

The Light

Exposing the Dirt

When I was a boy, my father bought what I thought was the coolest thing I had ever seen. It was a bug zapper! At dusk, I would run outside and plug that thing in. Two lights would come on surrounded by an electrified grid. Then, being drawn to the light, the bugs would start flying in. Bzzzt. Buzzzt. Bzzzzzt! One by one, the insects would meet their demise as they touched the grid. I would watch in awe for hours.

Fast forward a couple of decades. I loved to go fishing and had discovered night fishing. All you needed was a light above the water. Turn on the light and the insects would be drawn to it. This brought in the tiny fish to eat those bugs. Which brought in the big fish to eat the tiny fish! I love catching big fish.

Lights draw in. "The Light" refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Hope for the world. He is referred to as "The Light" throughout Scripture including our theme verse:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." -John 1:5 NLT

In His case, "The Light" draws in people. Not because He is bright and shiny, but because He is Love. In fact, we find in John 17 the whole reason that Jesus agreed to come to earth and carry out everything needed to save humanity. In praying to God just before heading to the cross, Jesus says:

"I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them." - John 17:26 NLT

Jesus is Love and He knew a Love that was so incredible that He willingly gave Himself as a sacrifice so that we could know the same. As followers of Jesus we are to show that same Love, i.e. let our "light" shine, drawing others in.

However, I want you to be aware of something. Don't assume "The Light" that you are displaying will draw everyone in. In fact, it may have the opposite effect on some.

Think about it, when you encounter someone from a different culture, and you don't understand their customs, oftentimes, what is your reaction? Is it curiosity making you want to explore it? Sometimes. But my guess is other times, you dismiss it as odd or even repulsive.

Christian Veterinary Mission is based in Seattle. I can tell you that as a southern man, I find the Pacific Northwest an odd place. When I went as a region rep to visit headquarters, I had a nice time, but I left there thankful that I don't live there. If the roles were reversed, and those from Seattle came to see me in Arkansas, I can assure you that they would go home thinking the same thing.

The same may occur when non-Christians encounter Christians. The non-Christian may just try to avoid you thinking you are weird. Also, you have to take into account that the devil will not want non-believers to convert. Always remember that Spiritual forces are at play. Even more

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than that, when non-Christians encounter “The Light” they may not like what is exposed in themselves.

“Anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.” -John 3:18-20 NLT

Darkness hates “The Light.” Christian, if we display “The Light”, and stake our claim that we follow Him, then we can expect hate. *“Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.” -1 Peter 4:12 NLT*

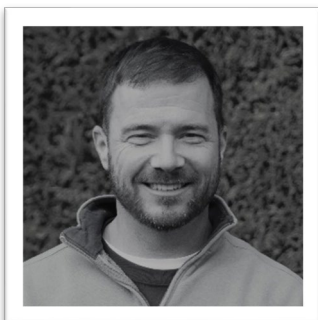
In fact, Jesus warns us saying: *“If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.”-John 15:18 NLT.*

So don’t take it personal when you encounter hate. Don’t draw back. In fact, draw near! Pursue it. Ministry, done correctly, is dirty.

Light exposes dirt. Jesus sought the dirty. Even when, and maybe because, they treated Him poorly, He washed dirty feet (John 13:5). In fact, when a miracle was needed and all that would have been required was a word from Him to cure them. He spit and made mud to cure the blind (John 9:6). He touched the leper (Mark 1:41). He stuck His hands in a man’s ears and mouth (Mark 7:33), all to heal them. These people were the outcasts of society. Despised by all. In today’s culture they are the devil worshipers and the drug users, the hostile man and the hateful woman.

Be like Jesus. Be “The Light”. Love people. Embrace the dirt!

- 1. Can you think of an example of when a light draws something into it?**
- 2. Have you ever been offended when non-Christians treated you poorly because of your “Light”?**
- 3. Have you ever considered how Jesus drew near the dirty and embraced them, when a word from Him could have done the same?**
- 4. Which outcast, ostracized, hateful, “dirty” person can you be “The Light” to going forward?**



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