

The Light

Shining Like Lights

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.”

-Philippians 2:14-16 (ESV)

What does your typical day look like? I know for me, when I was in the vet clinic, it went something like this. “Why is that client coming in, they never do what we recommend.” “Ugh, that client doesn’t use prevention. Don’t they know what is good for their pet?” “Look at this client, they got a puppy from a breeder and yup, the breeder contract doesn’t want to do specific vaccines or preventions. Bet they will go with the breeder recommendation over ours.” “I have to work with *them* today? They won’t even help when asked and then I’m stuck helping everyone even when I don’t have the time.” Sound familiar? Our days typically start and continue with complaining, grumbling, and gossiping. But should they?

For our monthly staff meetings, we once had a consultant come in to help us create a positive culture. This was not a Christian company but ultimately, they pointed out that when we recognize something as triggering, we need to take that thought and put ourselves in the other person’s shoes so we can empathize with them. This was what they called conquering the villain voices in our heads. We need to try to understand them so that we can understand why they may be resistant to our recommendations or in a bad mood. I found that idea to be similar to what is stated in 2 Corinthians 10:5 where we are to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.

If the world can recognize that we should conquer the villain voices, maybe we as Christians shouldn’t be complaining or grumbling. In Philippians, Paul tells us that we shouldn’t be doing these things so that we can stand out from the people around us shining like lights. Paul sees the people of this world as complainers who are crooked and twisted. They are in darkness and don’t have hope. But Christians, can rejoice and stand straight because of the perfect standard we have in God’s word. We can be bright lights in the darkness offering hope because we offer the word of life, salvation, to those around us.

When we act differently than those around us, shining like lights, and offering hope, people notice. They begin to ask you why you are different. This becomes a great opportunity to share Christ with them. Many times my friends have invited coworkers and old classmates out to our Bible studies because they have been asked why they are different and explained. Those asking the questions were interested enough to learn more that they then came to the Bible study. Some have even accepted Christ since! So be bold for Christ and shine like a light.

Recognizing how much I was participating in complaining, grumbling, and gossiping in the clinic, I prayed about it. I decided that I shouldn’t be participating in that but instead shining like a light and bringing hope. I resolved to start my day off with prayer every morning before I started my shift so that God could help me have the right attitude. I still catch myself

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participating at times but to a lesser degree. Instead, I try to counter some of what is said even if the client or employee is a difficult one. It is hard, but by leaning on God and his word, this change can happen and I can be a light to those around me.

1. **What does your normal day look like? How much complaining, grumbling, or gossiping do you notice yourself participating in or hearing from others?**
2. **What does it mean to shine like lights?**
3. **Read Philippians 2:1-11. How does Paul call us to live?**
4. **Philippians 2:5-11 shows how Christ lived? What was his example and how can we imitate that?**
5. **Describe a time when someone recognized you as different, in a good way, because of your beliefs and the impact it had on them.**
6. **What step(s) will you take to better shine like lights this week?**



Dr. Kara Song is an Ohio State grad, class of 2018 with roots in New England. It was during school that she found a heart for missions and a passion for CVM. After graduating, she moved to Northeast Ohio where she worked in a busy companion animal general practice for four years. During that time she and Sadie, her Australian Shepherd mix, added to their family. First with a Golden Retriever named Caspian and then with her wonderful husband, Paul. Despite thinking she would stay at her clinic for some time yet, Kara felt God calling her to join CVM where she will serve the Northeast region as representative. Email: ksong@cvm.org