



UNLEASHING THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF YOUR LIGHT

Dare To Shine (Part II)



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Foundation Scripture: Isaiah 60: 1-3, Matthew 5:14-16

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Last week we learned that we are the light of the world. We learned that in order to fully appreciate what Jesus was saying in Matthew 5:14-16, we need to understand our unique attributes as the light of the world. We agreed that the statement 'Let your light shine' was a wake-up call to recognise our identity. Looking at identity in great detail, we agreed that understanding who you are is crucial to your success in life. We defined identity as 'a set of behavioural or personal characteristics by which a person is recognisable' and understood that our true identity is defined by God. 'Let Your Light Shine' implies four things – (1) You have what it takes to make your light shine (2) Your Light has the capacity to shine (3) It is a call to take responsibility (4) You are instructed to let your light shine, overruling your age, background, circumstances or opinion. From the life of Enoch, we learned a number of key lessons including the truth that our history, background, environment, experiences, colour, age is not supposed to stop us and we are not required to follow the failures but were born to make a difference.

Today I would like to share with you six practical things you can do to shine your light.

- (1) **Be connected to your source:** This refers to your personal relationship with God. All things are maintained by the source from which they came. A flower is maintained and sustained by being connected to the earth. A fish is maintained and sustained by living in water. Some few days ago, we celebrated 'Valentine's Day' – some of us received flowers from our loved ones. Those bunches of flowers were recently plucked from the source from which they came from – of course with an 'expiry date'. Beautiful as they are, in the next two weeks they will wither, because they are no longer connected to and sustained by their source. All things/creation die the instant they are removed from their sources. The sign of death may not be evident, nonetheless death is inevitable. You cannot survive without God. Jesus said *'I am the vine, and you are the branches, He who abides in (connects with) Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.'* (John 15:5 NKJV) In other words, when you connect with God, you shine. If a person disconnects from God, like a bunch of flowers recently plucked, for a little while things may be okay, but eventually that person soon withers. There is no option or alternative to our need for God. No equipment or appliance works

without being connected to a power source. A keyboard with no power source will not release its music regardless of how hard a keyboardist tries. So it is in life. Stay connected to your power source.

(2) **Aim High:** In Genesis 13:14-15 we read the story of Abram... *'And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward. For all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.'* I want to encourage you today to go through life always aiming for something higher. In this passage, the key phrases to note are 'lift your eyes now' - which talks about elevation; and 'from the place where you are' - which talks about your position. Irrespective of your position, you have the right to lift up your eyes - to aim high. Change your perspective, look further, look higher. In other words, you are not supposed to remain where you are. Your current position is not your destination, you must see further. Don't aim small, aim high. There is nothing about you that is average. Refuse to live an average life - it means aim at something beyond your strength and previous success. You are capable of achieving beyond the level of your previous success. Never allow your past success to become a ceiling for your life. You carry the DNA of God; your God is more than enough. You must challenge and stretch yourself to pull something from within, never done before. Rise above every mental paralysis and fear. Life is too short to think small. Develop an infinite capacity to ignore what others think can't be done - unless you commit yourself to some great cause, you haven't really begun to live. Wayne Gretzky said *'It is an undeniable fact that you will always miss one hundred percent of the shots you do not take'*.

(3) **Believe In Yourself:** There is a school of thought that puts all of life's responsibility on God - in the name of believing in God. However, Apostle Paul said *'I can do all things, through Christ who strengthens me'* (Philippians 4:13). He believed in his ability. Irrespective of what may have knocked you down, you owe to yourself and those who depend on you to believe in yourself. If you think you can, you can, and if you think you cannot, you cannot. To succeed, you must believe that you can. Nothing splendid has ever not been achieved, except by those who dared believe that something inside of them was superior to the strength of their obstacles. After God, no one else's opinion of you matters than your own personal opinion. Don't go through life looking for people to believe in you. You've given too much power to others if you do so. Why don't you pull out your toothbrush and sing yourself happy in front of your mirror? Appreciate and celebrate yourself. David spoke and commended his achievements. Before King Saul, he celebrated his victory over the lion and the bear, before slaying Goliath (I Samuel 17:34-37). Make a list of your achievements and celebrate your victory- It's for days of adversity that God gives you those successes. Don't focus on what you don't have - rather focus on your victories. Here are some points to help you in believing in yourself

(i) Affirm yourself: Compliment yourself - 'I am great, I am beautiful, I am the best of God's creatures'. When you speak, your ears catches it, your mind processes it, and becomes a belief system. Everybody acts on their belief systems- **You** are a product of your belief. If you want to change the life of a person, simply change his mind, you change his belief and action.

