

**LIGHT**  
Matthew 5:14-16  
By Raymond White

*Matthew 5:14* *Ye are the light of the world...*

It is said that the best way to teach is by example, and that may be true. The heart of any message is the example of the messenger. But if example is all there is to a message, then it's an incomplete message. The Christian message must always have two parts: what the Christian does and what the Christian says; the deeds and the words; or, as Jesus says here, salt and light.

Salt influences the world from within. Food is better with salt. The world is better when it has godly people. But light influences the world from without. Not by changing the world as salt does, but by exposing the truth so that the world will be motivated to change. Both are necessary.

*Acts 1:1* *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to both do and teach.*

Certainly it is a mistake to teach a truth and not live it. That's hypocrisy. But it is also a mistake to live a truth and not teach it. That's, well, what exactly is that? Cowardice maybe? Or selfishness? That's like Jonah who loved God's truth and thought it was just fine that Israel had God all to itself, and he was not at all interested in sharing God with those foreign Assyrians, until God introduced Jonah to a giant fish.

Jesus had a great deal to say about light.

*Matthew 5:14* ... *A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. :15* *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. :16* *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

In ancient Israel, cities were typically built on hills. And at night, when people lit the lamps in their homes, travelers could see the glistening city a far off and go right to it.

Shouldn't the city of God be as conspicuous? And, if it is important for lights to be visible outside for travelers, isn't it at least as important for lights to be visible inside for "all that are in the house" so they don't stumble around in the dark, and trip, and hurt themselves?

*Ephesians 6:4* *Bring [your children] in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Nurture and admonition simply mean what you do and what you say, salt and light, for your family, and for everyone else. Live the gospel, certainly. But do not neglect the preaching of it. Do not expect people, particularly your own children, to guess your beliefs. Tell them. So you'll know they know. Notice also that God does not tell us to turn on the light; he has already done that. All he is asking of us is to "Let it shine."

*2 Corinthians 4:6* *God, who commanded the light, to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*