

# shine

THAT YOU MAY BE BLAMELESS AND INNOCENT, CHILDREN OF GOD WITHOUT BLEMISH IN THE MIDST OF  
A CROOKED AND TWISTED GENERATION, AMONG WHOM  
YOU SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD







## Shine

**Big Idea of the Series:** This four-week series encourages students to let their lives shine as a witness to the world around them. We will look at light-filled encounters in the Bible and discover how we can have similar experiences today.

### Week 1

**Text:** John 1:5; 6:1–14

**Topics:** Light, Darkness, Sharing a Lunch

**Big Idea of the Message:** Even when our lights feel dim, they are still making a difference.

**Application Point:** God can and will use the light we shine for others, even when it seems very dim.

### Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:

1. “The eternal Word, as *God*, shines in *the darkness* of *natural conscience*. Though men by the fall are become *darkness*, yet that which may be known of God is manifested in them; see Rom. 1:19, 20. The light of nature is this light shining in darkness. Something of the power of the divine Word, both as *creating* and as *commanding*, all mankind have an innate sense of; were it not for this, earth would be a hell, a place of *utter darkness*; blessed be God, it is not so yet. ... The Jews, who had the light of the Old Testament, yet comprehended not Christ in it. As there was a veil upon Moses’s face, so there was upon the people’s hearts. In the *darkness* of the types and shadows the light shone; but such as the *darkness* of their understandings that they could not see it. It was therefore requisite that Christ should come, both to rectify the errors of the Gentile world and to improve the truths of the Jewish church” (Matthew Henry, commentary on John 1, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_001.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_001.cfm)).

2. “There is a lad here, *paidarion*—a little lad, probably one that used to follow this company, as settlers do the camp, with provisions to sell, and the disciples had bespoken what he had for themselves; and it was *five barley-loaves*, and two small fishes” (Matthew Henry, commentary on John 6, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn\\_006.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Jhn/Jhn_006.cfm)). We don’t know whether the boy planned to eat the bread and fish or sell them. But Jesus used the boy’s willingness to share what he had to meet the needs of thousands. The boy didn’t do anything loud or giant; he simply made available that which he had with him. By doing very little, he became part of Jesus’s shining a huge light that day.
3. Sometimes it feels like the light we offer to others is weak, useless, or unhelpful. When God takes the light we offer and redirects it to others around us, however, it becomes powerful and effective. We can trust that God can use us.
4. One woman combined her love of photography with processing her grief of losing a son to cancer; she is discovering how a tiny amount of light can still be effective in the dark: “One project she is currently working on came about when she was admiring the light in her home one day. She noticed the light in her bedroom, which was completely dark except for a strip of light cascading over her crumpled sheets. Normally, it wasn’t a setting conducive to taking a photo because of the lack of light. As someone who shoots primarily on film, she knew even with the best of exposure settings, everything would likely end up pitch black. But as she wrestled with it, she decided to get her camera out anyway. ‘Kristin, there’s just enough,’ she said to herself. ‘In photography, you usually want to shoot for the light. But I’m trying to shoot for the dark. Because all it takes is a little bit of light to break up the darkness.’ She laughs, admitting the project is not a fully developed creative idea and might only go as far as the one photo she grabbed that day. ‘It could stop and end this week,’ she says. ‘Or I could keep it going, trying to find light in the darkness’” (Chantelle Gibbs and Karley Carrillo, “Capturing Light,” *Fuller Magazine*, no. 25, June 22, 2023, <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/story/capturing-light/>).
5. “Bioluminescence is the production and emission of light by a living organism, and it is truly one of the great magical properties of nature. At its core, bioluminescence is the way animals can visually sense the world around them. It’s all built on vision, one of the most fascinating and useful senses in the animal kingdom. Seeing is impossible without light, and so it makes sense that in the absence of sunlight, some animals created a way to make their own light” (“The Magic, Wonder, and Science of Ocean Bioluminescence in Southern California,” *California Curated*, October 4, 2024, <https://californiacurated.com/2024/10/04/the-magic-wonder-and-science-of-ocean-bioluminescence/>). “In fact, scientists estimate that more than 75% of the animals that live in the water column in the open ocean produce their own light” (“Bioluminescence,” *Deep Ocean Education Project*, accessed May 7, 2025, <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/materials/bioluminescence-fact-sheet.pdf>)!
6. Sometimes shining a light in a dark space feels useless because the darkness seems overwhelming. Even when our light feels faint or weak, however, it can still be seen by those whose eyes have adjusted to the darkness around them. A

