Take Your Life to the Next Level

How Does Light Impact Your Life?

I like growing plants both indoors and outdoors. Some have a green thumb and whatever they put in a pot or in the ground thrives. I am more of scientist who experiments with plants. Once I got a Venus Fly trap which is known for catching flies in its trap that closes on the fly when it lands on it. I thought that meat was meat, so I put little pieces of hamburger onto the trap and watched gleefully as the trap closed each time. Unfortunately, I killed the Venus Fly Trap. I have killed countless numbers of plants. Some died because I overwatered them, others because I underwatered them. I believe the most common way I kill plants is that I place them where they don't get enough sunlight to thrive. It is a slow death; most take about five months or longer to become another of my victims. There are times when we enjoy some darkness, like when we are trying to get to sleep or suffering from a migraine. But mostly, light is crucial to all of us, even if we consider ourselves mostly nocturnal. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is light and that is a most beautiful metaphor describing Him. **In Him life has always been, and that light has always been the light of people, and the light continually shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it**. (John 1: 4-5) We are going to take a close look at verse 5. Here is our big idea. Do whatever God tells you to do for Christ is the light who shines in the darkness.

There is a certain ignorance among those who are not Christian that is almost incomprehensible to those who are. It seems sometimes that they are just belligerent, stuck in their ways and unable to change. Yet that may not be the case at all. The Bible says that the darkness does not comprehend the light, does not recognize it. I once was talking to a fellow who was a Jehovah's Witness and no matter how much time I spent explaining to him from Scripture that Jesus Christ is God, he just could not see it. I've tried to show atheists how illogical it is to believe there is no God and despite how well thought through have been my arguments, they simply couldn't see it. When one is living in darkness, the light is unintelligible. The arguments are mere gibberish, like explaining in English to someone who only speaks Japanese how to make sense of a passage in one of Charles Dickens's books. To understand the things of God, you need the light of Christ shining within you. Otherwise it is nonsensical. We can't get mad at someone who doesn't accept the fundamental principles found in the Bible. We must fervently pray the light of Christ shines in them so they can see what they haven't been able to grasp.

I have often wondered why Satan does not comprehend the foolishness of fighting against God. Satan has seen it all. He has been up in heaven. He has had direct conversations with God. He has even fought with angels. **And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.** (Revelation 12: 7-9 NIV) So why is it that Satan continues to rebel against God? It is because Satan exists in darkness and that darkness cannot figure out the light of Christ. For all of the intelligence the devil possesses, that spiritual being is unable to grasp the personality of God or His nature or true power. Perhaps this may sound like a silly example to you, but it is pertinent. When smallish David approached Goliath to fight him, Goliath just laughed. **He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"** (1 Samuel 17: 42-44 NIV) Looking back on this, Goliath of course was the ridiculous one. David quickly dispatched of Goliath and cut off the giant warrior's head. At the time however, Goliath's reaction certainly was reasonable for all those in darkness, all those who did not know God. The only way to recognize the danger David presented Goliath was to be in the light, to be so aligned with God that you could see what was in David and the power he possessed. The light is confounding to those not in it and Christ is an enigma to those who don't know Him.

There is another meaning to the term translated "comprehend" in the verse. It is "overcome". Here is what it reads if you use this sense of the word**. …and the light continually shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.** The darkness can't make the light go away from it. Some find the light an irritant like Pontius Pilate who interviewed Jesus before ordering His execution but found no reason to convict Him of any crime. It was a bother to Pilate to have to deal with Christ late in the evening and he probably just wanted Jesus to go away like someone who is awakened by the morning sun shining through a window does not hate the light but would rather it wasn't there. Others hate the light like Caiaphas the high priest who demanded Pilate have Jesus crucified. Many consider the light

of Jesus irritating. Others hate it. But, regardless of how different ones feel about the light, they cannot get rid of it. The Light shines in the darkness and will not stop shining. Christ does not go away just because you don t believe in Him or you dislike Christianity. And remember, the light eventually overcomes the darkness regardless of what is thrown up against it. The Church did not go away despite the horrific persecution of both the Jews in Jerusalem and the Romans all over the world. Christ shines and the Church cannot be destroyed.

Let me share an illustration from history that perfectly illustrates this. When the vast army of Midian invaded Israel and threatened the little nation's existence, God put an obscure young man with absolutely no military experience in charge of Israel's tiny army But when the Lord gave Gideon his orders, He required his young general cut down the size of the army to a mere three hundred soldiers. There were over one hundred and forty thousand Midianites ready to destroy the Israelites and God's plan was for only three hundred Israelites to fight them. There was a strategy the Lord had in mind as silly as it may have seemed to those not in the light.. At night, as the massive army of Midian slept out in the fields, the plan was for Gideon and his men to each carry a burning torch under a clay jar. Here is what the text tells us happened. **The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.** (Judges 7: 20-21 NIV) In the pitch black darkness of the night, the flaming torches, hidden by the jars covering them, suddenly came out blazing as the jars were smashed and the torches revealed. The light shined in the darkness, but the darkness could not overcome the light. The Midianite army was destroyed and God's people were victorious.

Jesus told us to do something we often forget. **In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.** (Matthew 5: 16 NIV) Many mistakenly think Jesus is wanting us to make a show of ourselves, to get our name out there by doing nice things for others. It is anything but that. Christ is the light of the world and when you are born again, that light shines within you. It is His light He wants you to bring out into the open so those in darkness will know He is there. Let me share two examples. When Daniel, a powerful Jewish government official in Babylon discovered the Persian king had issued a decree that for thirty days no one was to pray to anyone but him, King Darius, he made it clear where his loyalty stood and what he would do about the darkness. **Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.** (Daniel 6: 10 NIV) When Daniel was thrown into the lion's den for violating the law, he already let the light of God shine but then the Lord made it a blazing torch when He kept the lions from harming him. Another example comes from the New Testament. Just as the early Church got started, Jewish persecution came like a great shadow. Christians were being imprisoned and losing their jobs for their faith. Some were even murdered. As a result, many Christian families were impoverished but the Church let their torches shine in the night. **There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.** (Acts 4: 34-35 NIV) That sort of faithfulness gets seen and the non-Christians living in Jerusalem took notice of the love of Christ shining in the Church.

If you are to let the light of Christ shine within you, get out into the open where God can be detected and accepted as Savior, and then do what He tells you to do. You may seem odd or a fool for wasting your time and resources by being loyal to Jesus, but the darkness will be invaded by God's light. Remember our big idea. Do whatever God tells you to do for Christ is the light who shines in the darkness. You were not brought by the Holy Spirit into the light so you would be of no consequence. You are made to be a bright and shining light who does not just enter the darkness but shatters it. Shine brightly this week. You may be shocked by the amazing things Christ does through you!