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# Words of Truth

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## If You Live Your Life In Secret

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Over the years I have known some brethren that would refer themselves as "private". What is generally meant by the description is that they do not want people to know their business. There is a little bit of merit to that idea. Some people do sin by being busybodies (II Thessalonians 3:11-12) and need to mind their own business (I Thessalonians 4:9-12). Since there are sometimes sinful busybodies creeping in amongst saints you can understand why some would be guarded. Having said that, when such busybodies are not present, we need to think about the negative impact of faithful people keeping their lives private.

Some might immediately put up their guard on this study. If you are one of those people, consider the mindset of Jesus and Paul. Think about what is written in the following Scriptures: *"The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said... My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews... But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience"* (John 18:19-21, Acts 26:4, and II Timothy 3:10).

Our Lord Jesus Christ and the faithful Apostles, such as Paul, lived their lives as patterns for us to follow (I Peter 2:21-22 and I Corinthians 11:1). They didn't hide who they were. Even their times of weakness and distress are recorded for us (Matthew 26:36-46, John 12:27, II Corinthians 7:5-7, and Hebrews 5:5-7). Their examples teach us a lot of things. By being examples though, they didn't put on a fake face. They lived publicly who they were. There was not Jesus or Paul that everyone saw then another face that they wore in private. Think about how that applies to us. Let's start with a similar thought that we have discussed regarding being examples. How can anyone be an example if they hide?

### A Light That Can Be Seen

As disciples of Christ we are supposed to live as examples for others to follow (Philippians 2:14-16). You can't do that if you are a "private person". Jesus taught this better than I ever could. Thus, take note: *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick;*

*and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:14-16). After reading this, maybe someone starts to excuse their living in secret with the idea that they are not good enough to be an example. So, what does that mean?

### **If You're Not A Light To Be Seen**

If your way of life is not a good example for others to follow that means you're doing something wrong! The answer is NOT to live in private. How can any brethren whom might be able to bring you back to Christ, for yes you have fallen, do so if you hide (Galatians 6:1)? If you cannot right your wrongs on your own you NEED to confess those faults to faithful saints (James 5:16) and get help in coming back to the Lord (James 5:19-20). You cannot do that if you hide yourself. The fact is, if you weren't so secretive, your apostasy may have been able to have been prevented.

### **Secret Living Prevents Needed Help From Coming**

During bad storms local news reporters often urge neighbors to check on the elderly that live alone. Why is that? They are living in private and no one will know if they need help unless you check on them. The same applies spiritually. How can your brethren help you bear your burdens (Galatians 6:2) if you have hidden them in the first place?

The Scriptures teach that there is safety in the multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14 and Proverbs 24:6). What if you don't talk though? I have known brethren who have made terrible, life changing [spiritual and carnal] decisions that could have been prevented had they just talked to their brethren beforehand. However, these brethren chose to keep their thoughts and plans to themselves and ended up making very bad decisions. I have often wondered if many of these bad decisions I have witnessed were kept private because the person(s) making them knew they were bad decisions. Think about that!

### **If You're Private Because You KNOW You're Wrong**

There will certainly be people in the body of Christ that fool us all (I Timothy 5:24-25). They will hide who they really are. If this is you, doesn't that tell you something? Hiding sin doesn't make it alright (Proverbs 28:13). The consequences will still come (Romans 2:16). If you are private because you cannot talk about what you do, say, think; make corrections.

### **Conclusion**

Leading people to Christ is a great joy (Luke 15:1-32). Relationships amongst faithful Christians are amongst the top benefits of being in Christ (I Thessalonians 5:11-14). "Private people" are not capable of either of these things. Live so you don't have to hide!

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