areas of our lives is not about beating ourselves up. It’s about allowing God to be Lord of our life and help us to purify our hearts and become more like Jesus. Some people are naturally more self-aware than others, but I encourage all of us to sit with the Holy Spirit and be honest and truthful about our lives, and let the light of the Lord reveal things to us that are already there. And, in some cases, find some help from others. We may not be well emotionally or financially

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or whatever the case may be, but keeping areas of our lives in the dark and off limits to God is not beneficial.

**Light shows the way.** Like Jesus said in one of the verses above, we will never walk in darkness if we follow him. This is true of our salvation, and it's also true of the time we have on this earth. Psalm 119:105 declares *"Your word is a lamp unto my feet, a light on my path."* God's word lights our way. Together with the Holy Spirit, we can find direction on the next steps of our lives, but this is far from a pure scientific exercise. Often, God lights up the next step. We may not see the end, but we can, in faith take the next right step. This can be a very challenging exercise. Often, we want to take control and get things done. But, what if God is walking with us to build our patience, which is a fruit of the spirit? There may be situations where the next step is specific or there may be situations where God is just with us, wherever we go – but the truth is that God's word is a light for our path.

**Being the light.** Jesus calls us to be the light of the world. Wow. That's a pretty big statement. I would suggest this is our primary vocation in life, no matter what we do to make a living. We are to be lights in this world. We are not to hide our lights. We are to do good deeds. And the credit and glory for this is to go to God. Without God, where would we be? The good news of Jesus Christ is meant to be shared. It's meant to be lived out in the world. It is the one truth that will really change lives. Hopefully our lives are continually shaped and changed by Jesus, and in turn, we are to be image bearers of God – light in the world – to others. May we all continue to light the way for others together.

- 1. Do you take much time in reflection on your life? In general, how do you allow God to reveal areas in your life that could use change?**
- 2. How do you make big decisions? Do you have a general process for steps you might take in life or goals you may have? Can you recall a specific time God or Scripture has 'lighted your path.'**
- 3. Where can we as Christians improve in being the light? Where are we doing well? How can we be a 'city on a hill' and let our light shine bright, rather than give in to the temptation to 'put it under a bowl' and not shine?**



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