



# THE PARABLES OF JESUS

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## THE LAMP

### **Before Life Group**

Read [Mark 4:21-25](#)

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After the Parable of the Sower, Jesus continued to speak to the people in parables. He compared the truth to the light of a lamp, explaining that the measure we use to judge others will be used for us.

We often take for granted the concept of electricity. The simple flip of a switch or verbal command to Google will illuminate our homes and other buildings. During the first century, people filled lamps with oil to light up the house. When a lamp was put under a bed or under a bowl, it ceased to function in its intended manner. When the goal is to provide light to the world around you, blocking or concealing that light opposes the true function of the lamp's intended purpose.

The nature of truth is not something that should be concealed. The truths of God are designed to be displayed brightly and outwardly. Jesus spoke in parables so that the people would be able to understand the complex intricacies of an infinite and eternal God. Yet, some still were unable to understand the message of Jesus Christ. Thus, you see Jesus frequently referring to "those who have ears to hear, let them hear."

### **Bringing Our Faith Out Into The Open**

The purpose of a lamp is to provide light as far as it is able to extend. Light shoots outward until it dissipates or is extinguished. It would be foolish to buy an expensive bright lamp to illuminate the whole of our house and then cover it with dark shades and covers.

In coming to Christ, we become radically changed and transformed by His the grace and power. No one can reasonably expect to remain the same after an encounter with the Risen Lord. Yet, this is not the pinnacle of our spiritual journey but merely our beginning. We are spiritual infants in need of guidance and direction from our Heavenly Father. Furthermore, the process of being sanctified begins and continues until we are glorified. There is the struggle of the flesh that we put to death daily in order to awaken even more to the life-giving message of Christ so that our light shines brighter and brighter. When we cave in to the desires of the flesh, our light dims.

There are many reasons that would drive a person to hide his faith...fear of persecution, judgment, embarrassment, loss of popularity. In being set apart *for* holiness and Godliness, we become set apart *from* our previous life. People will judge us for what we do and what we abstain from doing. We cannot pretend that these fears are not real or do not exist. Our flesh hates being excluded and rejected. Yet, no matter how we feel, the flesh and the Spirit stand opposed to one another. We can indulge the fleshly nature or we can

pursue spiritual growth. We can hide the effects of God in our life, or we can allow the His light to shine through us.

Whenever we are tempted to hide our light, God is always there to remind us of His purposes. There will be times when we will be excluded, persecuted, and isolated because of our faith. However, Christ raised us from death to life. The cure for our fallen spiritual condition has been offered to the whole of humanity and mankind, and God desires that all should experience that healing. His light shines on every one in its path.

Our faith is intended to shine outwardly and impact the world around us. It would be a colossal shame if someone failed to experience an encounter with God because I hid the light of my faith. Allowing God's light to shine through our faith enables us to be used for His glory. We have the supreme honor of being an instrument of God. His hand reaches through our own, using us to transform the lives of others by sharing His message. This is the importance of the allowing the light to shine in all corners of the house.

## **Showing Grace To One Another**

For all that we have been given by the grace of God, we still insist on finding creative reason to qualify, quantify and compare our faith with the faith of others. We judge one another for the sins we have committed. Yet, this is precisely the other function of the light—it illuminates every situation and corner of the home, bringing to light what is hidden in the darkness. As Jesus discusses the measure we use to judge one another, it is in the context that the light of God will leave nothing hidden.

The church can be an inviting place to people who have not yet received Jesus as their Savior. We rejoice in the story of those turning from supreme evil to the transformative power of Jesus Christ. Yet, when people come to Christ, we must remember to extend to them the same measure of God's grace as we extend to ourselves. Surely, we would be unable to survive under the system we might levy on one another.

Rather than judge a person for struggling through a particular sin or temptation, the light of God shows us that there is strength and healing in the arms of the brothers and sisters of Christ. In choosing to follow God, we all have willfully engaged in the spiritual battle against our fleshly nature and desire. Every Christian works through struggles and temptations. One of the major benefits of being part of the body of Christ is the mutual uplifting and accountability to grow with one another. As the light shines to all areas of the household, there is nothing that needs to be hidden from God or from our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all dedicated to grow closer to Christ with one another along the way. In standing together, we hide nothing from our spiritual family, and the light of our faith expands outwardly to the world, enabling them to see the difference that faith makes in the lives of those who follow Him. Nothing needs to be hidden.

Every last one of us is immensely messed up and desperately in need of a Savior, and our Savior is fully and wholly omniscient, knowing all things. In order to show grace to one another, we must all first come to grips and wrestle deeply with our own sinful attitude and desires. We can show grace to people because of the grace that God first extended to us. We have been saved from death and our treasonous sins have been forgiven. If this is the measure we wish that God would apply to us, then this is the measure we must apply to others. The light will shine on all of our faults and the inconsistencies of our faith, but the love of God will transcend every sin. Nothing is hidden and every person is welcomed into the arms of Christ regardless of where we have been or what we have done.



## Discussion Questions

Read [Mark 4:21-25](#)

1. Name some situations where a person would be tempted to put the light under “a bowl or bed”? What are some of the reasons or circumstances that you have been hesitant to claim that you are a Christian?
2. What areas do you struggle with in your own life in the battle between the flesh and the Spirit? What causes the struggle between the two?
3. What are some of the effects that occur within us when we allow our faith to be expressed in every area of our life? What are some of the effects that occur within the lives of those around us?
4. In which areas of your life do you see the struggle of applying different standards to yourself than you apply to others?
5. Why do we find some sins harder to forgive once a person becomes a Christian?
6. In what way does understanding the grace we have been given help us to extend grace to others?
7. How should we respond to a Christian who sins? How should we respond to ourselves when we sin? Are you able to extend grace to yourself and others?

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### **About the Author.**

*Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com>*

