Discipleship 201

Session 3: *Let Your Light Shine*

Matthew 5:14-16

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 25:25

And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground.

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.

Summary:

Jesus tells each of his disciples that they are the light of the world. There are no exceptions given; each one of us is meant to shine! You are meant to shine. Jesus points out how ridiculous it would be for someone who needs light to light a lamp and then hide it under a bowl.

This is a powerful metaphor because I believe Jesus was looking at humanity and seeing how many people are like that light, hiding under a bowl. Not children, though. When we are children, we shine naturally. But as we grow older, we become self-conscious, we are criticized, we get embarrassed, and gradually the darkness of fear takes over our hearts. So many people today are living under a bowl, hiding their light, playing it safe lest their feelings get hurt yet again.

But this is not God’s will for you. When you become a disciple of Jesus, it is part of the process that He will help you to shine your light once again. He will gradually replace the fear that dominates your every decision with a powerful love that unleashes your creativity and God-given personality. He wants nothing more and nothing less than to help you truly be the unique person he made you to be.

Poem:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,
talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other
people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory of
God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others."
— Marianne Williamson

Discussion Questions:

What percentage of your own self do you think you let shine? What percentage do you keep hidden?

What does "letting your light shine" mean to you? How would you describe someone who is letting their light shine?

Can you think of anyone you know who let's their light shine? What are they like?

How much does fear of what others may think affect the decisions you make about your life?

What is one area of your life that you think could shine more?

Homework:

Your **practice** for this week is to set aside a minimum of 15 minutes each day to reflect on the following Scripture.

Day 1: Reflect on Matthew 5:14-16. Write a description of yourself when you are feeling at your very best. What are you like?

Day 2: Read the poem included in this study guide. Write a reflection on how the poem relates to your life?

Day 3: Reflect on 1 John 4:18. At your core self, do you feel you are motivated more by love or by fear?

Day 4: Reflect on Matthew 5:14-16. How does letting your light shine bring glory to God? Do you think there are people are you in darkness, who need your light?

Day 5: Reflect on Matthew 5:14-16. How does being a light bless other people?