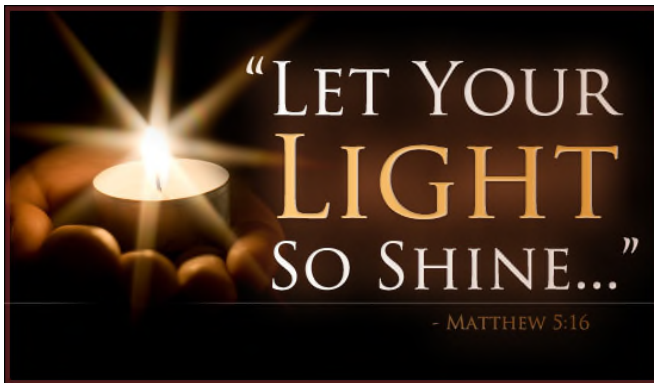


## SOUTH COAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Ordinary people* “continually praising” *an extraordinary God*

Blair Parkes writes “In a world that is filled with darkness, believers are to be the lights shining through the darkness to lead people not only to safety but to the arms of Jesus.” This is beautifully explained in Blair Parkes following article

### How Can We "Let Our Light Shine"? by Blair Parke



It has been said that when people are filled with the Holy Spirit, have a thriving relationship with God, and/or seek each day to follow the example of Jesus Christ, there is a significant glow about them. There is a difference in their steps, personalities, service to others, and handling of problems.

How does this “glow” or difference change us and what are we supposed to do about it? The Bible has several scriptures to describe how people are changed from the inside out when they become Christians, but this one verse, stated from the lips of Jesus Himself, seems to epitomize exactly what we are to do with this inner change.

In [Matthew 5:16](#), the verse states the following: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Although this verse may seem cryptic, it is actually pretty self-explanatory. So, let’s unpack this verse more

in the introduction. It is that positive change within you; that contentment; that inner peacefulness (even when chaos is all around you) that you just can’t contain with subtlety or oblivion.

The light is your understanding that God is your Father, Jesus is your Saviour, and your path is being led forward by the loving involvement of the Holy Spirit. It is the awareness that what you were before knowing Jesus personally, and accepting His sacrifice, is nothing like what you are now. You treat yourself and others better, as you understand more and more that God loves you and will provide for all your needs.

This understanding becomes evident to us as the “light” inside you, as the light of thankfulness that Jesus saved you and that you have hope in God to face whatever the day may bring. Issues that seemed like mountains to scale become more like conquerable foothills when you know God is your guide. So, when you let your light shine, it is this blatant awareness of who the Trinity is to you that becomes evident in your words, actions, and thoughts.

### To Whom Is Jesus Speaking Here?

Jesus shares this amazing insight recorded in [Matthew 5](#) with His disciples, which also includes the eight beatitudes. This conversation with the disciples came after Jesus healed a multitude throughout Galilee and was taking a peaceful rest from the crowds on a mountain.

Jesus tells the disciples that all believers are “the salt and light of the world” ([Matt. 5:13-14](#)) and that they are like a “city on a hill that cannot be hidden” ([Matt. 5:14](#)). He continues the verse by saying that believers were meant to be like lights for lamps that weren’t meant to be hidden under a basket, but placed on lampstands to light the way for all ([Matt. 5:15](#)).

### What Did the Verse Mean for Those Listening to Jesus?

This verse was part of several words of wisdom Jesus offered to His disciples, where it is revealed later, in [Matthew 7:28-29](#), that those listening “were

astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

Jesus knew what was in store for not only His disciples, but also for those that would later accept Him because of His sacrifice on the cross. He knew troubling times were ahead and that we needed to be lights in those times in order for others to survive and thrive.

In a world that is filled with darkness, believers are to be the lights shining through the darkness to lead people not only to safety but to the arms of Jesus.

As Jesus experienced with the Sanhedrin, who ultimately carved the path to Him being crucified on the cross, we as believers will also struggle against a world that will try to take away our light or claim it is false and not of God.

Our lights are our purposes that God has established in our lives, part of His plan to bring believers to His kingdom and eternity in heaven. When we accept these purposes — these callings in our lives — our wicks are lit inside and shine through us for others to see.



