

This Little Light of Mine

Last Saturday, Donna and I worked on a little bucketful of flashlights for her bible class. Each child gets one to “shine” while they sing “This Little Light of Mine,” but several of them weren’t working (the *lights*, not the children!). Supplying new batteries and swapping some good parts for bad ones made all but two unsalvageable ones “shine-worthy” again. But the process got me to thinking...

I know the song says, “I’m gonna let it shine,” but what about the times we didn’t... “let it shine,” that is? What about the times we DID “put it under a bushel”?

There have probably been times that we (at least there have been for me), instead of letting our light “shine” as reflective representatives of Christ, “hid” our light under the “bushel” of darkness and alternatively became delegates of darkness. To our horrified shame, rather than manifesting the “light” of Jesus, we provided another/others with the fodder of futility. Rather than “*showing all good faith*” to “*adorn the doctrine of God*” specifically and Christianity generally as Titus 2:10 describes, we, at least in that moment, became disciples and disseminators of the *doctrine of demons*, cf. 1Tim.4:1ff. But why would we do such a thing?

- Perhaps we were afraid of being singled out as *different*, though that is exactly what we’re called to be, cf. John 15:19 and 1John 2:15-17;
- Perhaps we were *ashamed* of the gospel and teachings of Christ, though we are expressly forbidden from being so, Mark 8:38; Rom.1:16; or,
- Perhaps we were being *sensuously selfish* and indulging our own desires, instead of *selflessly sacrificial* in submitting to and deferring to the desires of Christ, Eph.2:1-3; 5:10.

Whatever our motivations or even our intentions may have been, it is and should be a frightful thing that we, by our actions or omissions, may have been the *cause* of one of His other “*little ones*” to *stumble*, Matt.18:1-11. Godly influence is a precious commodity. It is gained over time by deliberate discipline and lost in a moment by careless folly. But more to the point, influence is a powerful commodity. It can enlighten and encourage to eternal reward, or darken and damage to eternal despair. Let yours shine- as brightly as you can, as a reflection of Jesus Christ (rather than your own ‘goodness’), as consistently as possible. And may our gracious God forgive us all for the times we didn’t “let our light shine.” (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)