faint light can lead the way. “Carrier-based aviators in World War II often used the long bioluminescent trails churned up by ships’ wakes to pinpoint vessels at night. ... James A. Lovell, one of the astronauts who made the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission to the moon, was one saved by bioluminescent dinoflagellates. In February 1954 when he was a navy pilot, Lovell set out on a night mission training from a carrier off the coast of Japan. While he was taking off in stormy weather from the *USS Shangri-La*, his directional finder malfunctioned, heading him in the wrong direction. To make matters worse, his instrument panel suddenly short-circuited, burning out all the lights in the cockpit. ... Lovell took the penlight out of his mouth, switched it off, and scanned the darkness. Down below him at about two o’clock, he thought he noticed a faint greenish glow forming a shimmery trail in the black water. The eerie radiance was barely visible and would have been lost of Lovell altogether had the blackness in the cockpit not acclimated his eyes to the darkness. ... He was certain he knew what the strange radiance was: a cloud of phosphorescent algae churned into luminosity by the screws of a cruising carrier. ... It was one of the least reliable and more desperate methods of bringing a lost plane home safely, but when all else failed, it could sometimes do the trick” (Vincent Pieribone and David Gruber, *Aglow in the Dark: The Revolutionary Science of Bioluminescence* [Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005], 23–24).

7. Give everyone an inexpensive glow stick. Observe how the light provided from a small, thin glow stick seems weak and ineffective in a room with the lights on. Turn out the lights and notice the glow offered in a dark space. Discuss how even when we feel like our lights aren’t shining brightly, we are still effective. This same illustration could work with a simple headlamp and jug of water, as seen here: <https://youtu.be/yPYW6KuDY7A?si=DeW7JMgyEcafrF7>.

## Week 2

**Text:** 1 John 4:7–13; Luke 10: 25–37

**Topics:** Brightness, Love, Good Samaritan

**Big Idea of the Message:** Use what you already have to shine your light.

**Application Point:** Whom could you bring the light of service and love to this week in your community?

### Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:

1. “We have found that [God] *is light as well as love* (ch. 1:5), and God is principally love to himself, and he has such perfections as arise from the necessary love he must bear to his necessary existence, excellence, and glory; but love is natural and essential to the divine Majesty: *God is love*” (Matthew Henry, commentary on 1 John 4, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Jo/1Jo\\_004.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Jo/1Jo_004.cfm)).
2. “The duty inferred from it is pressed home upon the lawyer’s own conscience: *Go, and do thou likewise*. The duty of relations is mutual and reciprocal. ... If a Samaritan does well that helps a distressed Jew, certainly a Jew does not well if he refuses in like manner to help a distressed Samaritan. ... Note, It is the duty of

every one of us, in our places, and according to our ability, to succour, help, and relieve all that are in distress and necessity” (Matthew Henry, commentary on Luke 10, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk\\_010.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Luk/Luk_010.cfm)).

