

### INTRODUCTION

What good is salt if it never leaves the shaker? And what good is a light if nobody can see it? Both are valuable because of what happens when they are put to use. Salt preserves what would otherwise decay and adds flavor to what would otherwise be bland. Light pushes back darkness and helps people see what is in front of them. Their usefulness is measured by the difference they make where they are placed.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus moves from describing the character of Kingdom people in the Beatitudes to explaining the influence Kingdom people should have in the world. He calls His followers the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13–16). These are not titles for us to admire. They are assignments for us to live out. As representatives of God’s Kingdom, believers are meant to make His presence felt in society, slowing moral and spiritual decay, confronting darkness, and making the beauty of the gospel visible.

But Jesus also gives a warning: salt that loses its usefulness and light that is hidden fail to fulfill their purpose. It is possible to be present in a community without making a Kingdom difference. Our faith is not meant to stay inside church walls or be kept private when an opportunity comes to serve. We are called to be useful to the King and His Kingdom wherever He places us.

That influence becomes visible through good works. Good works are more than simply doing good things; they are actions that benefit people in God’s name and direct attention to Him. When the good word of the gospel is connected to good works, people can see God’s Kingdom at work. The goal is not for us to receive applause but for others to glorify our Father in heaven. God’s people are called to make His presence known everywhere.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What is a food you think tastes completely different when the right seasoning is added?
2. What is one small thing someone has done that made a surprisingly big difference in your day?

### LET’S GET PERSONAL

1. Jesus calls His followers “the salt of the earth.” Where in your everyday life—at work, at home, in your neighborhood, or online—has God placed you to make a difference? Is your influence being felt there?
2. Salt preserves and adds flavor. In what situation have you been tempted to blend in, stay silent, or keep your faith inside the “shaker” instead of bringing God’s truth and grace into the room?

3. Jesus says we are the light of the world. Is there an area where fear, embarrassment, or concern about what others think has caused you to hide your faith? What would it look like to shine without being harsh or self-promoting?

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. Identify one place you will intentionally be “salt” this week. What specific action could help preserve what is good, resist what is harmful, or bring the flavor of Christ into that setting?
2. Choose one good work that meets a real need for someone this week. How can you do it in a way that reflects Christ and gives God the credit rather than seeking recognition for yourself?
3. Ask God to show you where your presence has been passive rather than purposeful. What one change will you make so that your faith is visible in both your words and your actions?
4. ***Want to go deeper?*** Read Matthew 5:1–16; John 8:12; Philippians 2:14–16; Colossians 4:5–6; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:8; and 1 Peter 2:12.

## RENEW YOUR MIND

***“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16 (ESV)***