#### Is This Verse Translated Differently in Other Versions?

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven,” is [Matthew 5:16](#) from the New King James Version, which is the same phrasing that can be seen in the King James Version of the Bible.

Some translations of the verse have some subtle differences from the KJV/NKJV translations, such as New International Version (NIV) and New American Standard Bible (NASB).

Other translations, such as the Amplified Bible, redefined “good works” mentioned in the verse to “good deeds and moral excellence” and that these deeds glorify, recognize, and honour God. The Message Bible elaborates even more on the verse and what is asked of us: “Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”

However, all the translations say the same sentiment of shining your light through good works so others see and recognize what God is doing through you.

#### How Can We Be a Light to the World Today?

Now more than ever, we are called to be lights to a world struggling against physical and spiritual forces like never before. Especially as we currently deal with issues involving our health, identities, finances, and government, our presence as lights for God is so important.

Some believe that grandiose acts are what it means to be lights for Him. But at times it is little acts of faith that most show others of God’s love and provision for all of us.

Some ways we can be lights to the world today include encouraging others during their trials and hardships through phone calls, text messages, or face-to-face interaction. Other ways could be using your skills and talents for the community or in ministry, such as singing in the choir, working with children, helping the elderly, and maybe even taking the pulpit to preach a sermon. Being a light means allowing others to come into contact with that light through service and connection, offering the opportunity to share with them how you have the joy of Jesus to help you through the trials and heartache.

As you shine your light for others to see, you will also see that it becomes less and less about getting recognition for what you have done and more about how you can direct that praise back to God. For if it wasn’t for Him, you wouldn’t be in a place where you

could shine your light and serve others in love to Him. Because of who He is, you have become the Christ follower that you are.

### Shine Your Own Light

[Matthew 5:16](#) is one verse that has been treasured and loved by many for years, explaining who we are in Christ and how what we do for Him brings glory and love to God our Father.

As Jesus shared these truths to His followers, they could see He was different from others who preached for their own glory. His own shining light was lit to direct people back to God the Father and all He is for us.

We embody the same light when we share God's love with others as Jesus did, serving them with peaceful hearts and directing them toward God's provision and mercy. As we shine our lights, let us be thankful for the opportunities we have to be these beacons of hope for people and glorify God in heaven.

*Blair Parke is a freelance writer for BibleStudyTools.com and editor for Xulon Press.*

## PRAYER



## MUSIC

Shine Jesus Shine, Graham Kendrick's best-known song was written in 1987 and has proved to be enduringly popular all round the world.

<https://youtu.be/FuW20MYAK4>

Shine Jesus Shine'

Lord, the light of your love is shining  
In the midst of the darkness, shining  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us  
Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine  
Fill this land with the Father's glory  
Blaze, Spirit, blaze  
Set our hearts on fire  
Flow, river, flow  
Flood the nations with grace and mercy  
Send forth your word  
Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence  
From the shadows into your radiance  
By the blood I may enter your brightness  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness  
Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
So our faces display your likeness  
Ever changing from glory to glory  
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story  
Shine on me, shine on me.

Copyright © 1987 Make Way Music,



## RECIPE

Something simple today and with chocolate – who can resist a little chocolate treat.





## INGREDIENTS

Serves: 12

- 200g (7 oz) plain flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 2 egg whites
- 225g (8 oz) mashed bananas
- 150g (5 oz) caster sugar
- 4 tablespoons apple sauce
- 75g (3 oz) chocolate chips

## Method

Prep:10min › Cook:20min › Ready in:30min

1. Preheat the oven to 200 C / Gas mark 6. Grease a 12-cup muffin tin, or line with paper bun cases.
2. Mix flour, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, salt and sugar. Mix in egg whites, apple sauce and banana until just moistened. Stir in chocolate chips. Pour into muffin cups.
3. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes in preheated oven, or until a skewer inserted in the centre of a muffin comes out clean.

### Tip:

Rather than muffins, this can also be made into a loaf. Pour batter into a 20x10cm (8x4 in) loaf tin, and bake at 180 C / Gas mark 4 for 45 to 50 minutes.

## BIBLE TRIVIA

1. Whose father tied him up and put him on the alter as a sacrifice until Jehovah provided a sheep?

Answer:

2. Who is the wife of Jacob?

Answer: