

The Calling

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Salt and Light...

We are called to live life on a higher level. Our faith needs to be overcoming.

Jesus had the ability to take the basic things of life and fill them with life changing meaning. In my speaking to volunteer organizations one of the presentations I give is "What A Difference One Person Can Make!" I first heard this message from my Senior Pastor and am passing it on to you. Pastor Phil has made a huge impact on my life and I praise God for him. I have added a few lines here and there but most of the content is from his original message. Jesus continually challenges us to be difference makers. The choice whether our impact will be "maximized or marginalized" is truly ours alone. Your life filled with the Holy Spirit has a maximum impact on the lives *you touch*.

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. (not "you represent") A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 4:13-16

In life simple does not always mean easy. Simple does not always mean unimportant.

Salt refers to inward character, or influence.

Our inward character will make an outward influence on people in our world.

Salt has three characteristics:

1. **Flavor**— making life more worth living to the people around us.

Colossians 4:6 "Let your conversations be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

We are called to make a positive impact on the people around us, the lives we touch everyday..

2. Salt make things **pure**— Peter 3:1-4. We are called to have a gentle, quiet spirit which is precious to God our Father.

3. **Preservative**—salt is a preservative. *Malachi 2:7 "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction— because he is the messenger of the Lord almighty."*

Salt is white—standing for purity, a purifying agent when rubbed on a wound brings healing. Salt preserves keeping items from decaying. Our

lives, our presence are to be a preservative in our world. We are to be holy as God is holy to not adopt the standards of this world. Our presence as children of God should "pick up" the atmosphere, yet even in our world there is a lack of influence even in the church the body of Christ.

"We are called to be a moral disinfected in a world where moral standards are low, constantly changing or non-existent."

~Tasker

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SALT and LIGHT

"If we are salt, if we are light, if we are who we are, we will be what we are to be, we will do what we are to do. Salt salts, light shines. Enhancing life...bringing hope...through living our lives for Jesus."

~Marilyn R. Beverley

Salt and Light continued...

As children of God we are called to remember the challenges of Jesus.

1. Salt can lose its flavor, its saltiness. We must ask ourselves, "What is stealing my flavor, my influence for God in this world?"
2. It is very difficult if not impossible to make salt regain its saltiness. When we lose our "saltiness" we have lost our ability to influence for God.

What is stealing your influence in this world for Jesus? Salt takes the ordinary and adds flavor and makes things "taste" good. There is a lack of influence of the church by not being present in the world—Christians no longer influence we have lost our saltiness. We must search our hearts, we must confess sin and be cleansed and we must strive to let others see Jesus and His mighty work of grace in our lives and see the power of the Holy Spirit transforming our lives, our minds and our hearts.

Light refers to outward testimony and is not just a character issue.

A light is suppose to be seen. Ephesians 5:1-16 "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible.

Light overwhelms the darkness.

A light is a guide.

A light is a warning.

Are you letting you light shine? Are is there darkness in your heart keeping that light from shining to

the lost and dying world? Is your light hidden under a bushel?

Barriers that hide our light:

1. Limiting self behavior—how we treat people, lack of integrity, dishonesty, self-centeredness, speech, behaviors that inhibit me from being a light.
2. A lousy attitude—Romans 12:1-2. Do you have a complaining spirit? A negative attitude? A critical spirit that repels people? Do you need an attitude transformation and the JOY of Christ implanted in your heart by the power of the Holy spirit?
3. Laziness—we don't want to get involved.
4. Indifference—we are not passionate, we forget we are talking about the eternity of souls.
5. Fear—afraid of misrepresentation, misunderstanding if we make light shine into our communities.

Ephesians 1:16

"that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

This life is not about me but about making an impact for Christ Jesus.

The destiny and legacy that God has for you is incredible. We weren't meant to take up space and use up oxygen. We were meant to have a maximum impact on our world for Jesus. That all who see us will praise God, Our Father.

This little light of mine,

I'm gonna let it shine.

This little light of mine,

I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel NO!

I'm gonna let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel NO!

I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Won't let Satan blow it out!

I'm gonna let it shine.

Won't let Satan blow it out!

I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Let it shine til Jesus comes!

I'm gonna let it shine.

Let it shine til Jesus comes!

I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let, let it shine.



It only takes a spark to get a fire going.

And soon all those around can warm up to its glowing.

That's how it is with God's love once you've experienced it, you want to sing, its fresh like spring you want to pass it on.

I wish for you my friend this happiness that I have found.

You can depend on Him.

It matters not were your bound.

That's how it is with God's love once you've experienced it, you want to sing, its fresh like spring you want to **PASS IT ON!**



A Box of Blessings

Enjoy the true meaning of Christmas with your Family!

To help keep our thoughts focused on the true meaning of Christmas, this family devised a holiday project which has become a family favorite and became a favorite of my family also. The children can hardly wait to dive in to our "Box of Blessings," a special box which holds 24 gifts for the Advent/Christmas Season.

