

EXERCISE:

Study the life and the heart-attitude of Stephen and Philip.



Acts 6,7



Acts 8

What do you learn from Stephen?

Read the two chapters and what the stories tell us about the command he was given.

What do you learn as he is persecuted?

What do you learn from Philip?

What do you learn from Stephen and Philip for your own life?



Matt 5:14-16

Read Jesus' instructions. Now apply it to your own life. Ask yourself four questions:

1. Is there a word from God for me personally in this text?
2. Is there a promise from the Father for my life?
3. Is Jesus asking me to apply anything to my life?
4. Decide today to do something with this and ask Jesus to help you with this.

Going deeper

In Matt 5:13,14 Jesus plants an important seed for the kingdom of God culture. He tells his disciples that they are salt and light.

This is the culture within which the seed bears fruit.

What does Jesus mean by salt and light?

Salt brings flavour and prevents deterioration.



2 Kings 2:19-21

This event involving Elisha and the stream is an example of what Jesus means when he talks about the fact we are the salt of the world. The words which Jesus spoke bring life and purify our lives. His words in us make a difference to the people around us and how we treat the people around us. People can see that our lives are different. It brings 'flavour' wherever we are. Just like when you add salt to food.

Natasja

When she heard that her mother had become a Christian she made a decision to radically look in to her Muslim faith and to do what the Koran taught her. She started off fanatically but then she started noticing how her mother was changing. She then decided to investigate faith in Jesus. She eventually reached the decision to allow Jesus in to her life.

Just as she had radically read the Koran, she now started confessing her new faith. Her friends and family soon recognised that Natasja was changing. In everything she said and did she was a new person. Shortly a member of the family in Iran noticed via internet that Natasja had gotten to know God in a very special way. He became very curious and not much later also decided to become a follower of Jesus Christ. He had had a taste of it. His father, mother and brothers also needed to hear this.

It was really special to see how the words of Jesus brought such a change in Natasja's family without them even having met up with each other.

Let your light shine

Why could the people not look at Moses when he came down from the mountain?



Ex 34:27-35

What happened to Jesus when he went up the mountain with his disciples?



Matt 17:1,2

Jesus calls himself the light of the world



John 8:12, John 9:5

In these texts we read that when we come into contact with God, His presence changes us. Moses and Jesus were illuminated by God's presence and that was visible on their faces.

Two children

I have twice seen how God encountered two of my children and how clearly evident that was on their faces.

The first time was when we left our son with a babysitter he didn't know. He was pretty fearful when we left him in that unfamiliar house. As a Dad I felt unsettled and was therefore glad when we returned from our evening spent evangelizing. When I walked into the room in which my son was sleeping he was sitting straight up in bed. His face was radiant. There was not a trace of fear. He said that whilst we were gone, three shining men came in to his room. They were radiant with light. One of the men told my son that he was Jesus and that he did not need to be afraid.

For weeks after he talked about this and his face shone as he did so.

Years later my oldest daughter went to Bolivia. She was going to work in a home for street children. She went there unable to speak the language. The first few weeks were extremely difficult for her. We also as parents were initially very concerned for our daughter. And yet the Spirit of God kept encouraging us to let her go and place her in God's hands. During that period of nine months she regularly experienced God's presence and I remember her arriving at Amsterdam airport, absolutely radiant. This glorious light remained on her face for a long time.

What does the light of God, the light of Jesus, do in our lives?



John 1:4-18

Here Jesus is called light but also the word that has become flesh. We know that where there is light, darkness disappears. In this way the word of God came to this world to make the truth about God known. The truth that God is not bad, but GOOD! The truth that he did not come to judge the world but to save us. These words bring truth and light into your life.



John 3:19-21

When Jesus shines His light in to you, darkness disappears. This light comes by his words, sometimes directly, sometimes through others. It brings to light and exposes the things in your heart which keep you from getting close to God. In fact, everything which causes affliction and darkness to enter your heart is shown up by this light enabling you to then set about dealing with it.




2 Cor 4:4-6, 6:14

The god of this world leads us into darkness by our thoughts. If Jesus has become Lord of your life then he will bring about the opposite. His words bring light in your heart and your

thoughts shall be renewed. The thoughts of Jesus set you free from being blinded.

What happens once we have experienced this light in our life?


 Acts 13:26, Rom 13:12

Once the light has entered you, you start to be a light for others.

Candles


There are people who try to give light but they are like a candle which is not lit. It just does not work. An unlit candle does not give light. Everyone knows that. And so it is with us as Christians, followers of the king. You first need to receive the light, his words, in your heart, you need to be with him and let his presence illuminate you. People will definitely see then that you are different. The light in you, his words of good news, will bring light to others.


Does everyone see the light?

 John 3:19-21

Unfortunately not everyone loves the light. Some prefer darkness and want to stay in it.

EXERCISE

 Take time to be in the presence of God. You could put some worship music on, for example. Try and forget everything around you and let the light of God come in to your heart.

 Respond to what He shows you.