

Concern for our Loved Ones

God took an entire nation, and 1500 years, and had His people “*act out the truth*” of Christ's coming as a “*Sin-bearer*.” They slaughtered tens of thousands of animals, sprinkled blood, transported a tabernacle for forty years in the desert and performed all kinds of priestly ritual, all to dramatize the truth on the stage of the world . . . the truth that the Lamb of God would take away sin of world. All this was just symbolical, a shadow of the real truth. God took a cast of more than 3 million people to dramatize the redemption story! God's message was wonderful and beautifully accurate. All of the rituals and ceremonies of the Old Testament Tabernacle gave a clear meaning.

Our Christian life is in the same situation. The situations God allows to come into our life is to dramatize a Gospel truth. Take marriage, for instance: Ephesians.5:31-32 states, “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **This is a great mystery**: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.*” God tells us here that marriage, for instance is to enact the drama of the union between Christ and the church. God has given us “*scripts*” and “*costumes*,” to carry out this production.

Ephesians 5:22 teaches, “*Wives adapt yourselves to your husband, as you submit yourselves to the Lord.* The wife is given a female costume. The script comes from the Director, the Holy Spirit. The better the wife plays her part, the more likely her husband will to what is right before Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 7:14a, promises, “*The unbelieving husband is **SANCTIFIED** through the wife.*” We must remember that the word, “**SANCTIFIED**” does not mean, “*saved*,” but, rather, it means “*separated, or set apart for specific attention.*” this verse teaches that the wife can become a special agent for God. Her husband will be separated from masses of other men and marked for special treatment by the Lord.

This is no small thing. He will be different from other prospects. He will be a “*special case, set apart for special treatment.*” Wife, you can be God's “*special agent*,” commissioned to reach your unsaved loved ones for Christ. You can be God's chosen person to deal with them. No one can reach that person as powerfully as you. Don't shrug off your responsibility.

Acts 16:31 teaches, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved **and thy house.***”

This is not a blanket-salvation for your family, if you do nothing about it! They must have to have *faith*. Faith comes by God's **WORD!**

How is the “**WORD**” imparted?

We who have unsaved loved one are God's agents with a job to do.

HOW CAN WE KNOW HOW TO WIN OUR UNSAVED LOVED ONES?

Let me share with you a “***Nutcracker sweet.***” You say what is that? Well, I want to show you how to use God's “*Nutcracker sweet.*” You insert walnut in nutcracker, to crack it. That's

what God wants you to do, in a spiritual sense.

Matthew 5:16 is an important verse. It says, *“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

A nutcracker has two jaws and the jaws of this spiritual nutcracker is LIGHT and WORKS. The Holy Spirit will enable you to join these two together, so that you can bear down on both handles and squeeze. You need to learn how to apply just enough pressure, and their *“persistent-shall”* will crack.

“Let your light shine...” What does **that** mean? Someone might say, *“Letting you light shine is living a good life before others.”* – **No!** – That is not your *“light,”* but, rather, that is your *“works!”*

Let me use an illustration: Let's say that a mechanic is fixing his car's fuel pump in dark. He has a helper holding a flash light, however, this helper lets the light *“wonder off”* of the mechanic's work and so the mechanic says, *“Hay, shine the light on my work!”*

THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENT BETWEEN **“LIGHT”** & **“WORK”**

The mechanic's work is one thing, the light is something else. Light is necessary to illuminate the work, in order that the work can be seen.

1. What is the Christian's light?

Let's say that you are walking through a room in the dark and you stub your toe. *Click*, you turn the light on and the light reveals what is around you. The **light** lets you see what you are doing and where you are going. The light illuminates what is around you. It sheds light on the subject. **“Light”** gives information, intelligence and knowledge. It opens up and explains what otherwise is unrevealed.

An obscure subject is illuminated by information! You explain, *“Oh, I see,”* because you have acquired insight. Physical light exposes things outside. Information explains things inside (We call it **in**sight).

Just as **“light”** scatters darkness, God's Word dispels inner, spiritual darkness. Without the Word of God we cannot understand anything in the spiritual world. Nothing makes sense when its truth cannot be seen. God's Word is God's light!

