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A Shining Light

- by Roger Shouse

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

Jesus wants us to shine our light for God. Jesus describes his disciples as "a city set upon a hill." A city on a hill is noticed. What you do, as His disciple, gets noticed. Everything you do gets noticed by somebody. The words you speak are heard. Your attitude is seen in your every act. Where you go is noticed. It all has influence for good or bad.

Recently one of the younger boys in our congregation asked his mother to get him some ties to wear to church services. He had seen the older boys wearing ties, and he wanted to dress up and be like them. This young boy NOTICED. You are noticed!

Who Notices You?

1. People Who Know You Notice. Nearly every day you see the same people at work, or at school. There is a circle of friends that you hang out with. They notice you. They see whether you pause to thank the Lord before you eat. They see how you drive your car. They see what you wear. They see what you doing during services. They see how you handle difficult situations. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Don't forget your own family. They notice. More than anyone else, they know if your faith is real or not. They know if you are serious about the Lord or not. What do the people who know you see?

2. People Who Don't Know You Notice. Nearly every day there are people we meet that we really don't know. Those that work at gas station, post offices, UPS drivers, those in doctor's offices. They see how we handle inconveniences. They see how patient we are.

They see how honest we are. Our attitude is seen in how we respond to various situations. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Christians are positively distinctive from the world (1 Pet 3:15).

3. God Notices. God sees all. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good" (Prov 15:3). God "looks upon the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). He cannot be mocked or fooled (Gal 6:7-9). Nobody can play games with God and win! A city set upon a hill cannot be hidden. You are noticed! The closer we get to Jesus, the light of the world, the brighter our light will shine! The Christian has the most important influence in the world, for he or she has the power of the gospel in their own life, which can change the lives of people around them lost in darkness. **THE BEACON – Electronic Edition – 7/14/26**

Reasons to Discipline

by Bryan Matthew Dockens

God commands Christians to discipline their brethren (Romans 16:17; II Thessalonians 3:6), yet many neglect to do so. Revealing the proper reasons for discipline may motivate the reluctant.

We Discipline for Love

Love is always the correct motive for fulfilling the Lord's will (John 14:15), and so it is with discipline in particular. Discipline is not practiced for spite, but for love. Jesus said, *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent"* (Revelation 3:19). Those who have no regard for the souls of others are willing to let them perish, but those moved by love will correct the erring when they stray. Those receiving discipline must learn to accept it accordingly: *"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights"* (Proverbs 3:11-12; cf. Hebrews 12:5-6).

We Discipline for Shame

Paul ordered the Thessalonians, *"And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed"* (II Thessalonians 3:14). People ought to be ashamed of themselves when they sin. God criticized His people in Jeremiah's day, saying, *"Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, they shall be cast down"* (Jeremiah 6:15; cf. 8:12). Without shame there can be no remorse, which is necessary to repent and be saved (II Corinthians 7:10). Unless a person is *"past feeling"* (Ephesians 4:19), he should be brought to shame when his brethren exclude him. And that, in turn, should motivate his repentance.

We Discipline for Deterrence

One goal of discipline is to prevent others from committing the same transgression as the one punished. The evangelist Timothy was told, *"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear"* (I Timothy 5:19-20). Others can be dissuaded from perpetrating errors by witnessing the consequences. Such was the case when God killed Ananias and Saphira for lying: *"So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things"* (Acts 5:11).

We Discipline for Purity

When Paul admonished the church in Corinth to expel the fornicator, he explained, *"Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened"* (I Corinthians 5:6-7). In other words: one bad apple really does spoil the whole bunch. In part, this is a further argument in favor of the deterrent effect of discipline, but more than that, it's about the purity of the group. Not only does harboring the sinner embolden others to sin, but the association also implies approval. It is written, *"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him, for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds"* (II John 10-11). We keep ourselves pure by keeping our distance from the wayward.

We Discipline for Self-Preservation

The Lord told Ezekiel the priest, *"When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul"* (Ezekiel 3:18-19). Failure by the righteous to warn the wicked imperils the righteous. This principle is recognized in criminal justice when those aware of an impending murder refuse to warn the victims or alert the authorities and are subsequently charged with second-degree murder. Thus also the Christian who refuses to warn his brother about his sin will stand in jeopardy for that sin. The apostle Paul abided by this principle, telling the Ephesian elders, *"Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God"* (Acts 20:26-27).

We Discipline for Self-Improvement

After the Corinthians had disciplined a sinful brother, Paul reminded them how it had improved themselves to do so: *"For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of*

yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you" (II Corinthians 7:11-12).

We Discipline for Obedience

Having been instructed by the apostle Paul to withdraw from an immoral brother (I Corinthians 5:1-13), the saints in Corinth did as they were told (II Corinthians 2:6). Paul explained his earlier instruction, saying, "*For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things*" (II Corinthians 2:9). Following through on discipline is not an easy task, but few tests of obedience are.