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God's Way to Make a Difference

Matthew 5:13-16

There are people in the world who never open a Bible. Still, they are forming impressions about God every time they meet a Christian. You may be the only Bible that someone will read.

GROUP DISCUSSION. Who has been like a Bible for you, showing in their life what God is like? What did that person say or do that showed God to you?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. In what ways have Christians had a positive influence on society?

What possible influence could the people described in the Beatitudes exert in this hard, tough world? What lasting good can the poor and the meek do, the mourners and the merciful—those who seek peace and not war? Would they not be overwhelmed by the flood of evil? What can they accomplish—whose only passion is righteousness and whose only weapon is purity of heart? Are not such people too feeble to achieve anything? Jesus does not share this skepticism, as this passage demonstrates. He expects us to have a profound influence on those around us. *Read Matthew 5:13-16.*

1. What positive qualities of salt and light do you think Jesus had in mind as he spoke these words?

2. Before refrigeration, salt was used to keep meat from rotting. What then does Jesus' statement "You are the salt of the earth" (v. 13) tell us about society and the church's role in it?

3. What has been in the news lately that indicates society is rotting and decaying?

4. What are some practical ways we can function as salt where we live and work (v. 13)?

5. What might cause Christians to lose their saltiness (v. 13)?

6. Jesus' second statement is "You are the light of the world" (v. 14). As salt we prevent decay, the spread of evil. How does the church's role as light complement its role as salt?

7. How can we positively promote the spread of truth in the world?

8. Why might we be tempted to hide our light (v. 15)?

9. What is the result, according to Jesus, of people seeing our good deeds (v. 16)?

10. What examples can you think of where the work of Christians has brought people closer to God?

11. What relationship do you see between the Beatitudes and our role as salt and light in society?

12. What is one way you can begin having a stronger influence as salt and as light?

Pray for the areas of rotteness in our world and for your ability to shine the light of truth.

Now or Later

Make plans with your small group (or on your own) to do a “salt and light” project. You could organize a clean up project in the city, serve in a soup kitchen, visit a nursing home or distribute Bibles in your dorm.