

TEXT Matthew 5:14-16; Daniel 6:1-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES John 1:1-9; Acts 13:47; Philippians 2:14,15; 1 John 1:5-9

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell why a Christian's influence, as he wholly follows Christ, is of utmost importance in this present world.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER 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

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. — Ephesians 5:8

ANSWER
TITLE:

SEARCH
TITLE:

A Shining Light

Christians as Radiant Lights

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The sun is our major source of physical light. It provides temperatures necessary for life. With a surface temperature of 6000K (Kelvin scale) and internal temperatures approaching 16 million degrees, it converts about 4 1/2 tons of hydrogen into helium each passing second, thereby emitting radiant light of 1 1/2 million candlepower per square inch.

In addition, we find that the sun, through a process called photosynthesis, is also the continuing source of food for life on earth. The rate at which living organisms consume each other (sea life, for example) is so great that they

would all disappear from the earth within the lifetime of a single human generation if there was not a process for the regeneration of organic matter. God designed the miracle of photosynthesis, whereby the energy of sunlight is absorbed by the chlorophyll of sea and land plants to manufacture carbohydrates (organic food) from carbon dioxide and water.

Christ is our spiritual light. He provides for us spiritually what the sun does for us physically. We look to Him as our source of life and energy.

YOUR OPENER

Christians as Radiant Lights

TEXT: Matthew 5:14-16; Daniel 6:1-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: John 1:1-9; Acts 13:47; Philippians 2:14,15; 1 John 1:5-9

KEY VERSE: For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light. — Ephesians 5:8

RESPONSES

- 1. The source of spiritual life is Jesus. Ask your students how spiritual light and spiritual life are related. They should conclude that without light, there can be no life. Light is necessary for growth, both physical and spiritual. When spiritual light is "screened out," the result will be spiritual darkness and eventually eternal damnation.
- 2. The world would be in spiritual darkness, and spiritual death would be the result. Discuss with your students the importance of Christians letting their light shine. Without this light, spiritual darkness would result in evil so intense that the world would be a terrible place in which to live. This situation of evil will be in evidence during the Tribulation, after the Church has been taken out of the world, and is evident in some areas of the world today.
- 3. He had an excellent spirit, and fault could not be found in him. Ask your students to compare Daniel's example to Matthew 5:16 of our text. Emphasis should be placed on the words "good works." What types of good works in our day can be a reflection of Christ's light?

Physical light makes vision possible, provides for life on earth, results in warmth and comfort, and dispels darkness. In Genesis 1:2-5, we find that light was so important God devoted the first day of creation to making it in order to dispel darkness. Without physical light, death ensues. Spiritual light is even more important. Malachi the prophet refers to Christ as the Sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2). Without spiritual light there would be no eternal life.

- 1. Read carefully John 1:1-9. What is the source of spiritual life? What happens when spiritual light is "screened out"?
- 2. Considering then the importance of spiritual light, what do you think would happen to your school, your work world, your community, and the world in general if all Christians failed to follow Christ's command in Matthew 5:16?
- 3. Describe how Daniel, as the first of three presidents under Darius the king, "let his light shine." Refer to Daniel 6:3,4.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. The 2 presidents and the 120 princes sought to find fault with Daniel so that they might accuse him to the king. Daniel was not only faithful to his God, but he was faithful to his country and to the king's business. They could find no fault, but what scheme did they devise against him, and why?

5. Once the decree was signed by the king, how did Daniel respond?

6. The light from Daniel's life had generated faith in the king's heart in the only true God. How was this manifested in the king's words to Daniel?

7. What specific character trait radiated from Daniel causing the king to say in verse 16 and again in verse 20, "whom thou servest continually"?

8. How far did Daniel's light shine as a result of his steadfast faith and deliverance from the lions' den?

4. They had the king sign a decree that no man could ask any petition of any God or man except of the king. They did this in order to destroy Daniel, and thus extinguish his light. Discuss with your students the attributes of Daniel which made him so wise and thorough that his associates could find no fault in him except concerning his God. Continue the thought by discussing how we can cultivate these same qualities in order to be the same kind of godly witness that Daniel was.

