

# That They May See

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1Peter 2:11-12)

Is there power in behavior? Because of Christians, much more may be taking place than you realize. This very type of power was noted in regard to Jesus and His own friend, Lazarus: “*When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus*” (**John 12:10-11**). Jesus had given Lazarus life and then he followed with Jesus. Many were believing in Jesus “on account of him.” This is also why Peter reminds us that folks are watching God’s people. Pursuing this thought, let us consider the importance of our behavior.

On account of you, some may still be in their sins. Right behavior shows the way. “*You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 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 5:13-16**). What does that say about the opposite kind of behavior?

On account of you, some may be discouraged. It is easy to see examples of this throughout all generations. “*And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation ... Then the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are’ ... Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night*” (**Numbers 13:26-14:4**). What a tragedy simply because of the behavior of ten men!

On account of you, some may be forsaking the assemblies. God’s inspired writer gives a warning: “*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near*” (**Hebrews 10:24-25**). The implication is that our choices in behavior can help engender like behavior in others. Have you set the right kind of example before others? Could it be that your very own are careless in these matters because of you?

On account of you, some may have sin and fall. Jesus speaks directly to this: “*Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea*” (**Matthew 18:1-6**).

The dangers of our behavior are real. However, the benefits of our behavior are real, too.

On account of you, some may be believers today. Christians are to try to make this so (**Matthew 28:18-20; 2Timothy 2:2**). Like Lazarus, we may be having this to happen simply by following Jesus and encouraging others to do so, even without our being conscious of their decision.

On account of you, some may be obedient. This is the message of **1Peter 3:1-2**. He wrote of women who had a great effect on their husbands. Christians can't afford to be careless in our conduct.

On account of you, some may be faithful because they see us imitate Christ (**1Corinthians 11:1; 2Timothy 1:5**). Could you think of any greater testimony in regard to your life?

On account of you, some may be greatly encouraged today. Even Paul was greatly encouraged by Christians previously unknown to him: *"And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage"* (**Acts 28:15**). Even if only a little thing brings help and encouragement, we will have our reward (**Matthew 10:42**).

On account of you, some may be rejoicing today. Paul rejoiced over what he heard about how Philemon had refreshed the saints (**Philemon 7**). Philemon may have wondered if he was doing any good with his help, but look who he helped.

On account of you, others may be zealous in the work of the Lord. This is what occurred because of work by the Christians of Achaia: *"I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them"* (**2Corinthians 9:2**).

On account of you, some may be glorifying God. Notice once again **Matthew 5:13-16**, but from a positive perspective. Your behavior, when proper, causes those that see it to *"give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

A Christian is to behave properly and to try deliberately to produce these results. We never know who may be watching. We may never find out those to whom we may be an influence. As a child of God, behave in such a way "that they may see."