The first present introduces the idea. On December 1, I open (mom) the large gift-wrapped box containing 24 more attractive gifts, and read the enclosed tag to the family: "Today we are beginning a Christmas project. We will open a different present for the next 24 days to help remind us of God's most precious gift - His Son Jesus."

In preparation for the Advent/Christmas season, gifts are selected that are practical and useful as visual aids, and then a specific object lesson is planned around each gift. Scripture references plus discussion questions are chosen which will both reinforce biblical principles and stimulate good conversation within the family.

The children grow more excited with each day. We find that the discussion time allows for them to share their ideas and feelings rather than to shout back "pat answers" to our questions. Sometimes we ask additional follow-up questions to help clarify an area of misunderstanding. My husband and I also add our own ideas and the children learn from our discussions. Everyone can benefit from this family holiday project. Simply wrap a large box with Christmas paper keeping the lid separate. Gather 24 visual aids (list follows), wrap them, write out tags for each (object lesson, Scriptures and discussion questions), and place the gifts in the box. With little effort

and a bit of creative imagination, every family can make Christmas become more Christ-centered. The Lord used object lessons consistently. He took things that were familiar to the disciples and made sermons out of them to teach eternal truths. Our "Box of Blessings" has helped each of us to know God better and to absorb simple principles from His word. When our then 5-year-old-son received Christ as his personal Savior less than three weeks after our Advent observance, we knew this was one Christmas tradition we would continue.

Present #1 A large, wrapped box containing 24 gift-wrapped presents. READ: Today we are starting a family Christmas project. We are going to be opening little presents for 24 more days. God gave us the most precious gift of all, His Son, Jesus. (John 3:16) Have each of us received this gift of Jesus into our lives?

Present #2 Several pieces of any kind of food wrapped. READ: Does food always stay the same even after a long time? No, it changes when it gets old, doesn't it? But Jesus never changes; He is always the same (Hebrews 13:8) Why do you think it is important that Jesus never changes?

Present #3 A heart shaped object. READ: Hearts remind us of love. We love others, but did you know that God loves us even more? (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) How many things about love can we find in these verses?

Present #4 A piece of soap. READ: Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show them that they should be servants to each other. (John 13:5) How can we be a servant to each other?

Present #5 A piece of flat bread for each person. READ: Jesus was tempted just like we are. (Matthew 4:1-11) When we are tempted, how can we resist the Tempter like Jesus did?

Present #6 A small candle or flashlight. READ: Both a candle and a flashlight give light. (Matthew 5:16) How can we be a light so that other people can see Jesus in us?

Present #7 A little Bible or tiny Scripture booklet. READ: God gives us His words in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16) How does the Bible help us to live the Christian life?

Present #8 A piece of modeling clay. READ: We can mold this piece of clay into whatever we want it to be. Sometimes we want to be like the people of the world but Jesus wants to mold us into His image. (Romans 12:1,2) Are there some

things we do that are like the world and not like Jesus? **Present #9** Scissors. READ: With scissors, we can cut out crowns for us to wear (Have construction paper available for crowns.) Jesus promises to give heavenly crowns to those who still love Him even when sad things happen to them. (James 1:12) What sad thing has happened in each of our lives? Do we still love Jesus? **Present #10** A toy boat. READ: The disciples were afraid they would die in a storm. (Mark 4:35-40) Are we afraid of something? What does God say about fear? **Present #11** A small battery. READ: A battery gives a flashlight the power to produce light. Similarly, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to live a Christian life and have the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22,23) What are the fruits of the Spirit? How can we have the fruits of the Spirit? **Present #12** A penny for each person. READ: God gives us everything we have and wants us to give a part of it back to HIM. (2 Corinthians 9:7) What can each of us give to God? Does God want us to be happy or sad when we give to Him? **Present #13** A plastic lid. READ: We use a lid or seal to keep something inside a jar or other container. (Ephesians 1:13) Who does God use to seal our salvation within us? **Present #14** Plastic toy sheep. READ: Sheep follow their shepherd's voice. Just like sheep, we should listen to our Shepherd's voice. (John 10:4,5) What are some things our Shepherd, Jesus, tells us to do? **Present #15** A rubber band. READ: See this rubber band? When we pull and stretch it, it becomes tight. That's a good example of how we feel inside when we worry. If we don't stretch it, the rubber band is soft and relaxed. (Philippians 4:6-7) God wants us to relax in Him. If we are uptight, what do we need to do so that we can relax inside? **Present #16** A blank piece of paper with "sin" erased off. READ: When you make a mistake in writing, you can erase it and start over again. When you do something wrong,

A BOX OF BLESSINGS continued: called sin, you can ask Jesus to forgive you and He will forget all about it. You can start over again. (Ephesians 4:32) What is something each of us did wrong lately that Jesus has forgiven us for? **Present #17** Empty. **READ:** Were you surprised to find this present empty? So was Peter when he found the tomb of Jesus empty. (John 20:1-9) Jesus was born so that He could grow into manhood, die for our sins and then be resurrected from the dead. What does resurrected mean? Jesus is alive- how does that affect our lives as Christians?

