



# TRUTH IN LOVE

*Shedding Light on the Word of God*

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## Night Lights

**Matthew 5:14a**

*You are the light of the world...*

Once when I was staying with my wife's parents I was trying to find my keys late at night, in the dark. I knew right where I had left them on their kitchen table, and decided that rather than risk waking her parents up by turning on the lights, I would just find them in the dark. I made it down into the kitchen okay, and located the table without incident. But as I put out my hand to where I knew the keys were (though I couldn't see them), my hand brushed a glass and knocked it off the table. It landed on the floor with a loud crash and shattered. Twenty seconds later, every light in the house was on, and everybody was awake while I tried to explain why I was foolishly looking for my keys in the dark.

I learned that no matter how confident I am, when I bumble around in the dark I'm eventually going to break something. This is true for life as well. When there is little or no light, you can do nothing and go nowhere without serious risk to yourself and others. So it's not surprising that in this darkened world, there are so many broken lives. They hurt themselves and others because they reach for the keys they know are there, but keep knocking glasses off the table. If only the light was on to stop all the breakage. Sadly, most people don't even know there is a light.

Worse still, those of us who have the light often fail to turn it on. Maybe we're forgetful or lazy. Maybe we're afraid of the messes light will reveal lying at our own feet. Maybe we just don't know how to turn on the light. Whatever the reason, we've found that it's much easier to sit back and criticize the dark for being dark. It's less convicting to leave the light off, while laughing at the foolish mistakes of those walking in darkness. We rant and rave. We picket and criticize. We call the darkness derogatory names. Some of our more peaceful members try to vote the darkness into light and plead with the darkness to be lighter.

But darkness will never become light. The only way to banish darkness is to turn the lights on. The lights must shine before darkness fades away. We see this illustrated on the first page of Scripture. On the first day of creation, God did not command the darkness to be light. Instead, He spoke into the darkness and created light. He said, "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3). When Jesus came to this earth, He reacted toward spiritual darkness in the same way. Though He found great darkness (John 1:5) on earth, He did not embark on a quest to transform darkness into light, but instead chose to be light so that people could see (John 8:12).

How are Christians supposed to bring light into this dark world? We must first recognize that we *are* lights. When people believe in Jesus for everlasting life, they become a light which is capable of shining brightly for all to see. Christ told His disciples that as His followers they are **the light of the world** in a similar way that He is (cf. John 8:12; 9:5). But being a light is not the same thing as shining as a light. Shining is not automatic.

When I lived in Montana, it was frequently dangerous to drive at night in the spring. The melting snow would create a thin layer of dirty water and mud on the roads which would be thrown up by the cars in front of you. Eventually, your headlights get so covered with dirt and mud, that you could not see where you were going, nor could oncoming cars see you. The wise driver would stop every so often to clean off his headlights. It was dirty work, but it had to be done to help avoid accidents.

Living in a dirty world, Christians often have dirty lights. Most of us begin our Christian lives with years of dirt and grime needing to be washed away. To wash the dirt and grim that has built up in your life, you need to embark on the path of discipleship as laid out by Jesus in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12). As we progress and grow in our Christian life, our lights shine brighter and brighter, until the most saintly of Christians is like a beacon or spotlight, telling people "This is the way. Follow the light."

John Wesley once wrote that if any person would be set on fire for Christ, people would come from miles away just to watch him burn. Are you on fire for Christ? Or are you just putting out a lot of smoke? Are you a light for the world to see? There is a country song called, “Every Light in the House is On” about a man who lost his wife and is waiting for her return. To help her find her way, he turned on every light in the house. Jesus Christ is returning soon, and He wants us to turn every light on so that the lost and wayward can find the path home. We’ll learn more next month on how to do this as individuals and as the church.

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## Family and Ministry Update

### From Jeremy: (Read below for how to get a FREE Theological Journal)

Work was quite hectic this month. Due to some employee changes at Grace Evangelical Society, my workload has increased drastically, as well as my level of responsibility. I am now some sort of cross between an office manager, director of publications, website developer, editor, typesetter, and conference coordinator. I am definitely keeping busy.

Speaking of which, we recently put out our Spring edition of the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* in which I wrote two book reviews, one on John Piper’s *Brothers, We Are NOT Professionals*, and the other on *The Five Points of Calvinism* by David Steele, Curtis Thomas and S. Lance Quinn. The rest of the articles in this journal are excellent. This month I will send a free copy of this journal to everyone who requests one, but I do ask that you make a donation to help offset the costs.

I spoke twice at Westcliff Community Church this month. They are a great group of believers! I have included a picture of them to the right (courtesy of Bob Wilkin who recently spoke there as well).

Classes at Dallas Theological Seminary start back up for me later this month. I am trying to get geared up for that as I am once again taking a full load.



### From Wendy:

This last month has flown by for us—which is a great thing considering how hot it has been. With this being our 2<sup>nd</sup> summer in Texas, we’re getting accustomed to staying inside during July and August unless you’re in water. It’s usually over 100 degrees and the sun down here literally feels like it’s cooking your skin if you stand in it for more than five minutes. So we’ve been staying in and going to bookstores to read books. From what we see in the weather report, it looks as if the entire country is trying to stay indoors as well.

God has blessed us in a fun way though this past week. Some friends of ours were house-sitting at a nice home with a pool, and so we were able to spend several evenings with them cooling off in the water. It was like a little vacation. The girls turned into fish and Jeremy and I got to spend some fun time relaxing while enjoying our girls—a real treat!

It is also great to finally have a fun baby—one that laughs, smiles and sleeps. Kahlea is generally a very happy baby (now that the colic is over). One of the best things though is watching all three girls interact with one another, and how they truly love each other. God has blessed us immensely with three beautiful girls, both inside and out.

Taylor and Selah are already teaching Kahlea that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Two budding evangelists, I think! Please remember to keep Jeremy in your prayers as he heads back to school. It will be another year of long days in class and longer nights doing homework. He will also be spending more time on busy highways, so pray for his safety.