



## STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, December 21, 2025

**Teaching Title:** The Light We Carry

**Key Scripture:** Matthew 5:14–16

# CEDAR VALLEY

### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** Matthew 5:1–16

**Tuesday:** Philippians 2:1–18

**Wednesday:** Psalm 118

**Thursday:** John 3

**Friday:** John 12

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

### MEMORY TOPIC:

Shine Your Light

**MEMORY VERSE:** Matthew 5:16 NLT

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### Introduction:

At Christmas, we celebrate that the Light of the world has come! Jesus, the eternal son of God, came to bring light into a dark world. In John 8:12, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Interestingly, in Matthew 5:14, Jesus says, "You are the light of the world." Jesus is the Light, and His light is in us! He has entrusted His role to us as His followers. A light is meant to be seen, not hidden. In the same way, believers are called to live so that hope, kindness, integrity, and love shine visibly in a dark and confused world. When we stay connected to Jesus, the true source of light, we will naturally shine in the places he has put us—whether at home, at work, or in our communities. We carry the light of Christ into a dark world. The Light that saved us is the Light that sends us.

#### Questions:

Ice Breaker: Are you a sunrise, daylight, twilight, or nighttime person? Why?

1. Read Matthew 5:13–16 together as a group. Jesus uses two metaphors here with salt and light. What do you think Jesus meant when He compared His followers to salt? What qualities of salt stand out to you? (See Digging Deeper)
2. What do you think Jesus meant when He told His followers, "You are the light of the world?" What was His main point about the light? (see Notes and Digging Deeper)
3. How does the image of "city on a hill" help explain why our faith is meant to be visible?
4. What are some ways we may hide our faith today and live as "secret disciples"? Why do people hide their faith?
5. According to Matthew 5:16, what's the purpose of our good works? What does that look like?

6. What kinds of actions in your daily life help you “shine your light” in a dark world? How can you “carry your light” this week?

## NOTES

### Question 2—

The word for “are” is the Greek “ἔστε” (este) – it’s in the indicative mood, not the imperative mood. The indicative mood in Greek communicates facts and statements. In other words, He’s declaring their identity, not giving instruction. It’s not “try to be light”, it’s “you ARE light because of Me.”

## DIGGING DEEPER

### Question 1—

“Salt serves mainly to give flavor, and to prevent corruption. Disciples, if they are true to their calling, make the earth a purer and a more palatable place. But they can do so only as long as they preserve their distinctive character: unsalty salt has no more value. Strictly, pure salt cannot lose its salinity; but the impure ‘sat’ dug from the shores of the Dead Sea could gradually become unsalty as the actual sodium chloride dissolved. In any case, Jesus was not reaching chemistry, but using a proverbial image. The Rabbis commonly used salt as an image for wisdom (cf. Col. 4:6), which may explain why the Greek word represented by *lost its taste* actually means ‘become foolish’. (Aramaic *tapel*, which conveys both meanings, was no doubt the word used by Jesus.) A foolish disciple has no influence on the world.”

### Question 2—

“*Light*, like salt, affects its environment by being distinctive. The disciple who is visibly different from other men will have an effect on them. But the aim of his *good works* is not to parade his own virtue, but to direct attention to the God who inspired them. By so doing the disciple will give *light to all* (cf. Phil. 2:15). Jesus is pre-eminently the *light of the world* (Jn. 8:12), as Isaiah had prophesied of the Servant (Is. 42:6, 49:6), but this role passed to his disciples (cf. Acts 13:47). The *city set on a hill*... reinforces the importance of being conspicuously different. A *bushel* (grain measure of about 9 liters) put over an oil lamp would probably put it out, so that the meaning could be that a lamp is not lit only to be put out again; but the emphasis of the passage is on non-concealment (cf. Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16, ‘under a bed’), so again the ‘scientific’ implication need not be pressed. A secret disciple is no more use in the world than one who has lost his distinctiveness (v. 13).”

—France, R. T. *Matthew: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1985.  
p. 112–113