

# Go Deeper

Disciple Group Leader Guide

## PART 3: SHINE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Based on Matthew 5:14–16

### Opening

We are continuing our series Different to Make a Difference. The whole idea behind this series is that God didn't call us to be different just so people would notice us. He called us to be different so people would notice Jesus. This week, we are talking about shining to make a difference. In Matthew 5:14–16, Jesus tells us: “You are the light of the world.” Jesus didn't say we should try to become light. He said, “You are the light of the world.” If Jesus lives inside of us, there should be something different about the way we live, the way we handle pressure, the way we treat people, and the way we respond when everyone else is complaining. Light is supposed to be noticeable in darkness.

### Ice Breaker

Ask God to help us recognize where He has placed us and how He wants us to shine there. Pray that our lives would point people toward Jesus rather than toward ourselves.

### Opening Prayer

Ask God to give the group open hearts and honesty as they discuss forgiveness. Pray for anyone carrying hurt, anger, or offense and ask God to give everyone the faith and courage needed to surrender those things to Him.

### Read Together

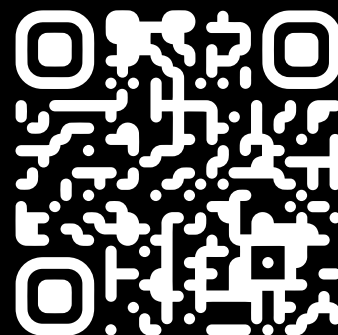
Matthew 5:14–16

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

10.07.26

Mens Event

Download the  
Turning Point  
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**TURNING POINT**

## **Key Takeaways from the Sermon**

### **1. Light Was Made for Darkness.**

*Darkness is exactly where light is most effective.*

*Instead of asking, “God, why am I surrounded by darkness?” we can ask, “God, how do You want me to shine here?” God may have placed you at your workplace, school, in your family, or around certain people because someone there needs to see Jesus through you.*

### **2. Shine Through the Way You Live.**

*Jesus connects our light with our works. Our greatest witness may not be what we say about Jesus, but the way we live because of Jesus. People may read your life before they ever read your Bible.*

### **3. Shine Through the Way You Work.**

*Your job can be your mission field. Wherever God has placed you, you have an opportunity to represent Jesus.*

### **4. Shine Through the Way You Treat People**

*People will recognize Jesus' disciples by their love. It's easy to be nice to people we need. Character is revealed in how you treat people you don't need.*

## **Discussion Questions**

### **The Goal Is Not for People to See Us: Matthew 5:16**

The goal is for people to see our lives and give glory to our Father in heaven.

- *What's the difference between shining for Jesus and shining for ourselves?*
- *How can we make sure our good works point people toward God?*
- *What's the difference between being hurt by something and choosing to live offended?*
- *What do you hope people see when they look at your life?*

### **Don't Hide Your Light: Matthew 5:14–16 | Romans 1:16**

We don't have to be obnoxious to be a witness, but we shouldn't be ashamed either.

- *Why do you think Christians sometimes hide their faith?*
- *When has God given you an opportunity to share your faith?*

## **Go Deeper**

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world.” We don't have to create the light—we reflect the light of Jesus through the way we live. Take some time to honestly consider:

- Where am I most tempted to blend in rather than live differently?
- Is there a place in my life where my words say one thing, but my actions communicate something different?

### Go one step further:

Choose one person, place, or situation that came to mind. What would it look like to intentionally shine there this week?

## **Sermon Truth**

- Shine where God put you.
- You don't need a platform, microphone, or perfect circumstances to make a difference.
- One light can change a room. One believer can change a workplace. One student can change a classroom. One family can change a neighborhood.

## **Leader Insight**

- The goal of this sermon isn't simply to challenge people to “be nicer” or “do better.” The focus is on letting the life of Jesus in us become visible to the people around us.
- Remind the group that we don't shine so people notice us. We shine so people can see Jesus. Our workplace, family, school, and everyday relationships are all opportunities to reflect Him.
- If someone feels discouraged about the darkness around them, bring them back to the question from the sermon: “God, how do You want me to shine here?”

## Application

Take some time to think about where God has placed you right now. *Where is God asking me to shine?*

What would it look like this week to:

- Work with diligence?
- Work with integrity?
- Work with joy?
- Treat people differently?
- Point someone toward Jesus?

## Memory Verse: Matthew 5:16

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

## Closing Challenge

Don't wait for a platform. Don't wait for a microphone. Don't wait for everything around you to change. Maybe God put you there because someone needs to see His light through you. Don't curse the darkness. Don't run from the darkness. Shine in the darkness.

## This Week's Challenge

Look for one opportunity to:

- Encourage instead of complain.
- Choose integrity when no one is watching.
- Show kindness to someone who may be overlooked.
- Refuse to participate in gossip or negativity.

## Closing Reflection

Take a few moments to reflect:

- Where has God placed me right now?
- How does He want me to shine there?
- Is there an area where I've been hiding my light?
- Who might God be asking me to point toward Jesus?

## Closing Prayer

Pray that God would help each person live as a visible reflection of Jesus wherever He has placed them. Ask Him for courage to shine through their actions, work, relationships, and everyday choices.

## Leader Notes

- Keep the discussion focused on where God has placed us, not just the darkness around us. Don't minimize the hurt. Forgiveness doesn't mean saying the offense wasn't serious or pretending it didn't happen.
- The goal isn't to make people feel guilty for not being a perfect witness. Help them think about practical ways they can reflect Jesus in everyday situations.
- If someone shares about a difficult person or environment, bring the conversation back to: "How does God want me to shine here?"
- Remind the group that our good works are meant to point people to Jesus, not to ourselves.
- Give people time to think about one specific person or situation where they can put this into practice.
- Avoid turning the discussion into a list of rules for being a "good Christian." The source of our light is Jesus, and our lives should reflect what He is doing in us.
- **Leader Reminder: our role is to facilitate discussion, not deliver the sermon again. Keep the group rooted in Scripture, allow people space to respond, and help them identify a practical next step.**