3. The good Samaritan used what he had to help another. He shined a light when nobody else would do so. He ensured care for someone else. We can shine our lights in a similar way by using what we have and by caring for the needs of others. Our light will leave a lasting impact on the person who we helped.
4. “Do you see how remarkable this is? God’s love for us takes the form of our loving one another. God’s love *for us* is manifested in *our loving each other*. ... Our love for each other is a manifestation of God’s love for us. I think we can now begin to see why God as love is light. To love my brothers and sisters is to seek their good, their flourishing. God’s love for us radiates out into our seeking the flourishing of each other. Is that not analogous to what is most fundamental about light in our lives? Yes, light illuminates our path. But even more fundamental, light radiates out from the sun to nourish us, to provide the energy without which there could be no life. How better to describe God as love—love radiating out from God onto and into us and from us to the neighbor—than to say that God is light?” (Nicholas Wolterstorff, “The Light of God’s Love,” *Theology News & Notes*, Spring 2010, <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/light-gods-love/>).
5. “Jesus allowed the parable to answer the lawyer’s question and guide the application. I am to love my neighbor, and my neighbor is the one who others might consider my enemy. My neighbor is the one with a need right in front of me” (David Guzik, study guide for Luke 10, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david/study-guide/luke/luke-10.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/luke/luke-10.cfm)).
6. “A solar sail, simply put, is a spacecraft propelled by sunlight. Whereas conventional rockets are propelled by the combustion of rocket fuel, a solar sail is pushed forward by light from the Sun. Light is made of packets of energy called photons. While photons have no mass, they have momentum. Solar sails capture this momentum with sheets of large, reflective material such as Mylar. As photons bounce off the sail, most of their momentum is transferred, speeding up the sail in the direction opposite the bouncing light. Unlike chemical rockets that provide short, powerful bursts of thrust, solar sails provide continuous, slight thrust and can reach higher speeds over time. Sunlight is free and unlimited, whereas rocket propellant must be carried into orbit and be stored onboard a spacecraft” (“LightSail, a Planetary Society Solar Sail Spacecraft,” The Planetary Society, accessed May 7, 2025, <https://www.planetary.org/sci-tech/light sail>).
7. Challenge your group to consider whom they might be a blessing to this week. Could you work together to care for someone in the church? Create a list of tasks that need to be accomplished that will directly affect someone else either inside the church community or outside of it. Talk about ways to be a humble light to others, outside of the spotlight. Remind the students that applause isn’t earned, and people might not ever know who was responsible for the blessing.

### **Week 3**

**Text:** 1 John 1:5–10; Psalm 119:105

**Topics:** Illuminate, Embodiment of Jesus, Hospitality

**Big Idea of the Message:** We embody Jesus and the fellowship among believers when we shine our light.

**Application Point:** What is an act of hospitality you can offer someone this week?

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. "To walk, in scripture account, is to order and frame the course and actions of the moral life, that is, of the life so far as it is capable of subjection to the divine law. *To walk in darkness* is to live and act according to such ignorance, error, and erroneous practice, as are contrary to the fundamental dictates of our holy religion. ... For the conviction and consequent satisfaction of those that are near to God: *But, if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* As the blessed God is the eternal boundless light, and the Mediator is, from him, the light of the world, so the Christian institution is the great luminary that appears in our sphere, and shines here below. A conformity to this in spirit and practice demonstrates fellowship or communion with God. Those that so walk show that they know God, that they have received of the Spirit of God, and that the divine impress or image is stamped upon their souls" (Matthew Henry, commentary on 1 John 1, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Jo/1Jo\\_001.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Jo/1Jo_001.cfm)).
2. When we don't know how to shine the light of Jesus to others, we can remember that his Word is the lamp for our feet and the light for our path. He shows us the way. The Word of God "is a *lamp and a light*. It discovers to us, concerning God and ourselves, that which otherwise we could not have known; it shows us what is amiss, and will be dangerous; it directs us in our work and way, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is a lamp which we may set up by us, and take into our hands for our own particular use, Prov. 6:23. The commandment is a lamp kept burning with the oil of the Spirit; it is like the lamps in the sanctuary, and the pillar of fire to Israel. The use we should make of it. It must be not only a *light to our eyes*, to gratify them, and fill our heads with speculations, but a *light to our feet and to our path*, to direct us in the right ordering of our conversation, both in the choice of our way in general and in the particular steps we take in that way, that we may not take a false way nor a false step in the right way. We are then truly sensible of God's goodness to us in giving us such a lamp and light when we make it a guide to our feet, our path" (Matthew Henry, commentary on Psalm 119, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Psa/Psa\\_119.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Psa/Psa_119.cfm)).
3. When we shine the light of Jesus for others, we embody Jesus; we are like Jesus to others. He shines through us. The light we shine points others to Jesus, and then he can light up their path. It doesn't take much light to illuminate a path in the darkness.
4. Shining our light looks a lot like offering hospitality to others. Hospitality is not just offering a meal to someone in our home; it's the intentional warmth given to someone who comes near our space. When we set our hearts to interact with and warmly welcome others in our conversations, friend groups, study groups,

