



# A Strategy for Cultural Transformation

## *Module 3 - Task 3*

### **IMAGES OF KINGDOM INFLUENCE: LIGHT**

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Read Matthew 5:14-16. Jesus stated that we can also have an impact in our communities by being “the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). These days our cities and homes are endlessly illuminated by electric light, so it might be difficult to understand the full impact of this metaphor in Jesus’s day.

In His time the world knew very well the thick, choking blanket of darkness that would descend at nightfall. One had to kindle a fire or light an oil lamp to dissipate the darkness. Jesus’s metaphor references a murky world that has fallen under the encroaching shadows of Satan’s rival kingdom of darkness. As Christians, our witness strikes a match against the backdrop of darkness, repelling the shadows and reclaiming our world for God’s kingdom.

We can extend our light to the world through our words—our witness to the gospel. We can also extend our light through the kind of life we live. Matthew 5:16 advises, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Good works can be defined as: the deeds of kindness and blessing that we do to benefit others, in the name of God and for His glory. Our love for God should result in a deep, compassionate engagement with the world that He created. As others see that concern through our good works, they will be directed back to God. Our lighted lamps will illumine this darkened world, revealing the glorious goodness and mercy of our God.

Now read Jonah 3:10–4:11. One of the temptations that comes with being a light to the world is, as Jesus said, to “put it under a basket” (Matt. 5:14). You are probably familiar with the story of Jonah’s reluctance to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. He was someone who would just as soon have kept his light hidden. Israel had been called to be a “light to the nations” (Isa. 42:6), but Jonah would rather just take the next boat out of town. For Jonah, this failure ultimately represented a failure to shine God’s light.



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In the Jonah story, how does God's love and compassion for the people of Nineveh push the prophet beyond his comfort zone?

Why do you think Jonah was more concerned with the comfort of his vine than for the lives of the people of Nineveh?

What similar temptations have you faced to hide your light? Have you ignored opportunities or open doors to do good works in your community? What caused you to do this?

Why is this such a big deal? Watch Dr. Evans' video response to the following question: "What is the significance of serving our community through doing good works?"

Think about a memorable experience where you or your church did this. What happened? How did it impact the person or people whose needs were met? Share your thoughts in the public comments box below. Take some time to read a few of the replies and respond with some additional reflection and encouragement.