

## The Scripture as Light

**Key Scriptures:** Psalm 119:105; John 1:5, 9; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Exodus 13:21–22; Numbers 9:15–23; Isaiah 50:10; Proverbs 4:18.

Light is perhaps the most extensive of all metaphors or symbols of Scripture used in the Bible. It is the light of Scripture that brings sinners out of the darkness of sin, guides saints through life, and leads them into that perfect day of eternal glory (Proverbs 4:18).

The Psalmist (119:105) says that the Word is a “lamp” and a “light.” The Psalmist clearly uses the two words synonymously, but it is possible to have the lamp but no oil to give light (*cf.* Matthew 25:1–13). The Jews had the Scriptures, but they did not see Christ there (John 5:39). John speaks of Christ as the light shining in darkness, but the rays of light did not penetrate the darkness (John 1:5)—they did not understand Christ. The oil of the Spirit of God is needed to give effect to the Words of Scripture (John 16:13; 1 Peter 1:22).

### **The Scripture light dispels darkness (2 Corinthians 4:6)**

The darkness of the natural heart is dispersed by the light of the gospel. This darkness was like the chaos of the earth before light and order were established so that salvation is referred to as the creation of a “new creature” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). John speaks of the darkness blinding the eyes (1 John 2:11), but the light of the gospel opens the eyes of our understanding (Ephesians 1:18). As the sun’s rising in the morning and shining through the window awakens us, so Christ as the “Sun of righteousness arise[s] with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2) and awakens sinners.

### **The Scripture light directs saints (Numbers 9:15–23)**

As the mariner uses the light of the lighthouse to direct his course and the miner his headlamp to direct his steps, so the Scripture directs both our course and our steps. The distinction between our course and our steps is an important one. Many have been correct in the general direction of life, but they miss a step or, to put it in the words of Paul, are “overtaken in a fault” (Galatians 6:1). Others may be entirely off course in life—in their family, in vocation, or in social life—but in particular incidents of life they do right and appear to be godly individuals.

Abraham was on the right course so that it could be said of him generally that he staggered not at the promises (Romans 4:20), and yet there were times in his life that his steps faltered (e.g., Genesis 16). Lot, on the other hand, lived a large part of his life off course when he pitched his tent towards Sodom, and yet he knew the correct action to take in a given situation when the angels visited. There was an aspect of Eli’s life that was horribly off course (how to train his sons) and yet he could direct the steps of the young Samuel in the temple.

The lesson is twofold: a man may do certain Christian actions but that does not mean that his life is going in the right direction. Conversely, one’s life may be on course, but he may falter in his step as David did when he sinned with Bathsheba. The Scripture speaks to the whole man—to his life in general life and to all the details of life—and the psalmist brings both into sync when he said, “The *steps* of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his *way*.” (Psalm 37:23).

### The Scripture light dispenses grace (Proverbs 4:18)

According to Proverbs 4:18 the grace of gospel light “shineth more and more” (literally, “going and shining”) through the darkness of this present evil world. The road of life has many pitfalls, hurdles, twists and turns, rough places, and bypaths, but the Scripture diffuses light along the way. As we read, search, and study Scripture its gracious influences are diffused like light into all areas of life until we reach that “perfect day” in glory where “the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

### The light of Satan and the light of self-presumption deceive

There is an alarming truth contained in Scripture that serves as a warning: the devil can transform himself into an angel of light, and it is possible for a Christian to generate his own false light. That which looks right and seems to be true and biblical (both in the course of life and in the steps of life) could in fact be deceptive light. The candles of the devil or the fires of personal presumption (2 Corinthians 11:14; Isaiah 50:11) must be distinguished from the true light.

It is not within the scope of this short study to distinguish these lights, but it is important that the Christian know who he is in Christ, what he is for Christ, and where he is with Christ. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17).

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### Study Questions:

1. What is the light of the gospel likened to in 2 Corinthians 4:6? (*cf.* Genesis 1:3)
2. What does the light of the gospel do when it shines in darkened hearts? (*cf.* Ephesians 1:18).
3. How is the Word of God made effectual to the hearer or reader of Scripture?
4. In what two aspects of our walk with God does the Scripture lead us?
5. Tabulate biblical characters you can think of who reveal an inconsistency between the “course” and “steps” of life. Two examples have been given.

Biblical Character	General Course of Life	Particular Steps in Life
Judas	Betrayer and reprobate	“Church” treasurer
David	A man after God’s heart	Committed adultery

6. What kinds of “false lights” identified in Scripture should we be aware of?
7. **For further study:** Think of the Scripture as light in relation to the different type of lights that we have today: searchlight, spotlight, floodlight, motion light, etc. In all of these there are lessons to encourage you and strengthen your Christian life.