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Salt & Light

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## Salt of the Earth

by Elizabeth Turner Beall

Jesus tells us in His Sermon on the Mount, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet." (Matthew 6:13) Mark's account adds "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." (Mark 9:50)

What does it mean to "be salt?" We know food tastes better with at least a little salt. Job even asks "Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?" (Job 6:6) But why does salt help? A quick search revealed three general statements about salt: 1) It makes everything taste better because it brings out the flavors we like and makes those flavors we don't like taste better; 2) It enhances sweetness and blocks bitterness; and 3) It makes meat juicier.

That's good to know, but what does that have to do with our Christian lives? The key is found in Mark's account where He quotes Jesus, telling us to "have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another." Let's look at two phrases to find our answer.

"At peace with one another" brings us to the beginning of the Sermon on the

Mount. In Matthew 5:9 Jesus says “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.” In Romans 12, Paul gives a list of qualities that show others we are Christians. In verse 18, he says, “if possible, so far as depends on you, live peaceably with all.” The Hebrews writer in chapter 12, verse 14 says “strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

From these verses we can see that living in a peaceful manner—not being troublemakers in any fashion—is important for Christians. That does not mean we “back down” or compromise on doctrinal issues. But when there are problems, are we, with our attitudes and opinions, part of the cause? Do we seek to calmly help solve problems? Do we lovingly and gently discuss? Do we look for peaceful ways to resolve misunderstandings within the church family or the brotherhood?

Finding ways to be the “salt” is to better any situation we are a part of, and to bring out the best in others. Truly loving one another makes for peace, and leaves the “good taste” of a good influence and example in the minds of others; we show our love for God by showing our love for one another. And loving one another because we love God makes us the “salt” of the earth.

Develop your “salt” seasoning to “sprinkle” in the lives of those around you, and “be at peace with one another.”

**NOTE:** the “one another” verses from the New Testament are listed at the end of this newsletter.

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Shining Brighter  
by Amanda Stephanus

When thinking about influence and letting our lights shine, most Bible students generally go to Matthew 5:16, and rightfully so. In Proverbs, more insight is given on how we must shine. Proverbs 4:18 tells us “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” As Christians, we are to shine our light in a dark and dying world. There is no doubt that light is needed in our world today.

The phrase “shines ever brighter” in the Proverbs passage is a reference to the progressive brightness of the sun. What we see of the sun in the morning is not the same as what we see in the afternoon and evening. As the day passes, the sun becomes brighter as it rises above the horizon and into the sky. Just as the sun increases in brightness and warmth, our Christian light should shine brighter and brighter as we study and mature in Christ.

Ezra 7:10 gives us a valuable example of how this can be done: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” Ezra prepared, or fixed, his heart. He intentionally planned what he was going to do. Our lights will not haphazardly shine in this world, and they most definitely will not grow brighter without proper planning and preparation.

After preparing his heart, Ezra sought the Law of the Lord and so should we. The Bible is our guide in all things pertaining to life (2 Peter 1:3) and righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17); it tells us how to shine our lights. There is no need to look anywhere else when learning how to shine bright. We see many examples of those in the First Century who were known for letting their lights shine: Dorcas was known for making coats and garments for widows (Acts 9:39), the Macedonians were known for giving while in deep poverty (2 Corinthians 8:1-5), and the Thessalonian brethren were examples to those in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7).

Ezra did not stop at seeking God’s word, but he set forth to put in practice what he learned. Knowledge of God’s word will not benefit the Christian unless it is put into action (James 2:14-20). Scriptures are replete with instruction to do the will

of our Father. The “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews 11 highlights this for us: Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice (vs. 4), Noah prepared an ark (vs. 7), Abraham went out and sojourned (vs. 8-9), and Moses forsook Egypt and kept the Passover (vs. 27-28).

The final step Ezra made was to become a teacher of God’s law. God expects Christians to mature to the point where we can be teachers of His word. The Hebrew’s writer reprovved Christians for failing to reach that level of service (Hebrews 5:12-14). It might seem intimidating at first to teach someone God’s word, but it does not need to be. There are many resources available at our disposal to help teach others, and we can always ask another sister in Christ for help.

When we prepare our hearts, seek God’s word, and obey His commandments, our lights will shine brighter and brighter as we teach those around us. I encourage all of us to take time to evaluate how bright our lights are shining. Have you only prepared your heart but not sought God’s word? Have you sought God’s word but not put it into practice? As long as we are on time’s side of eternity, there is always room for us to grow and increase the brightness of our light. If you have been keeping God’s commandments but not teaching, think of someone you know who you could reach out to and try and teach. Put what you have learned into practice!



