



Discussion Guide

June 10, 2018

Contrast: Shine

Introduction: Read II Corinthians 3:1-18 together.

Nicholas Kristof – New York Times – March 28, 2015

Today, among urban Americans and Europeans, “evangelical Christian” is sometimes a synonym for “rube.” In liberal circles, evangelicals constitute one of the few groups that it’s safe to mock openly. Yet the liberal caricature of evangelicals is incomplete and unfair. I must say that a disproportionate share of the aid workers I’ve met in the wildest places over the years, long after anyone sensible had evacuated, have been evangelicals, nuns or priests. These are folks who don’t so much proclaim the gospel as live it. They deserve better.

Unbelievers are favorably impressed when God shines through our lives in genuine and positive ways.

Discussion Questions

1. Exodus 33 & 34. As Moses spent time in the presence of God, his face physically lit up. It is perhaps safe to say that as we spend time with God in his Word, in prayer, and in acts of obedience, our lives light up with godliness. How much time would you estimate that you spend in any of those 3 encounters [Word, prayer, obedience] with God each week? Can you see God “shining” in your life as you do?
2. Don’t worry if this feels like self-promotion to you – you are among friends. Can you describe a time when someone has commented on how nice or how good or how thoughtful you are, which you knew had everything to do with the fact that you are a Christian? Were you able to give Jesus the credit for that? Realistically, does that seem an awkward thing to do, to say such things to people?

3. The law of Moses contained 613 commands, give or take a few. Jesus gave several commands in our new covenant agreement, but the three that stand out form the Mission Statement for Parkside. We exist to love God, love people, and help others do the same. Matthew 22:35-40 Great Command. Matthew 28:19-20 Great Commission. In a typical day, how often does this mission occur to you, as to how you live, act and conduct yourself? How do you put it into action each day?

4. Sample scenario. You are with a group of friends who are commenting on the recent celebrity suicides. At the height of what seemed on the outside to be enviable lives well lived, Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain chose to end it all. Why? As a Christ-follower, how do you insert the hope, optimism, and confidence that comes with knowing Christ, that might prevent such tragedies? [being careful not to pass judgment on these two celebrities.]

www.forbes.com/sites/hennainam/2018/06/10/anthony-bourdain-kate-spade-and-the-question-of-why/#714b6e64b7c5.

5. Bart made the comment on Sunday that 8 baptisms since the first of the year should be a much greater number. Parkside is a good church full of good people doing good things. What is missing that more people are not coming and turning to Christ because of this sincere and authentic goodness of our church?

Moving Forward:

Staff and Elders will be coming together on July 14 to plot a better strategy for Parkside, one that will result in more people in our community coming to know Christ. Will you pray just now about the success of that one-day retreat, and pray in advance as to how you and your group will be a part of efforts moving forward? Please set the alarm on your phone to 7:14 [a.m. or p.m.] and pray for this retreat each day.