



# Jesus Teaches That We Are to Be Salt and Light

Matthew 5:13-16

BIBLE BACKGROUND  
FOR LEADERS

## Picture 1: Salt

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One characteristic of salt is that it's distinctive. If Christians are to be salt, it's important that our words, attitudes, and actions be distinctive from everyone else's.

Another characteristic of salt is that it enhances whatever it's added to. Just as salt enhances and changes the flavor of food, Christians are to change the flavor of whatever environment we find ourselves in. Instead of being influenced by our culture, we are to influence our culture for good. We can bring out the best in our culture, just as salt brings out the best flavor of food.

Salt is also a preservative; it prevents food from spoiling. In the same way, we should act as a preservative—examples of purity in a decaying world, arresting decay by our presence.

In addition, salt melts ice. As our world's salt, Christians can help melt the cold resistance of those who haven't embraced Jesus and cause their hearts to be more open to him.

In verse 13, Jesus points out that salt that has lost its flavor is worthless; it's good for nothing except to be trampled on. In the same way, our contributions to God's kingdom are worthless if we're not acting as salt in our world.

## Picture 2: Light

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Light drives out darkness. As the light of the sun overcomes the darkness of night, we can be the light that overcomes the darkness of the sin around us. In biblical times, the light from a city drew people from the frightening dangers of the wilderness to safety within the city's walls. As we hold our light higher for Jesus, more and more people will see it and will run to him for eternal life.

The light of a city on a hill cannot be hidden, but an individual's light can. If we want to, we can hide our light with some kind of covering, something that doesn't allow the light of Jesus within us to shine. But we are called to let that light shine so that everyone around us can see it.

As people around us are drawn to the light we reflect, we must direct them to the source of that light: Jesus, the inextinguishable light of the world!

## The Jesus Connection

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Because Jesus adds salt and light to your life, you have the ability to flavor and illuminate your circles of influence for Jesus.

How is your life like spice? What light have you shone into your relationships lately? Sit silently before God. Ask him to give you the names of two people with whom you can start being "salt and light." Now make a plan with God to start building salt and light into that friendship. You can write your prayer here.

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Matthew 5:13-16

► Bible Point—Help others see Jesus.

Key Verse—“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

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## Daily Challenges

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week.

- **Set a goal of encouraging a certain number of people this week. See if you can break your goal! Reflect on how these encouragements shine the light of Jesus to those you share with.**
- **Have you hurt someone else? Get with that person and apologize for your actions, whether they were intentional or not. Let the light of Jesus show in your words and actions.**
- **Is there someone you know who really needs to know Jesus and is ready to listen? Spend some time with that person this week. Tell him or her how Jesus has made a difference in your life, and how Jesus can make a difference in his or her life, too. Ask that person if you can pray for (or better yet, with) him or her.**

### Talk Topics

- Talk about the ways that you can live in such a way that Jesus' light shines through you—even to people you don't know.
- Discuss someone you all know who seems to be reflecting the light of Jesus to other people.
- Tell about a time you or someone you know had to make a choice about whether or not to let the light of Christ shine through you—and what happened as a result.
- Share about a specific person you want to be salt and light to. Why does that person need to know Jesus, and what can you do to help the person see Jesus?

## Through the Week

Use the following passages to explore additional biblical insights about being salt and light in the world.

### Monday—Colossians 4:6

- What do you think it means for your conversation to be “seasoned with salt”?

### Tuesday—Colossians 4:5

- How can you make outsiders feel welcome?

### Wednesday—Psalm 119:105

- How can the Bible guide you?

### Thursday—Titus 2:7

- In what ways do you set a good example for others?

### Friday—Matthew 5:14-15

- Why is it so important to let light shine for all to see?

### Saturday—Matthew 5:16

- What can you do to “let your light shine”?

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