Help Me Shine Again  
by Alice Simmons

In America, statistics show that one of every four older people fall each year. Falls are dangerous and may cause serious injuries while some are

fatal. Risk factors include lower body weakness, instability in balance, poor appetite, vision problems, and various household hazards/obstacles.

As we consider the above risk factors and results of a physical fall, let us also consider the seriousness of a spiritual fall and those dangerous consequences. Let us use the 'risk factors' above to help us prevent spiritual falling.

Weakness comes when we fail to 'exercise' our thoughts and minds on spiritual things (Philippians 4:8-9) and remove our "armor" (Ephesians 6: 10-17). We then become very vulnerable to Satan and his fiery darts (Ephesians 4: 22-24). We may choose friends who distract us rather than encourage us. Once distracted, we neglect to open the Bible, to read and study His Word, and we then begin to forsake the assembly to worship God and remember His Son on the Lord's Day. We have failed others in that we are no longer the beacon of light and positive example they once knew.

We lose our 'balance' in life's journey when we do not prioritize our time or put 'first things first.' The former popular acronym JOY –Jesus, Others, Yourself— becomes reversed to the point that we lose our vision of others and their needs. The scripture "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them" (Luke 6:31) is all but forgotten.

Our Appetite for the 'meat' of the Word has waned. We now lack in Biblical knowledge, not growing as Christians should, and are barely surviving on the 'milk only' (Hebrews 5:12-14). We have developed 'tunnel vision' in that we are becoming not only blind to others, but blind to the truth, and our light is dimming day by day. The obstacles and roadblocks in life are depleting our hope and faith. Eventually we fall away and are no longer "walking in the light" (I John 1:7).

Just as there is always help when we fall physically, there is always help when we fall spiritually. About a year ago, I took a hard fall on ceramic tile floor, flat on my face. Terrified that I was badly injured, I yelled for my husband and he came running. I had a bump on my forehead, was a bit dazed, and was afraid I might

pass out. But with my husband's help, I was okay.

The point is, as God's children, there is a remedy. When we are no longer shining as a Christian, we need to remember God's promise that He will never leave or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6). We must ask Him to forgive us and help us to be more like Him again.

(II Corinthians 7:10).

Our weakness must return to strength in truth, faithfulness, and knowledge of His Word, avoiding distractions. We must consider choices we have made in friends and maybe even our lifestyle. We must also strive to be more giving and aware of others, and willing to receive encouragement from others in worshiping and fellowshiping at every opportunity. We must practice using our time effectively and glorifying God in every way we have opportunity with 'JOY' as our mantra!

Always feeding on the Word of God, we digest the meat which contains the rules of conduct and actions that reflect Christianity. That 'meat' brings grow and strength. Knowing that walking in the light leads us out of darkness, we can then regain our hope, and pray that our shining light will guide others toward our Savior. (I John 1:5).



### Don't Be an Egg White by Wilburta Arrowood

I suspect every one of us shines our light brightly when we sit in the pew on Sunday morning, but what about the rest of the time? What happens when we are away from our Christian friends? Do we forget our life as a Christian is a 24/7 deal?

Let's look at some possible snares that can extinguish our light for others. Suppose you are in a grocery store and you can't find an item in its usual place. Do

you calmly search, or do you accost a nearby employee and demand why “you people keep moving things around? Don’t you know how frustrating that is?” Does your voice raise? Do you take a threatening stance? Or do you calmly ask, “Can you tell me where to find the trail mix?”

I was in a pharmacy one day and happened to witness an elderly Christian brother who became frustrated because the medicine his wife had been prescribed was very expensive, and after only a few doses it was apparent it would not work for her. The brother wanted to return the remainder of the pills for a refund, because it had been a horrible financial burden, all to no avail. Unfortunately, by law the pharmacy could not do that for fear the contents had been contaminated. Neither had any idea I saw their conversation. Imagine how damaging it would have been if the brother had lost his temper in his frustration. Would your light have shone, or would it be under a bushel and only anger and frustration reign?

What about when it is bedtime and your toddlers are still running rampant around the room? Do you calmly, but assertively bring the room to order or do you scream at your children? Are you actively seeking good discipline methods and using them calmly? What sort of example do you impress on those young minds about how to conduct their own home when they grow up?

When you are at a gas station and someone approaches you and asks for help, either money, or perhaps a lift somewhere, do you brush them off, or do you investigate the need and try to help? We are given examples of being a good steward, and we are expected to be wise as well as safe, but do we use that as an excuse to be cold and harsh? We must be prudent in those situations, but sometimes we can be safe and still help, or perhaps arrange for the help needed via someone else. Do we bother to look for those safe solutions?