Psalms 119:130 says, *“The entrance of Thy words giveth light,”* and verse 105 says, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”*

God's Word is like a street light that scatters spiritual darkness. God's Word illuminates. When it is used, it gives insight.

We like mechanic's helper holding flashlight, God's Word shines on His Work, so that it can be seen!

Now, if “*God's Word*” is God's Light, then what is **YOUR** light? We are commanded by Jesus to, “*Let **YOUR** light so shine before men . . .*” What does that mean?

God's light (His Word) shines on His works so that they may be seen. **Your** light must shine on your works, and only then, will men see God's hand in your life. Without this light, others will not see what God is doing, no matter how startling it may be.

If men can see the dazzling wonders in God's sky and fail to see God's hand, they will never give God credit for small wonder in your life - unless you say so!

Let me give you an illustration: One man, whose wife lay in iron lung for 8 years, was faithful and patient husband. People said, “*Isn't **HE** a good man!*” He took care of his children, properly disciplined them and gave them good Christian training and people said, “*Isn't **HE** a wonderful father!*” His language was always pure, he never spoke evil of anyone. He was faithful to serve the church and people said, “*Isn't **HE** a fine man.*”

Of course, it was because God stood with him that he was able to do all this, Jesus made it possible. However, the people saw his “*good works*” and did not glorify God. Why? Because he had **WORKS** – but his **LIGHT** was not shining. There were no words to illuminate the precious work of the Holy Spirit. Nothing ever indicated that the Lord was responsible for his work. **No credit was given to the Lord!**

BIG DIFFERENCE IN HIS “**WORKS**” & “**LIGHT**”

If those who knew him had realized Who it was that made his goodness possible, they would have given full credit to the Lord. They would have said, “*If God can do that for Mr So-and-so, then maybe He can do it for me too!*”

People behold the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ because of our words. Without words, the person, alone gets the glory.

“*Let your **LIGHT** so shine before men . . .*” The other ingredient is **WORKS!**

“*Works*” speaks of “*change*,” God bringing us to maturity. That is what this life is all about. We cannot mature without change. Maturity means “*change*.”

How can I win my loved ones to Christ? Do I accomplish this by begging, arguing, preaching, threatening, or quoting the Bible to them? No! That is not the way and it is not what God is saying.

How about changing yourself? A change in you will bring a change in your loved one. We need to be coached by Director, the Holy Spirit.

Remember, **LIGHT** is our word, giving credit to Jesus Christ for the change that takes place in our life. We are careful to point out that Christ is the One responsible for the change that is taking place in our life.

This does **not** mean, “*preaching*,” but, rather, simply to let others know that the change

taking place in our life is due to our desire to please loved one **and the Lord!**
Remember, Light "*Illuminate works, so that one sees the real source of change.*"

They see the Lord at work in your life. When our life shows the Fruit of the Spirit:
LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEK- NESS,
and **SELF-CONTROL**, we give God the credit for the change. The more change, the more light.

2. **Light** and **Works** should match. Our "*words*" not exceed our works.

We are only wasting time changing, if Christ is not given the credit for the changes. Some Christians bend over backward to please Christ but reluctant to give Him credit for the change that is taking place in their life. Others tell what Jesus means to them. They sing, "*How Christ lifted them out of miry clay, and set their feet on solid rock,*" however, they do not care about please Him.

There's two possible dangers, two possible extremes. On one hand you have Christians who have works - but no light - and on the other hand you have those who have light - but no works!

It is easy to get out of balance. "*Light*" is giving Jesus Christ all of the credit for the changes that take place in our life and "*works*" is the change that is taking place in our life..

3. **SQUEEZE GENTLY**

Please excuse the expression, but all "*nuts*" do not have the same resistance. If you come crashing down on almond real hard, you will mash the kernel. However, it takes considerable pressure on a Brazil nut before the shell will yield. All nuts are not the same.

And all men not the same either!

