

LIFE UPSIDE DOWN__4

Reflect



“Try to shine as lights
among the people of
this world,
as you hold firmly
to the message that
gives life.”
- Philippians 2:15-16,
NLT

“Let your light shine
before men, that they
may see your good
deeds and praise your
Father in heaven.”
- Jesus, Matthew 5:16

The darker the night, the brighter the stars. Few sights are more breath-taking. The array of stars—both their order and their brilliance—commands our attention and admiration. The same should hold true for God’s people living in the world. In a “What’s-in-it-for-me?” culture, genuine disciples are as evident as stars on the darkest nights.

The purpose of letting our lives shine isn’t to look good or to impress others, but rather to “hold out the word of life” to a world lost in darkness. The difference in the way we approach life will show people a new way, an abundant life—the one God intends for them to have also. As far as powerfully impacting others in concerned, there’s a lot of truth in the old adage, “*It’s better to light one candle, than to curse the darkness.*”

Opening Up

Describe a time when your life or attitude had a positive impact in a distinctively “unchristian setting.”

Digging In

Read **Philippians 2:14-18**

1. This passage is quite emphatic: “*In everything you do....*” In what situations are you most tempted to complain, grumble or squabble? How can a person complain without using words?
2. How is this passage a logical follow-up to the admonitions in verses 3-4?
3. What reasons are given for doing everything readily or cheerfully, and without bickering? When we don’t like what is happening, what should we do instead?
4. It seems that some people, no matter how good things are, always look at the downside. Do you know someone like that? By contrast, who do you know that doesn’t complain even though they would have every “right” to do so? What’s their “secret” for maintaining such a positive attitude?
5. Do you tend to expend more energy “cursing the darkness” around you, or actually doing something about the light? Would you say this is true of Christians in general, or not?
6. How aware are you about the way in which you affect others? Explain. How deeply do you believe that you can be a person of influence? How often do you pray that you will be such?

Living Out

Have you ever heard someone say, “*And you call yourself a Christian?*” There’s a lot at stake, especially in the “little” ways we respond to the circumstances or people around us. Is there any area of your life or attitude that is inhibiting God’s ability to shine brightly through you? If so, what would obedience look like in this area?

Lifting Up

If you have younger children in your group, this would be an excellent occasion to involve them in your time of worship: (1016) “This Little Light of Mine,” (290) “Shine, Jesus, Shine,” (722) “Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen,” (540), “Oh, For a Faith that Will Not Shrink.”