As I grew up I was very insecure with myself, and I struggled with my ineptness. It was my excuse to try to be invisible. One thing that helped me was a teacher who once said to choose someone with a skill you admire and watch, or ask, them how they do it. If they cook well, ask for hints. If they are calm and patient with children, ask how they maintain that attitude. If they teach a bible

class, ask to sit in and watch. Watch, listen, and learn. On one occasion we had a visiting preacher and his wife. The lady had traveled a good distance and still had a gorgeous upswept hair style that I admired. At the evening service her hair remained perfectly in place, and she mentioned she had taken a nap that afternoon. I stood amazed. How did she keep her hair in such beautiful shape after traveling so far and even through a nap? I asked, and her husband laughed and said, "She took it off and set it on the dresser." So, now I know.

When someone asks, take the time to explain. Let your light shine. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and sometimes we tend to take our own for granted. It may not always be a "bible" thing, but merely a beneficial hint or instruction to make life easier for the recipient. Help one another. Of course, the ultimate example we should be watching is Jesus. There is no better example than that.

Do you truly realize how closely others watch you and your actions and reactions as you go about your daily life? There is a saying that you may be the only bible someone reads, and like it or not, that is true. Do your neighbors see you loading up for worship every week? Do your brothers and sisters see you in worship every time the door is open, and if you are not there, they know something is wrong? Do people see you welcoming new neighbors, or helping care for the sick, both physically and spiritually? Remember, no matter how well-meaning your light is, if it is hidden, it has lost its influence. Is your example one that you would be proud to have someone follow? If not, it is time to crawl out from under that bushel and let your light shine.

[Job 6:6](#) says, "Can something tasteless be eaten without **salt**, Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" Don't hide your light, and don't be an egg white. Be the light of the world and the salt of the faithful. Get out and do something good!





## **“One Another”**

Abound in love for one another (I Thessalonians 3:12)

Accept one another (Romans 15:7)

Admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16)

Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love (Romans 12:10)

Be hospitable to one another without complaint (I Peter 4:9)

Be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Be of the same mind to one another (Romans 12:16)

Be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21)

Be tender-hearted to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)

Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)

Build up one another (Romans 14:19; I Thessalonians 5:11)

Comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:18)

Confess your sins to one another (James 5:15)

Consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)

Do not complain against one another (James 5:9)

Do not lie to one another (Colossians 3:9)

Do not speak against one another (James 4:11)

Encourage one another (I Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13)

Forgive one another (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32)

Give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:10)

Greet one another with a holy kiss/kiss of love (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20;

I Peter 5:14)

Keep fervent in your love for one another (I Peter 4:8)

Let us not become boastful with one another (Galatians 5:26)

Let us not challenge one another (Galatians 5:26)

Let us not envy one another (Galatians 5:26)

Let us not judge one another (Romans 14:13)

Love one another (John 13:35; 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; I John 3:1,11; 4:7, 11-12)

No one repay another with evil (I Thessalonians 5:15)

Pray for one another (James 5:15)

Pursue things which make peace with one another (Romans 14:19)

Regard one another more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)

Show tolerance for one another (Ephesians 4:2)

Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)

Take care that you are not consumed by one another (Galatians 5:15)

We have fellowship with one another if... (I John 1:7)



### Questions for discussion and meditation:

1. What is another word for “prepared”?
2. How can we prepare our hearts to seek, or continue seeking, God and His will?
3. Think of people who have influenced your life for Christ? What drew you to them? How did they treat you? Why did they influence you?
4. How can we let our “lights” shine for Christ?
5. How can we “turn-on” our lights again of example and influence?
6. Give/write your own definitions of “salt” and “light.”

### **Ideas for application of this topic:**

1. Give thought to your life and how you are “salt” and “light”:
  - a. Recognize your strengths in Serving God and interacting with others.  
Plan to continue those things so they are not lost.
  - b. Recognize a weakness. Make a plan to develop it to be stronger.

Remember: slow, small steps are better than large giant leaps. Make short-term goals a week at a time.

2. Study the “one another” passages (on the next to the last page). How can you develop those in yourself?
3. Find someone you can teach, i.e. a child to teach a Bible story, a neighbor or friend that needs to know Christ.

### **Prayer suggestions:**

1. Ask God to help you grow in your knowledge of His Word so you can not only know Him better, but so you also can teach others.
2. Ask God to help you to always be light to people around you that they can see Him in you.
3. Ask God to help you to be “salt” in every situation, that you make people better.



Match the number to the letter or number to fill in verses and theme for this issue.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
7	12	17	20	24	15	28	9	2	19	29	22	4	30	10	25	6	32

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