

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## **82. How to Brighten Your Corner of the World**

You are listening to episode 82 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, How to Brighten Your Corner of the World. Welcome to the podcast! I'm thrilled you are here. Today in this episode we are exploring the idea of brightening our own corners of the world, because frankly, there's a whole lot of darkness present these days, don't you agree? God calls us to be lights in this world for Him, and we're taking a look at how to do that today. So, if you're ready for a dose of happy and a spurring on to make a difference in this world, I invite you to hang with me here for this next short while. I can't wait to get into this episode with you. Ready? Let's get to it.

I appreciate the sun. The warmth it gives, the light it shines, the boost it gives my attitude. The sun brightens our world! When it's absent, however, I might appreciate it even more. Because not all days can be sunny days, right? Not all days can be full of rainbows and butterflies. Even if we desire them to be. In last week's episode we discussed how the days of winter can feel dark and drab without the sun's warming light. Maybe it's been a cloudy, dreary, rainy season where you are, and maybe you're ready for some sun.

Sure, we are to expect dreary and rainy days every now and then. But wouldn't it be great if you could brighten your corner of the world today, no matter if the sun is out or not? Wouldn't it be nice if we had a way to create the warmth, the light, the boost the sun gives? Especially on the cloudy, rainy, dreary days? Well, friend, I believe we can. I believe you and I can shine light into our own corners of the world and also into the lives of others. I believe we can brighten the world right where we are today.

But how?

### **How can you brighten your corner of the world today?**

On the days when clouds cover the sky, we know the sun is still shining, right? We just can't see it. The clouds block our view of the sun. So, even on cloudy days we can remember the sun is shining, somewhere. And even though we may want it to shine where we are, we can find encouragement remembering it is still shining.

I relate this to my relationship with God. I can't see Him with my eyes, yet I know He's present in my life. Sometimes the clouds—or the obstacles in my life—block my perspective of God. Sometimes I focus more on the clouds than on Him, and when I do that, well, the days become dreary, dark, and gloomy.

### **It matters what I focus on.**

Is my focus on the sun or the clouds? Is my focus on the Son or the obstacles?

I believe God designed us to shine. He designed us to be His vessels of light, to shine His light through us and into this world.

And you, *beloved*, are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. Similarly it would be silly to light a lamp and then hide it under a bowl. When someone lights a lamp, she puts it on a table or a desk or a chair, and the light illumines the entire house. *You are like that illuminating light*. Let your light shine everywhere you go, *that you may illumine creation*, so men and women everywhere may see your good actions, *may see creation at its fullest, may see your devotion to Me*, and may turn and praise your Father in heaven *because of it*. Matthew 5:14-16 VOICE

The thing is though, we aren't called just to brighten our corner of the world just for us, no. We are to shine His light wherever we go, to impact the lives of others, and to shine so God is glorified. God does the illuminating, and we just simply shine. Because He is the light of life.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 ESV

And when we shine God's light in our corners of the world, it's no match for any darkness.

His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it. John 1:5 TLB

**I believe we each desire to shine His light in this world and in the lives of those around us, right?**

And I think the Matthew 5:14-16 passage I just referenced has the answer of how. Let's follow that.

**We can be a light.**

We can't shine for very long or very bright without God's light shining in us. Like a lamp that needs to be plugged into a power outlet to brighten a room, we, too, must be plugged into our power Source to shine bright. The more we stay "plugged in" to our Source, the brighter and longer we can shine. How? We can read our Bibles or our Bible apps or a devotional. We can pray and spend time talking with God and worshipping Him. Just spending time with God brightens our lives.

**We can shine wherever we go.**

This verse in Matthew encourages us to shine everywhere we go. Sure, this world may be dark and gloomy, or it may just be a cloudy day. Either way, we all need God's light to shine in this world. For ourselves and others. We can offer our smiles to other people, or hold the door open for another, or give someone else the closer parking spot. We can even send an encouraging text to someone who needs some encouragement. This day is filled with opportunities to shine, even if we're just staying home for the day.

**We can appreciate God's creation.**

God's creation is beautiful and amazing, isn't it? When we think about all God created: the universe, earth, sky, land, people, pets, plants, etc., we have many opportunities to give glory to God. We don't worship the created, we worship the Creator. But we can take care of His creation and enable it to flourish and thrive. How about picking up a bouquet of flowers at the flower shop for your home? Or how about planting a flower or green plant? Maybe making a meal for a neighbor or taking a long walk outdoors? Even the acts of simply caring for what God has given you is appreciating God's creation and brightening our corners of the world.

### **We can be examples.**

Speaking of God's creation, He created you to be you and me to be me. We aren't designed to be anyone else but who He wants us to be. And since we are like that illuminating light referenced in this Matthew passage, let's picture ourselves, each holding a candle. We look over at the person next to us and realize her candle isn't lit. So, we reach over and light her candle. Then she does the same thing and lights the candle of the person next to her. As this continues, it doesn't take long for the room to be bright with light as each person's candle is lit by another. How about we be the ones to start the chain reaction? When others follow your example and mine, light replaces the darkness!

“Just as one candle lights another and can light thousands of other candles, so one heart illuminates another heart and can illuminate thousands of other hearts.”— Leo Tolstoy

### **We can care for ourselves.**

This one isn't listed in the verses above, but we can't brighten our corners of the world if we aren't taking care of ourselves. This means pausing and resting, taking time for ourselves. Making time to fill ourselves back up, to read, to write, to create, to breathe. Doing something that brings us joy. Eating healthy, drinking a glass of water. Filling our minds with good things. Taking a leisurely walk. Caring for ourselves isn't an option to brighten our corners of the world.

### **Our world can use some brightening today, don't you think?**

How do you plan to brighten your corner of the world? It doesn't have to be big or bold to make a difference, but anything you do for God and His glory will shed light beyond what you can see now.

Let's shine God's light into this world and make it a brighter place. It all begins with God and how He shines through you and me. No matter if the sun is shining or not.

We are continuing this conversation over in our private Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook this week. Come on over to join in the conversation as we discuss more about brightening your corner of the world. This community is full of blessing and encouragement, and it's a welcoming space to grow in your faith. The link to this group is in the show notes.

Also, if you found encouragement in this episode, would you please rate it and/or review it from where you're listening today? This will help others find this encouragement too. And so you never miss a new episode, be sure to subscribe to the podcast.

God fills us with His light so we can turn around and shine it wherever we go. I pray we do that today and this week, friend. I encourage you to get creative to find ways brighten your corner of the world, and I'll do the same over here. You and I can make a difference for good. Let's do it together. Thank you for being here. Shine bright, friend. God bless you!

Links in this episode

- Episode 81, [How to Stay Encouraged When Winter Feels Long](#)
- [Matthew 5:14-16](#) VOICE
- [John 8:12](#) ESV

- [John 1:5 TLB](#)
- [Leo Tolstoy quote](#)
- [Encouragement for Real Life Community](#)
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*Julie Lefebvre*