(ii) Never count yourself out: God has not counted you out, why should you? You are not a quitter.

(iii) Believe what God says about you: He is the final authority

(iv) Choose your associations wisely: Don't expose yourself to environment where you are unduly criticized.

(v) Think positively: You can change your thought flow - I learned this from Pastor Tayo some years back. For example - count 1 to 10. Then say 'Jesus'. What happened? You stopped counting. When strings of negative thoughts from the devil flow through your mind, you can break the flow. You have the power to control what goes in your mind. Every one experiences and fights the battle in their mind. You can't afford to lose this battle. This is how the bible puts it in Philippians 4:8 - *'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things'*

You can choose what goes through your mind - not the negative things that the devil brings your way.

- (vi) Encourage yourself: David encouraged himself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:1-6). Don't focus on what you don't have, even when things are not going the way you think they should be going.
- (4) **Recognise that you are a gift to the world:** Never undervalue or underestimate yourself – you are not ordinary. You are a solution provider. There are two things to bear in mind as the gift to the world.
- (i) You must discover your worth: This is not subject to man's opinion; your worth is what God says about you. Before God met with Jacob, he had up to then been described as a 'supplanter'. But God called him 'Israel - a nation'
- (ii) Find out where you add value: There is a place in God's mind for you. There is a team in church, there is employment in a field where you add the most value – find it out. Life is about adding value – not just about making money. Go to work because of what you have to offer – let your light shine. Be an agent of influence everywhere you go, including work. This was what Joseph did – In one day, he was moved from prison to the palace. The world is looking for solution providers, problem solvers and answer bringers.
- (5) **Focus on your strengths and not your weaknesses:** Everybody has something to offer this world and their generation – you have what it takes. Don't undervalue what you have by comparing yourself to others. God spoke of Moses rod in Exodus 4:17 *'And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs.'*
- What you've got – a smile or simply encouraging others – don't trivialise, underestimate or undermine it.
- (6) **Put your light on the candlestick:** Light by nature radiates. Go through life with confidence and high self-esteem – with courage and boldness. Don't bury your light. It is supposed to be felt by others – they need to see your good works. And they need to glorify your Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Let's look at some heroes in the bible – Jabez was labelled 'pain'. He had no future - he was rejected by men. However, he refused to live an ordinary life, so much so that he cried out to God. 'Oh, that you will bless me indeed' he cried. God answered. (1 Chronicles 4:9-10) Jephthah in Judges 11 was the son of a prostitute. He was despised and sent away from his inheritance. He stood fast, refused to be intimidated and decided to make his life count for something. The same people who rejected him called him back to lead and judge. Joshua and Caleb refused to follow popular opinion, they held on to their convictions. Nehemiah rose above every opposition. David brought Goliath down, refusing to be intimidated. Apostle Paul stood up for Jesus and affected generations after him. We are all beneficiaries of Paul's ministry. People just like us.

What about people in our day: What about Henry Ford, Bill Gates, Harland David Sanders (KFC) and Walt Disney? These people failed several times, but they refused to give up. What about Isaac Newton and Winston Churchill, the Nobel Prize winning, twice elected Prime Minister of the UK – he struggled in school and failed his sixth grade. After school, he faced many years of political failures as he was defeated in early election for public office until he finally became Prime Minister at the ripe age of sixty-two. What about Abraham Lincoln? What about Michael Jordan? Most people would not believe that a basketball star regarded as the best basketball player of all time was not discovered in his high school basketball team – luckily he did not let this stop him from playing the game. He says *'I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been entrusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed'*. He did not give up.

The world is full of ordinary people who dared to shine, irrespective of their background and condition. You too have the power to shine – you have what it takes to arise and shine. Let the world feel and see your impact here on earth. Shine; let the world see your good works and let God be glorified. Future generations are awaiting your light – I dare you to shine!