Present #18 A cotton ball with perfume on it. **READ:** This smells good, doesn't it? What Jesus did for us, by dying for our sins, smelled good to God. (Ephesians 5:2) What nice thing have each of us done lately that smells good to God? **Present #19** A plastic or toy angel. **READ:** An angel will announce when Jesus comes back to earth to take his children to heaven. (1 Thessalonians 4:16) Do each of us know that we are going to heaven? How can we know for sure? **Present #20** A match. **READ:** The deeds we do are either valuable or worthless. (1 Corinthians 3:12,13) What deeds are each of us doing that will be considered good in heaven? What deeds will be judged worthless and burned up? **Present #21** A picture of neighbor or friend. **READ:** God used the word "neighbor" to mean everyone. (Galatians 5:14) He wants us to love everyone. Do we have a hard time loving everyone? **Present #22** A happy face sticker. **READ:** Is there something you can do to make God happy? (Colossians 3:20) What are some ways each of us can be obedient today? **Present #23** A tiny piece of concrete. **READ:** The foundation of a house is usually made from concrete. It is put in first before the house is built. (Luke 5:47-49) Is Jesus our foundation? Is He first in each of our lives? **Present #24** A tiny globe or picture of the earth. **READ:** God made the earth and everything in it. That includes each of us. (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 13;13-16) Do you know that you are special and important to God? **Present #25** A photograph of each child when they were a baby. **READ:** You used to be a baby, didn't you? So was Jesus. Just as you are growing up, Jesus grew up so that He could one day become our Savior (Luke 2:1-20) What do you want to be when you grow up? IN what way can each of us continue to have the Christmas spirit every day of the year? Article originally taken from Virtue Magazine, November 1984 I used this with my son several years and each December he would be so excited. It really drew our family closer and into the real meaning of Christmas. Then, when he served as a Children's Pastor in ST. Paul, MN, he called and asked me to send the article to him. - Marilyn R. Beverley

Present #25 A photograph of each child when they were a baby. **READ:** You used to be a baby, didn't you? So was Jesus. Just as you are growing up, Jesus grew up so that He could one day become our Savior (Luke 2:1-20) What do you want to be when you grow up? IN what way can each of us continue to have the Christmas spirit every day of the year? Article originally taken from Virtue Magazine, November 1984 I used this with my son several years and each December he would be so excited. It really drew our family closer and into the real meaning of Christmas. Then, when he served as a Children's Pastor in ST. Paul, MN, he called and asked me to send the article to him. - Marilyn R. Beverley

Prayer List: Pray for my Dad in Kentucky, his house was hit by a tornado causing damage. Pray for Randy and Bonnie Overly—healing for Bonnie's cancer. Pray for Sharon who has a mass on her adrenal gland. Pray for Isabella and Madeline Dunn new born identical twins fighting cancer. Pray for my friend Ruth in Kentucky whose health is not good. Pray for Mary Alice Kalmbach surgery for thyroid cancer. Pray for City Community Chapel planting a church in Lincoln Park, Illinois. Pray for Pastor Martin Appah and positive Christian Church in Korle Gonno, Acra, Ghana, West Africa. Pray for Pastor Frank Archer in Virginia and Covenant Baptist Church of Virginia. Cast a vision for your city, pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit over your city, over America. Pray for the war in Iraq—Pray for the people of Iraq who are homeless, pray for the children of Iraq. Pray for the homeless in America. Pray for the lost—Pray that they will respond to God's draw; pray that the lost will seek to know God; pray that the lost will believe the Living Word of God; Pray that Satan will be bound from blinding them to the truth; pray that the lost will respond to the Holy Spirit's convicting of sin; Pray for opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost; pray that the lost will believe in Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior; pray the lost will recognize sin as sin and repent and turn from it confessing Jesus as Lord and yield all to follow Him; pray that the Living Word of God will take root in their hearts and they will grow in Christ. Pastor Elvis Bafour and his wife have started a National Prayer Line if you would like to pray morning and night please join us please contact me via email and I will send you the conference call number we pray Every week morning 6-7am and M-F evening 10-11 pm Sat and Sun evening 9-10. Join us.

AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Start a Gratitude Journal and each day give thanks for five things that make a difference in your life. The story is told of the teacher asking her students to list the "Seven Wonders of the World" and one little girl seemed to struggle. After a few moments the teacher asked the students what the seven wonders of the world are and she received the usual answers, the Great Pyramids, of Egypt, the Taj Mahal, the Grand Canyon, the Panama Canal, the Empire State Building, St. Peter's Basilica, and the Great Wall of China, then there was the little girl you see she couldn't decide you see there are so many...she said just let me tell you what I have so far. Then the little girl hesitated for a moment and said, "I think the seven wonders of the world are to touch, to

taste, to see, to hear, to run, to laugh and to love. So I challenge you start a gratitude journal and today enjoy these wonders in your world...

To see, to hear, to run, to laugh, and to love.