5. He had a right purpose within him—to do as he had done before, rather than seek a secluded place in which to pray. What were some other courses of action Daniel could have taken? Help your students see that we should never be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Ask your students for some specific ways they might be able to let their light shine; for example, by publicly bowing their heads to give thanks for their food—keeping in mind that we don't pray to be seen of men, but are truly thankful for God's care and provision.

6. Though King Darius was heathen, Daniel's consistent godly behavior convinced the king of the power of God. Discuss with your students that the king's statement in verse 16 was made prior to Daniel's being cast to the lions—not the result of his witnessing Daniel's miraculous deliverance. Continue the discussion by paralleling this powerful witness to the value of light shining from Christians today. How powerful is the light from their Christian lives?

7. The character trait was consistency or faithfulness. Ask your students if they feel a sporadic witness for Christ is effective, and why or why not? Bring out that while a flashing light may attract attention, it is not an effective method of illumination. Just so, their testimony must be continuous in order to be effective.

8. Discuss with your students that through the marvelous light resulting from the deliverance of Daniel, the king decreed the whole kingdom should tremble and fear before God. Through the Biblical account, his testimony has continued even to our day. Help the students rehearse how the light of today's Christian can influence many; for example, missionary endeavors, work among the seamen, testimonies in the Light of Hope and the Higher Way magazines going throughout the world.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How did Daniel let his "light" shine?

Why do people who choose not to serve the Lord shy away from those who are shining lights?

Can there be a little darkness with the light—a little sin in a Christian's life? Why or why not? Bring out the point that light always dissipates darkness.

Why is a Christian's behavior away from church important?

What is meant by being a witness?

What are some of the ways we can be a light?

What happens to our Christian witness when we say we believe something and then do the opposite?

Our key verse says, "Let your light so shine before men." What does this mean?

Are good works enough to make your light shine? Or does there have to be something else? If so, what else?

Why is it important for a Christian to let his light shine?

How can you keep this light bright?

What do you expect of a person who is a Christian? Discuss how the answers indicate the importance of a Christian's having a brightly burning light.

If we do not shine for God, how will others find Him?

In our ANSWER story, would it have been better for Larry to refrain from praying so he wouldn't make those around him embarrassed? Explain.

THINGS TO DO

To represent being a light for Jesus:

- * Class members could write witness letters to friends or relatives.
- * Class members could canvass a small section of your town or city for the Sunday school departments.
- * If there are unsaved students in your class, ask a Christian student to prepare a testimony to be given during class time.

Have your students try to imagine they are living in the days of Daniel—several thousand years ago. What kinds of things do they think they would be recording for the daily newspaper? Tell them the following, "Here's an assignment you just received from your editor: You are to go to the court of King Darius and report on what happens to Daniel for disobeying the decree by his praying to his God. Title your newspaper article, and make

sure you get all the details by reading Daniel 6:1-28." Display the pieces in class next week. If you have some students who are uncomfortable with writing assignments, pair them with other students and allow them to be the illustrator.

Call the students in your class and ask them to clip one or two illustrations showing situations in which a Christian could let his light shine. Bring a large sheet of posterboard and assemble a collage of the pictures as you discuss each situation and the possibility for witnessing that it presents.

Take to class a package of new batteries and a flashlight which has no batteries inside. Show the class that the flashlight doesn't work because there are no batteries in it. But when you put the batteries in, the light will turn on. We are like an empty flashlight and cannot shine for Jesus unless He is in our hearts.

As an opener, blindfold a student volunteer. Spin the student around about five times and then ask him to find the door. As he falters without physical light, point out the necessity of spiritual light through example, testimony, and the Bible in order to find the right pathway through life. Quote Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Answers for ANSWER

This Little Light of Mine

Figure the answer for each math problem on some scratch paper. Then find the letter that matches your answer on the candle and write the letter on the line above the math problem. The first word has been done for you. When you have solved this puzzle you will find out what you are when you are following Jesus.

