



Lights! Don't you just love the lights of the season. Do you know what I have really come to love? I love those café lights strung outdoors. I don't know why I love them so much, but I do. They invite me to nestle up close with my warm, fuzzy throw, a good book, cup of hot cocoa, flavored with peppermint, of course, and an ooey gooey fresh baked cookie. These lights simply beckon me to bask in the warm glow of God's presence during any season of the year.

Light is an important word of Christmas. Just as the lights on my pergola invite me to come and sit, so the light of Jesus' presence invites me in to commune. Jesus came to brighten our dark, sinful world. His light was a gift on the very first Christmas, and His light is our gift every day of the year.

The light of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament.

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. – Isaiah 9:2*

*For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6*

In John 8:12, Jesus made a declaration about Himself and light when He said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life."*

Jesus proclaimed that His followers are to be light as well, and He commanded us to shine His light to a lost and dying world.

Matthew 5:14-16 says it this way.

*"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*



What a promise. If I allow the Light of Jesus to shine through me, God will get the glory. He will be glorified. What a privilege to have the opportunity to glorify the Father this season. Let me ask you ...

- How bright is God's light in your life?
- Does Jesus light up your life?
- Are you shining the light of Jesus brightly to others or is your light dull and in need of power that can only be accessed as you plug in to God's Word and prayer?

Are you shining the light of Jesus in the shopping mall, grocery line, or (dare I say it) when you're stuck in traffic or pressed for time?

My prayer for you and for me today, is that Christ's light will shine brightly in us not just today but every day. As Christ's light penetrates through the darkness of our selfishness, our wants, and our own agendas, we reflect Christ and bring Him much glory.

So, let's talk through this for a moment ... What are some ways that we can shine God's light into a lost and dying world? Here are a few ideas.

- Invite someone who needs a bit of encouragement for coffee and just sit, listen, and pray with her.
- Get involved with a community outreach project this season.
- Say thank you and smile at the checkout counter.
- Pay it forward in the drive-thru line.
- Display patience even when it's hard.
- Bit your tongue when tempted to lash out.

These seemingly small gestures shine the light of Jesus on our world, making it glisten with God's glory.

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, would You help us shine Your light today? Would You give us the restraint and the strength when needed to be Your hands and feet? Thank You for penetrating the dark and dreary with Your marvelous light. Help us to walk in it today and always, in Jesus' name, amen.