and lunch tables, we shine a light of hospitality. “We struggle to love the person in the group whose comments annoy us. We get frustrated when a sister or brother in Christ falls back into sin after disciplining them for months. We grow resistant to change when others decide to bring new people into the community. This is why the family of God is dependent on Jesus’s hospitality and not our own. Jesus did not come to serve and rescue those who were like Him. If so, none of us would have found belonging in the family of God. But Jesus came to rescue everyone, which allows us to fully extend ourselves in service to anyone. Our hospitality—our heart welcome—differentiates us from the welcome of the world; for we find life in giving it away and laying it down for the good of others” (Bailey T. Hurley, “Offering Hospitality,” *She Reads Truth*, accessed May 7, 2025, <https://shereadstruth.com/offering-hospitality/>).

5. Diffraction separates light into different colors, proving that a single white light contains many colors. This could be a good illustration to show that our simple acts of being a light for Jesus are actually more complex than we might think. “A diffraction grating is an optical component designed to disperse light by spatially separating different wavelengths. It typically consists of a surface with numerous closely spaced parallel lines or grooves that can either be reflective or transmissive. ... Diffraction gratings can occur in nature. Peacocks and some other bird species have feathers with natural diffraction grating capable of producing constructive interference, a phenomenon that leads to visible iridescence. Natural diffraction grating can also be seen in the antennae of seed shrimp and butterfly wings” (Jack Lasky, “Diffraction Grating,” 2022, <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/science/diffraction-grating>).
6. Shining our light at school, during clubs or afternoon sports, at our part-time jobs, and when we volunteer and study does not require huge acts. It requires simple acts. We can invite someone to sit with us at lunch, offer to help a classmate who is struggling in an area of academics or with a skill they’re trying to master, or stick around to help clean up after an activity.
7. You can show diffraction grating by hanging a CD or DVD up to a light. White light points at the disk, but a rainbow results.

#### **Week 4**

**Text:** Mark 4: 21–25; John 8:12

**Topics:** Light Shines, Hidden, Prominent

**Big Idea of the Message:** Lights shine best when they are not covered.

**Application Point:** Our tiny lights can cast far when they are lifted high and left uncovered.

#### **Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. “God expects a grateful return of his gifts to us, and a useful improvement of his gifts in us; for (v. 21), *Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed?* No, but that it may be set on a candlestick. The apostles were ordained, to receive the gospel, not for themselves only, but for the good of others, to

communicate it to them. All Christians, as they have *received the gift*, must *minister the same*. ... Many who are *lighted* as candles, put themselves *under a bed, or under a bushel*: they do not *manifest* grace themselves, nor *minister* grace to others; they have estates, and do no good with them; have their limbs and senses, wit and learning perhaps, but nobody is the better for them; they have spiritual gifts, but do not use them; like a taper in an urn, they burn to themselves. Those who are lighted as candles, should set themselves *on a candlestick*; that is, should improve all opportunities of doing good, as those that were made for the glory of God, and the service of the communities they are members of; we are not born for ourselves” (Matthew Henry, commentary on Mark 4, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar\\_004.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mar/Mar_004.cfm)).

