

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD: Amplifying God's Light of the World

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God is light. Jesus came to reignite the light that went out. Now He entrusts you with the very same task He had when He walked the earth: to be the light of the world; to take an initiative, pray, and show God's love—and thus flick a spiritual light switch on so that God's power can be released into the world.

You Are Equipped and Able Indeed!

Too many Christians think they are unable to let their lights shine and make a difference for God in their reality. Most of the time the problem lies not in theory nor in theology. Most Christians know that Jesus calls them the light of the world in the Gospel of Matthew, and they have probably heard a message or two about it but still lack the confidence and boldness to put that calling into practice. Why?

As a pastor for almost four decades, and especially after having worked with young people for most of that time, I know from experience that much of the problem stems from a belief that only a certain kind of person—an ideal Christian with a distinct personality—has the ability to shine for God. It is so easy for us to paint a picture in our mind of this “super Christian” person with no faults and challenges, elevated high above the rest of us. And if you don't recognize yourself in that perfect image you've created in your mind, it is also

easy to assume that “shining the light” is not for you. You assume that you lack whatever is needed and subconsciously disqualify yourself from even the remote possibility that you could actually be the person who flicks the light switch and makes a difference for Jesus.

3 Keys to Unleash Your Light

Oh, how I wish there were a button I could push to instantly and supernaturally set you free from this devastating lie! If we would only see the truth—that *all* of us are created to shine, that *all* of us have the ability in Christ to do so, and that *all* of us have been entrusted with a unique flavor of light that only we can shine in our unique world—then the church would be turned into a Jesus revolution, the gospel would sweep the earth, and the kingdom of God would flourish.

In the absence of such a magic button, let us try to deconstruct this lie and remind ourselves of the truth of God’s Word. In doing so, there are three important things to understand:

Shining your light does not require perfection.

If it did, none of us would be able to shine at all. It is a lie of the enemy and a complete misconception of the message of the Bible that God demands perfection before He can use anyone for His kingdom. According to the Word of God, the reality seems to be quite the opposite way around: “For observe your calling, brothers. Among you, not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty men, and not many noble men were called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And God has chosen the base things of the world and things which are despised. Yes, and He chose things which did not exist to bring to nothing things that do, so that no flesh should boast in His presence,” (1 Cor. 1:26–29, MEV).

When the light of God reappeared on earth through Jesus Christ, it passed by the perfectionists. The wise, the religious, the ones who considered themselves worthy of God through the way they kept the commandments of the Law, were left behind and many times became enemies of the light. Instead, Jesus chose regular, ordinary people and gave them the mission of shining for Him. The people He proclaimed to be the light of the world in the Sermon on the Mount were not theological students or participants of a pastors' conference but fishermen, carpenters, tax collectors, former prostitutes—the kind of people no one counted on or expected anything good from.

This was all according to the wisdom of God. If the light were to shine through the perfection, wisdom, and strength of man, then man would get the glory. But if it shone through the foolish, the weak, and the unexpected, then God and God alone would be glorified.

This is exactly why it is so destructive to believe we have to reach a point of perfection before we are qualified to take an initiative and trust God to use us. The outcome of this will only be that we wait in vain for a level of excellence we will never reach while the world around us is left in darkness.

Remember, throughout the Bible God continuously used men and women who were far from perfect, people with major flaws in their lives such as Abraham, Tamar, Moses, Samson, David, Solomon, Jonah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Peter, James and John. Does this mean our lifestyle doesn't matter and that we can just keep on sinning and still expect to be used by God? Of course not. The Bible clearly tells us to stop sinning (Rom. 6:12), to work out our salvation in the fear of the Lord (Phil. 2:12), and not to gratify the desires of the flesh (Rom. 13:14). There is absolutely no place in Christianity for a teaching that implies we can do whatever we want, or that God's grace means I am automatically forgiven anytime I sin.

The point is that even though God requires holiness and expects us to continuously strive so that our heart's salvation also works its way into our minds, habits, attitudes, words, and deeds, He will not stand at the sideline and wait for a certain level of perfection before He can use you.

He wants to shine through you right here and now!

You were created to shine a unique light.

