

SHINE LIKE STARS

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

Philippians 2:14-16

For six months of my life, I lived near the edge of the desert in the Western Australian countryside. When I awoke each morning, I stood outside and gazed over fields covered with red dust and brown grass. Flocks of white cockatoos ascended in noisy pandemonium as they swirled through a pure blue sky. The daylight hours possessed a rugged beauty which never wearied my eyes.

But it was the night sky that mesmerised me most. Away from city lights, town lights, street lights, house lights — all artificial lights — the Milky Way flowed like a river through the sky. Stars glittered in the velvety blackness. They looked brighter and bigger than ever I'd seen before.

On three occasions, I even saw shooting stars. The sky was black enough, the shooting satellites bright enough, that my unaided gaze saw the momentary fizzles of lights.

Those country night skies never failed to remind me of the apostle Paul's words in his letter to the followers of Jesus Christ in Phillipi: “Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.”

Every generation since Adam and Eve has been 'warped and crooked' and, nowadays, it seems more noticeable than ever. Perhaps, because of the constant background chatter of television and internet, the darkness appears to be deepening. Each day brings murmurings of terrorism, war, disease, creeping authoritarianism, immorality, and all manners of destruction and death.

True believers need to shine the brightest when the world is at its darkest. This means we should be noticeably different from the crowds of unbelievers who surround us.

Can people see something pure shining through our lives? The way we talk, the way we behave, the way we respond, the way we care for other people, the way we have an unshakeable trust in our Heavenly Father. It's a challenge. In our own strength, it is impossible. We might possess good intentions for a time, but those good intentions can so easily vanish! But with God, nothing is impossible. The Holy Spirit has been sent to help us in our weaknesses.

When God calls us to shine forth, it's not our own light that shines. Human beings can't produce any light from within themselves. It's the light of Jesus which shines through us. It's the light of Jesus which will show people the path to our Father God.

It's a tough world. The darkness is deepening across the globe. Sometimes we might even be tempted to give up. But with our God, we can overcome. He is powerful, loving and faithful. Press in and press on. Keep on going and never give up. With God's help, we will reflect the light of Jesus. That's when we'll shine.



Dear Father,

Fill me with the light of you Son, Jesus! Teach me how to shine like a star in the darkness of this world. Lead me by your Holy Spirit.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.