2. “Light was an important symbol in the Feast of Tabernacles. During the feast, many emblems and ceremonies remembered the pillar of fire that gave light to Israel during the Exodus. Now, Jesus took this important symbol and simply applied it to Himself: I am the light of the world. Barclay and several others connects the light of the world sayings with a ceremony associated with the Feast of Tabernacles known as *The Illumination of the Temple*. ‘It was the custom during the first night, if not during every night, of the feast of tabernacles, to light up two large golden chandeliers in the court of the women, the light of which illuminated all Jerusalem. All that night they held a festal dance by the light.’ (Alford). ... ‘If a man could travel so fast as always to follow the sun, of course he would always be in the light. If the day should ever come when the speed of the railway shall be equal to the speed of the world’s motion, then a man may so live as to never lose the light. Now he that follows Christ shall never walk in darkness’ (Spurgeon)” (David Guzik, study guide for John 8, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik\\_david/study-guide/john/john-8.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/study-guide/john/john-8.cfm)).
3. Jesus’s light shining from within us is meant to help others to see. Jesus taught that we are to raise our lights up on a lampstand so they can cast far, bless others, and allow them to see Jesus in us.
4. “Delta flight 1218 will be specifically operated on an A220-300, which will offer especially premium viewing due to the aircraft’s extra-large windows. The flight will depart from Austin at 12:15 p.m. CT and land in Detroit at 4:20 p.m. ET—timed to give those on board the best chance of safely viewing the solar eclipse at its peak. ‘This flight is the result of significant collaboration and exemplifies the close teamwork Delta is known for—from selecting an aircraft with larger windows to determining the exact departure time from Austin and the experiences at the gate and in the air,’ said Eric Beck, Managing Director of Domestic Network Planning. ‘Thanks to teams across the company, the idea of viewing a total eclipse from the air will become a reality for our customers’” (“Eclipse Viewing at 30,000 Feet: Delta to Offer Path-of-Totally Flight,” *Delta News Hub*, February 19, 2024, <https://news.delta.com/eclipse-viewing-30000-feet-delta-offer-path-totality-flight>).
5. During a solar eclipse, the moon temporarily blocks the sun’s light. The absence of light shining causes a few distinct and noticeable changes. When we don’t shine our light to others, a distinct and noticeable change happens around us, too. “The most noticeable impact of a solar eclipse is a decrease in temperature.

As the Sun's rays are blocked, the ground loses its primary heat source. This cooling effect, similar to what happens at sunset, is most pronounced in areas experiencing totality, the path where the Moon completely covers the Sun. ... Based on past observations, temperature drops during totality typically range from 3°F to 5°F (1.7°C to 2.8°C). This might seem insignificant, but it's a measurable change considering it occurs in the middle of the day. ... The Sun's heat doesn't just warm the ground; it also influences atmospheric circulation. As the ground cools during a solar eclipse, the air above it becomes denser and tends to sink. This can lead to a temporary decrease in wind speed" (Anastasia M., "How Solar Eclipses Briefly Disrupt the Weather," December 18, 2024, <https://www.rainviewer.com/blog/how-solar-eclipses-briefly-disrupt-the-weather.html>). "A darkening sky and lowering of temperatures brought on by an eclipse can cause wildlife to shift their behavior to nighttime routines" ("Wildlife Behavior and a Solar Eclipse," US Fish & Wildlife Service, accessed May 7, 2025, <https://www.fws.gov/story/wildlife-behavior-and-solar-eclipse>).

6. A lighthouse provides a great example of raising a light above other things and keeping it uncovered. "The magnifying lens projects an intense beam of light that is visible up to 28 miles away. ... Every lighthouse emits a distinctive series of flashes known as its 'characteristic.' These flash sequences allow ship captains to time intervals between flashes so that they can identify lighthouses, using a publication called the Light List. This publication assigns a number to each lighted beacon and describes its identifying characteristics. Flash sequences include the following: fixed, occulting, flashing, isophase, group flashing, alternating, and Morse code" ("Lighthouse Facts," The Lighthouse Preservation Society, accessed May 7, 2025, <https://lighthousepreservation.org/facts/>).
7. Place a lit candle (in a candle holder) on the floor and note how far the light shines on the floor. Place a piece of tape on the floor to mark the line of light. Then, raise the same light to a much higher surface and mark the light on the floor again. Also pay attention to how the walls are lit differently with the different placement of the light. Observe that a candle that has been raised can light up much more. Compare this to how we are to place our lights on lampstands and keep them uncovered for all to see.

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