



May 2011

Shine in Love

Philippians 2:15 says, “That ye may be blameless and harmless the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” How can we “shine as lights” in such a dark and sinful world? We can share God’s love with one another..

DRAW NEAR —*Worship and and prepare your heart to hear from God’s Word.*

Share prayer requests and lead girls in prayer. Play worship music of your choice and prepare your hearts to hear from God’s Word.

Suggested Songs:

“This Little Light of Mine” – Addison Road

“Love Has Come” – Mark Schultz

“Taken By Love” – Kutless

“If We Are the Body” – Casting Crowns

“Amazing Love” – Bebo Norman

GO DEEP —*Dig into the Bible to learn truths from God’s Word.*

I am sitting at my computer after almost three days without electricity. Over 200 people in my city are missing. Houses have been destroyed. The hospitals are so full that they have had to turn people away. People have been killed.

It is a fact that I live in a broken and hurting world. On Wednesday, April 27, several deadly tornadoes tore through the southern United States. They left miles of destruction behind them. Now that the storms are over, there are people throughout my city and state who are left with nothing.

How can I shine in such a dark circumstance? By sharing God’s love with the hurting people around me.

What is Love?

Paul described it like this in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never fails...”

This is not your typical hearts and flowers, romantic comedy kind of love. What Paul is talking about here is true, pure love. It is patient and kind. It does not envy, is not proud or boastful. It is not selfish and is not easily angered. It thinks no evil thoughts. It celebrates the truth. It withstands all trials. It is filled with hope and it doesn’t give up. This love never fails.

This kind of love is not something that comes naturally to us humans. It is a fruit of Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)—a kind of love we can only get from God. It is the kind of love God has for us—the kind of love Jesus felt when He died on the cross for our sins.

I love how the KJV uses the word “charity” in Paul’s letter to the people at Corinth. When we think about giving to a charity, we usually don’t expect to get anything in return, right? We give charity to people who sometimes don’t deserve it. We sacrifice when we give to charity—with our time, money or both.

This love is charity. It is unconditional. It expects nothing in return. It is often not deserved. And sometimes, we must make sacrifices to share it with others. It is a kind of love both hard to understand and hard to share. But Jesus commanded us to try.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus told His disciples, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Jesus commanded us not only to love one another, but to love *as He has loved us*.

Ephesians 5:1-2 says, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children: And *walk in love*, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God...” John 15:13 says, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Jesus loved us enough to give His life for us. We do not deserve His love, but He loves us anyway. We don’t always love Him back, but He loves us anyway. Sometimes we are hard to love, but He loves us anyway.

Do you know that you are a beloved daughter of the King of Kings? God loves you more than you can even imagine, and more than most of us can ever understand. He has filled His Word with love letters for you, His princess.

Fill in your name in the love letter below.

Dear _____,

Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, _____. You are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be there with you. And through the rivers? Don’t worry; they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire you won’t be burned. The flames? They won’t even scorch you. I am the Lord your God! _____, don’t grow weary in doing good, for you will reap in due time, if you do not lose heart. Pretty Princess, I know the thoughts I think towards you. They are thoughts of peace and not evil; they will give you hope and future. Just seek me with ALL of your heart—every bit of it—and you will find me. Today I want you to act justly, walk humbly, and love mercy!

Love,

Your Father in Heaven

(Adapted from from Isaiah 43:1-3, Galatians 6:9, Jeremiah 29:11-13 and Micah 6:8. Prayer by Tacy Merchant. *)

God—the Creator of the Universe, the King of Kings, the Alpha and the Omega—*loves* you. And He wants you to share His love with others.

In the last few days, I have seen some of God’s people do an extraordinary job of demonstrating His love. Churches all around my town have come together to provide disaster relief, food, shelter, financial and emotional support and prayer for the people affected by the recent storms. One church in town was actually hit by the tornado, and most of the church building was destroyed, but their members have been working constantly out of a trailer in their parking lot to supply others with water, food and first aid. These people have experienced a huge loss of their own, but they are still serving others. The only way to explain their selfless acts is God’s love.

The outpouring of love in the communities around me has been inspiring. It is so good to see God’s people doing what Jesus would do. But sharing God’s love is not just something we do when bad things happen. Sharing God’s love is something we should do every single day.

1 John 4:11 says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

The Bible is filled with commandments for us to “shine” with God’s love. Why? Because it is a love that reaches into the broken places of people’s hearts. It is a love so unselfish that it can often not be explained. It is a love the world longs to know. And it is up to us, God’s princesses, to share that love with the world.

Won’t you let His love shine through you today?

GET REAL—*Apply God’s Word to your life.*

Wondering how you can shine as a light in a dark world? Do you want to show God’s love to the people around you, in all circumstances?

Take a few minutes to fill in the chart on the next page. Then talk with your group about ways you can “shine as light” for the people you listed.

PEOPLE WITH WHOM I CAN SHARE GOD'S LOVE

AT HOME, SCHOOL OR CHURCH

IN MY COMMUNITY

IN MY STATE AND COUNTRY

AROUND THE WORLD

Sharing God's love is a commandment for every day. Never underestimate the power of a kind word or a smile. The little things sometimes mean the most.

NOTES: _____

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Christina Hopper is 24 years old and attends Sulphur Springs FWB Church in Northport, Alabama where she teaches the Junior Youth Group. She asks for you to join her in prayer for the victims of the severe storms that have devastated the south. She welcomes questions and comments on her Facebook page or through email at cmhopper.warrior@gmail.com.

*Tacy Merchant who wrote the love letter in this study is Christina's friend.