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SHINING LIGHT

The Apostle Paul's encouraging letter to the Philippian church contains inspiring jewels of thought, designed to give his readers incentive to "keep on keeping on" as they live their lives for the Lord.

Because God has begun His good work in their lives and promised to complete it (Philippians 1:6), they can work out what He works in them (Philippians 2:12-13). Now in 2:15 he encourages them to live as **"children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."**

"Children of God" are those who have been born again by believing in Jesus as Savior and Lord, having been adopted into God's family, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live their new lives for the Lord.

The Apostle echoes the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:14, **"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."** God's light shows us the way through the dark and twisted world in which we live. But it's not "our" own light that shines. It's the light of Jesus THROUGH us! Paul continues his sentence in Philippians 2:16, **"you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the Word of life."**

How? In John 8:12 Jesus said, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."** Jesus is the light. He illuminates our way. And we shine His light to all around us, as we walk in His light. Read John 1:1-13. It says, **"In the beginning was the Word... in Him was life, and the life was the light of men."** The living Word (Jesus) gives you life and light. You are "born again" as His child, by putting your trust in Him. And then as you live for Him, then His life and His light then shines through you.

How? 2:16 **"children of God...as lights in the world, holding fast the Word of life."** As you read and understand and live out the Word of God, it changes your thinking and your living. God's light of truth dispels the darkness of sin and the lies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. God's light shines light and life into your life. And He shines His light through you, as you live out His Word of truth.

Really? Yes! Paul again holds himself out as an example of this transforming grace of God. Not only himself, but also his faithful companions Timothy and Epaphroditus, both well-known to the Philippians. Paul is so sure of God's promise to complete the good work He has begun in changing lives, that he tells them he is willing for his own life to be **"poured out"** as a sacrificial offering.

And he reminds them of Timothy, who is **"genuinely concerned for your welfare"** (2:19). He's an example of someone with the **"mind of Christ"** who does not seek His own interests, but rather those of the Lord Jesus. He's a living example of what Paul wrote in chapter 2:3-5.

Likewise, Paul points to Epaphroditus. He delivered the gift from the Philippians, and he has just delivered the Philippian letter, as Paul sends him back to minister to them. Paul calls him **"my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister"** (2:25-30)

Paul and Timothy and Epaphroditus are willing to serve as examples, role models, sacrificing their lives for the Lord. The Philippians personally know how each one shone as lights in a dark world. In the same way, they encourage YOU to likewise trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that His light shines through you.

You also are probably thinking now of people that God has placed as shining lights in your life, to encourage you to follow Him in the same way -- with the light of Jesus shining through you.

So how about it? Whose light are you shining ?