

The Believer's Powerful Influence

Matthew 5:13-16

Christians, according to 1 Peter 2:9, are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and God's special people. Christians are also called "salt and light." This is a reminder of the opportunity and the responsibility they have to be an influence in the world. When the citizens of the kingdom (characterized by the Beatitudes in vv. 3-9) are persecuted by the world (verses 10-12), they continue to be a positive influence in the world (vv. 13-16). God sent believers into the world to reach the world; but they are to be different from the world and not to love the world (John 17:15-18; 1 John 2:15).

1. *Because God made us salts and lights, we must _____ the significance of our influence*

The world needs the believers' influence because it is dark and decaying. This society needs salt to retard the corruption and light to brighten the darkness. Christians are salt because of their role to preserve, purify {Christians are to be examples of purity (Rom. 12:2; James 1:27)}, penetrate {Christians should penetrate the world with the gospel (Acts 8:1, 4; Acts 17:60)}, please {Christians should flavor the world around him}, and promote {Christian has the wonderful opportunity to promote a thirst for Jesus in the world (John 7:37-38)}.

Believers are also to be lights to the world (v.14; Eph. 5:8-9); reflecting that character of God (Psalm 36:9; John 1:9; 8:12) and declaring the truth of His word (Psalm 119:105). The light of the Gospel of Christ should shine through us (2 Cor. 4:6; Phil. 2:14-15).

2. *Because God made us salts and lights, we must _____ to exercise our influence*

Salt should not lose its flavor; instead it should permeate. Light is not meant to be concealed but to shine in order to illuminate. Salt is only good when it has saltiness and light is only good when it is shining. Believers can fall into the danger of losing their influence. If sin enters a Christian's life and is tolerated, he will lose his influence (Rev. 2:12 ff.). To avoid the compromise of sin, "let your light shine" (v. 16). That's what we have been designed to be and to do (Eph. 2:10).

Believers shine forth their light when they display the love of God (1 John 2:9-10); when they live in holiness (Eph. 5:8); when they share the Word of Christ (Phil. 2: 15-16).

3. *Because God made us salts and lights, we must _____ in the result of our influence*

The ultimate aim and design of our life is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31; 6:20). In being the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus glorified the Father (John 17:4). David's sole desire was to glorify God (Psalm 16:8-9). When men will see our good works, they will glorify our Father in Heaven (1 Pet. 2:2).

As Christians, may we always remember that we alone are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. As we represent Jesus Christ to the world, we are the hope of the world. May God help us even this day to be different from the world, that the world may benefit by our difference and come to glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!