You are not in this world and in this time by coincidence. Quite the opposite. God did not just design you to be the person you are, He also designed the time and place where you would live your life. Your personality, your year of birth and the part of the world in which you were born—all are parts of God's master plan: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love; He predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved," (Eph. 1:3–6, MEV).

Please read that again and again until you fully realize how amazing this perspective is. He chose you not just when you were born or even conceived in your mother's womb. He chose you before the creation of the world! Before that first "Let there be light" He thought of you and planned you. You were already designed in God's heart before He even designed creation, and He chose you to shine before the first man drew his first breath.

God knew what He did when He gave you your unique personality and the ability to shine your unique light in your unique world in your unique time. This is the reason you are not like others and should never compare yourself with others. Why

should you, when you are perfectly put together by God almighty, entrusted and enabled to shine exactly the light needed for the people around you to see.

Comparing yourself with others (only to fall short in the process) is one of the most common and devastating mistakes Christians make. Now, there is a positive kind of comparison, where we can look at other people's faith, initiatives, and examples and be inspired to reach even further ourselves. But placing yourself next to someone else, only to assume that because you are not like them you are less able to shine and less likely to be used by God, basically means claiming that God has made a horrible mistake.

You are you—created and chosen by God to live in this world and in this time to shine a light uniquely designed by the Lord Himself to reach the exact group of people God knew from the beginning your life would touch.

Diversity is not a problem but an asset.

In the world we live in conformity is the law. Everybody is expected to look the same, be the same, act the same, have the same opinions, and wear the same clothes. Standing out from the crowd or going against the flow is punished by cancellation. In a season of insecurity, when you are desperately seeking identity, the easiest route is simply to be a clone of everyone else.

As Christians we can never allow ourselves to be infected by this mindset. In the kingdom of God diversity is not a problem but an absolute necessity. No one of us can display the fullness of God on our own. No single person, church, or movement carries in itself the ability to reflect to the world the greatness and diversity that is found in Him. He is simply too great, too amazing.

This is exactly why we, as the church, are portrayed and described as one body with many different parts rather than as

many independent individuals: “For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the many parts of that one body are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,” (1 Cor. 12:12–13, MEV).

How I love this revelation! And how totally contrary it is to the way of this world, which dictates that everyone should be the same. The kingdom of God is the complete opposite, a kingdom where diversity is celebrated as absolutely essential.

We are called to complete, not to compete. And as we all shine our individual, unique lights in our individual, unique worlds, all of them will blend together into one amazing beam of light for the world to see. The result: one and the same light but filled with all the various spectrums and nuances needed to display the greatness, glory, and diversity of our God.

This has always been the main vision, passion, and desire of my ministry: inspiring believers to shine their lights boldly in their world and never excuse or exclude themselves because their lights don’t look exactly like someone else’s.

The Inspired Illustration

Some years ago, after many months of prayer, God gave me the grace to put together an illustrated sermon for this very purpose. By that same grace, this message has now encouraged hundreds of thousands of believers in some 15 countries to shine their lights.

The main illustration of the message consists of a number of lampstands with different light bulbs—all different in design, but all with the ability to shine their unique light according to the purpose they were created for. As the light bulbs light up one by one, I talk about each one, its importance, its strengths and limitations, and how its uniqueness sets it apart from the others and gives it a very special purpose that none of the others can fill. Then at the end the lamps all

light up at once and their unique lights blend together to create this beautiful display of unity and diversity—just as the kingdom of God is meant to do.

These different light bulbs help you better understand the diversity of the kingdom and the uniqueness of every believer's light. You will be able to identify what kind of light bulb God has created you to be and why your special light is so important and irreplaceable.

Joakim Lundqvist serves as pastor and international ambassador of Word of Life Church in Uppsala, Sweden. Even in this highly secularized nation, it has grown to a megachurch and become the launchpad of more than 900 churches in Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, India and beyond. Lundqvist is a highly esteemed speaker in more than 50 nations to make a difference for Jesus in their world. He is the author of four books translated into several languages. His new book, *Shine Your Light*, was published in October and is available at now. He and his wife, Maria, have two daughters, one son-in-law and two grandsons.