

## making an *impact*

**Leviticus 11:45** - For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

The Hebrew word translated "holy" from the text literally means to be **set apart**. As followers of Christ, we are *set apart* from the world. The way we act and the things we say and what we believe and the priorities we hold **set us apart** from the world. *But Why do we have to be different? Why does God make us stand out so much?* Let us look further into this idea and see that this is no mere coincidence or purposeless thing, but a fulfillment of God's **ultimate** plan.

**Romans 1:1-6** - Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding His Son, who as to His human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Him and for His name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

God's plan for us to be holy, to be set apart and called apart from the world, is nothing new, but part of His plan to spread the good news. Since (before) the beginning this has been His plan, and we are called to be holy, set apart, for the gospel. *But why?*

**Matthew 5:13-16** - "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Jesus explains to us this purpose: we are set apart, for the gospel, so that the light of Christ can shine through us, that those in the world will see us standing apart, come to know Christ, and glorify God. **1 Peter 2:11-17.**

**Ephesians 2:10** - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God has prepared these works for us, that we might further the gospel through them. People see us and notice us; the fact that there is something different about us. And it's true, we **are** different; but *why?* Because Jesus Christ **lives** in us! We are not set apart or holy because we're good people or we have good morals or do good works, but because Christ *makes* us holy. And His light shines through us.

Many people say 'actions speak louder than words.' I guess that's pretty accurate. Nobody's going to listen to a hypocrite and we certainly don't want to be one. Someone can say really great things, but not live those things out in their lives. It's easy to say and think about some of the things we're told to believe, but will we hear (attend to) the word of God? Can we let our actions reflect our beliefs? Let's try, God will help. He wants us to make an *impact*.

Now, that *is* a good saying, but I've set for myself a better one: '*actions accompanied by words speak the loudest.*' When we live out the love of Christ in our lives and people see that there is something greater in our lives, they are going to want to know more, they are going to want to listen to the words we have to say, the words we have been given by God. Let's **practice** what we *preach*, and **preach** what we *practice*. We're going to continue to talk about these two main ideas specifically over the next couple of weeks: how we make an impact through our words *and* our actions - this is God's will for us. Consider the example of Jesus. He was a servant of all, met the needs of the people, and they listened to His words. With His actions He showed the world that He was of God, and then when He spoke, people listened to the word of God.

**Romans 12:9-21** - *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore*

*"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;  
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."*

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

This is a good example of the way our **actions** can affect the world! Through our actions we can make an *impact* on those around us, this is God's design!

**Matthew 10:27-33** - "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."

Here Jesus gives us another example of how our **words** can affect the world. Remember, God's word is powerful, and whenever it is read or spoken or heard, it alone affects the world in a big way. We will discuss this in detail later. Let's talk about Light.

**John 1:1-5** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

**John 8:12** - Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

**1 John 1:5-7** - This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Let us look back to **Matthew 5**. We are the **salt** of the earth, we are the **light** of the world! We make the world *taste* better! We are the light in a dark place. When we allow it, the light, the love of Christ, shines through us and rests on those in the world, that they may come to know Him.

**Revelation 1:20** - The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

We *are* **lampstands**! Together we let our light shine before the world so that ultimately, God can be glorified. Jesus has called us to follow Him. And this is our purpose: to glorify Him through our lives, to present ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice, and along the way, we make an *impact* on the world around us.

Read **John 15:13** and **1 John 3:16**

I do hope all is well and that we are able to give all our worries up to God that He may work through us. Like always, if you need any guidance or have any questions, I'm happy to serve you as a fellow child of God.

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