It would be easy get out of balance, but we must match our "*works*" and our "*light*." When we do something that is pleasing and noticed by our loved one, our response is something like, "*I'm glad you noticed the change that is taking place in me, but I really don't deserve the credit. It wasn't until the Lord showed me what kind of person I ought to be that I began to change. He is the One who deserves the thanks. It really belongs to Him because He is responsible for my desire to be a better person.*"

What specific area in your life would your loved one be likely to notice, if it changed or improved? Are you a complainer? They certainly would notice, if you stopped complaining. Are you careless about income? A spend thrift? Do you spend too much time on phone? Do you give too little attention while they are speaking?

What would please them?

Remember that there is a world of difference between **PLEASING** and just **TOLERATING**. The difference is our **attitude**. It is the way in which we do something, more than *what* we do, that really counts.

"*Do you bring pleasure to others?*"

Colossians 3:23 teaches, "*Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do it heartily [with all your heart] as unto the Lord and not unto men.*"

LIGHT is our word which tells others that Jesus is responsible for the change that is taking place in our life, and **WORKS** is the change that are taking place daily in our life.

We make changes [*by the help of the Holy Spirit*] as we come to know what it is that the Lord would have us to be and, by openly giving credit to Jesus Christ for these changes, it compels our loved ones to consider Christ as the cause of these changes.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven Matthew 5:16

"***Glorify your Father,***" what does that mean? We "*glorify the Father in heaven,*" the moment our loved ones become aware that it is the Lord working in our life.

Let's say that a Christian wife simply bring a cup of coffee to her husband. When he notices that she has gone out of her way to do something that please him, she merely says something like, "*It is not only because I want to do something nice for you, but I have been asking Lord to help me be better person. This is brought to you courtesy of the Lord!*"

There are some very principles given in 1 Peter 3:1-6. These verse state, "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands . . . (that is, fit in with, or your life compliments his life) . . . that if any obey not the word . . . (that is, they disbelieve God's Word) they also may without the word be won by the conversation . . . (manner of behavior) . . . of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear . . . (when they see the purity and reverence of your lives; when they see how pure and God-fearing you are; see your blameless conduct) . . . Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning . . . (Don't be so concerned about the outward beauty) . . . of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel . . . (arrangement of the hair, wearing of jewelry or the putting on of fine clothes) **but** let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit . . . "*

A "**MEEK** spirit," is a spirit that is completely submitted to God and a "**QUIET** spirit" is an undisturbed spirit within an individual. One's beauty should be from within, rather than from without. It should be the inner loveliness of one's heart, the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit.

. . . which is in the sight of God of great price."

Scripture teaches us that our loved ones are won to the Lord, Jesus Christ by the manner of our blameless conduct . . . by our meek and quiet spirit.

We can never execute this plan of God with no failures. Don't let failures distress you.

Charles Fuller was being attacked by a Christian leader, "*Yeeess (he drawled) God bless him!*" Someone asked him, "*Doesn't that upset you?*" Fuller responded, "*Why should I let someone else decide how I am going to act?*" This is what God is talking about. We are to act the

way He wants us to, not react to others around us.

ACT - DON'T REACT

Fuller's spirit was totally serene within him because it didn't matter what happened around him, he would refuse to return evil for evil.

Are you in control, by the Holy Spirit, or are events around you in control? One who does not have his "*self*" under control **RE**-ACTS. No one is more unhappy than the perpetual reacter. If they are praised, their spirit soars but, if they are criticized, their hearts sink out of sight. A "*re-actor*" is good to those who are good to him. God can enable us to come into possession of ourself - under the control of the Holy Spirit.

REACTING WILL WRECK EVERYTHING

Our job is to get our loved ones to face Christ and this will not be an overnight success. We can't revamp our entire personality all at once, we must take it a step at a time. We must let the Holy Spirit be director of our life. He will bring us to **maturity** as we fulfill our role.

Do you worry over bills, your health, the children, your job or the house?

We may need victory over our tempter, our tongue our impatience, our attitude or our moods. These changes WITHIN us and they are not as easy.

God promises us in Philippians 4:13, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.*"