

GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 6

Question 1

- a) In the ancient world salt was primarily used as a preservative. It was used to preserve food, especially fish and meat that would go off in such a hot climate. Salt holds back the decaying process.
- b) Also in first century Palestine, salt was used to dress wounds and to stop the spread of infection.
- c) Apart from the disciples of Jesus the world becomes a more rotten place.
- d) The Christian has the effect of delaying moral and spiritual decline.
- e) Salt also adds flavor. Christians can influence everyday life in a way that makes it more palatable for others: e.g. creating a better environment at work; setting an example in reaction to those who are difficult to get on with; not getting involved in talking about people behind their backs or running them down.
- f) Remember that salt cannot give flavour unless it has contact with the food. So our witness as Christians needs to be out there in the world.
- g) Quote: *'Disciples, if they are true to their calling, make the earth a purer and more palatable place.'* (R. T. France)

Question 2

- a) Salt is only of any use while it has its essential properties.
- b) Without the ability to add flavour or to preserve then it is of no value or influence.
- c) The problem is that salt by nature cannot be anything other than salt.
- d) It can be adulterated by impurities such as sand. It therefore loses its effectiveness.

- e) You might as well throw it onto the street and let people trample on it for the good it does.
- f) Quote: *“Don’t worry too greatly if you find you can’t say much, or do much. Your business is especially to be much: that is the nature of salt”* (Guy King).

Question 3

- a) The word is in darkness; the Bible’s description of sin.
- b) Compare verse 14 with **John 8:12** where we have one of the great “I AM” statements of Jesus. And yet, here is Jesus passing the very same responsibility to His disciples. What an awesome privilege for the Christian!

Question 4

- a) These days because of light pollution we find it hard to find a place at night which is totally black.
- b) Even a city many miles away sheds light which is reflected off the clouds.
- c) Christians are like that. If we are shining then the darkness is not as dark as it could be; even though we feel we are making little impact.
- d) In verse 15 Jesus emphasises this point again. There is no point in lighting a lamp and then hiding it under a bowl.
- e) For a start it turns everything dark. You cannot see its light for a start. And eventually it will go out because it is starved of oxygen.
- f) The light in our life might seem inadequate to influence anyone but notice that Jesus sees the significance of it in verse 15; it is sufficient to give light to all in the house.

Question 5

- a) Jesus answers it himself. It is our ‘good deeds’; that lifestyle which at least some will recognise as being that of followers of Jesus.
- b) This can include how we behave at work; how we react to those who others will not get involved with; our honesty; our relationships within our families etc.
- c) Over the years Christians have shone a light into this nation which has brought about: prison reform; hospitals, abolition of slavery; abolition of child labour; employee welfare; orphanages etc.

Question 6

- a) We are children of God and we want others to give glory to our Father in heaven (v16).
- b) God is glorified in our lifestyle, but any praise is redirected from man to God.
- c) What greater desire can we have than that others would glorify God?

Encourage the group to share how they are challenged to go out and live and be an influence in their everyday lives.