

July 29

Matthew 5:16 (NIV) [Jesus said,] ¹⁶ **In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**
Matthew 6:1 (NIV) [Jesus said,] **“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”**

Once again, looking back at my college days, one of our discussions focused on what we felt were contradictions. The Bible could not be a book of truth if it contradicted itself because truth never does that. Our discussions made sense to us because we were relying on our own understanding. This is a quote from an atheist website about the Bible: “What is incredible about the Bible is not its divine authorship; it’s that such a concoction of contradictory nonsense could be believed by anyone to have been written by an omniscient god.” This statement, at one time, would have sounded wise to me, but, now, I realize that the contradiction rested with me and not with God’s Word.

Today’s scriptures are an example of what appears to be a contradiction, which stems from the very words of Jesus. However, as with any word of God, we must look past the legalistic aspect of the word and look to Jesus for the fulfillment of that word. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5, verse 15 that people do not hide a light. Instead, when we turn on a light, it will naturally be seen by others because the light will dispel the darkness. Therefore, as God’s children and followers of Jesus Christ, when we enter the world, the Light in us will be seen by others through our “normal” everyday actions and words in the same way the lights on my car can be seen at night. However, when Jesus tells us not to practice our righteousness in front of others to be seen, He is addressing the attitude of our hearts. Using a flashlight to light my way at night will allow that light to be seen. However, using a flashlight to shine in someone’s eyes to let them know I have a light is wrong. If we make plans to let our light shine so we can be seen, then we have lost our reward. If we walk with Jesus and are led by the Holy Spirit, our light will be seen because it is a light in the darkness. The contradiction, as will all attributed to the Bible, lies in our misunderstanding Jesus. He is the truth.