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*(Student handouts for each lesson will be available at camp. Bold print represents material that will be in the student handout. Underlined print represents fill-in-the-blanks in the student handout)*

## **This Little Light of Mine**

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 5:14-16 NIV

**FOCUS:** In order to make God known, we must each shine out our light.

**INTRODUCTION:** *(For the Teacher)*

The word “known” can be defined as “recognized, familiar, or within the scope of knowledge”. That should be our goal in making God known. We want God to be recognized and acknowledged. We want God to become a familiar part of not only our lives but the lives of others. That is what it means to make God known.

However, consider the opposite of God being known. Consider the fact that to many, God is “unknown”. He is not familiar or even within the scope of knowledge with a vast number of people spread across our planet. Sometimes, He is not known by those people that are right next door.

God has entrusted us with the awesome task of spreading His word. We are to shine out His light to this lost world. But, when we hide our light, or allow our light to be dampened by the temptations of this world, we fail and God remains “unknown”.

Help your students to see the tragedy in not shining their light to those who are longing for answers. Help your students to see the importance of making God known.

### **GETTING STARTED:**

*This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine*

*This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine*

*This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine*

*Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

Anyone who has ever gone to Vacation Bible School has probably sang the song, *“This Little Light of Mine.”* Many would see it as being childish to sing this song at a camp that is geared for Jr. High and High School students. However, don't underestimate the message of this song. After all, the lyrics are based on the words of Christ Himself as recorded in Matthew 5:14-16. Jesus calls us, “The light of the world” and makes the command to “let your light shine”. As you will see in this lesson, it is a great responsibility that Christians are called to fulfill. Christians are to let their light shine, and by doing so, make God known.

**Shinning your light will make God known!**

Read Matthew 5:14-16 NIV

### 1. **Hiding Not Allowed**

<sup>14</sup>*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.* <sup>15</sup>*Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand...*

**ILLUSTRATION:** "They're Looking for Me" - <http://www.danggoodjokes.com/look/>

The boss of a big company needed to call one of his employees about an urgent problem with one of the main computers. He dialed the employee's home phone number and was greeted with a child's whispered, "Hello?"

Feeling put out at the inconvenience of having to talk to a youngster the boss asked, "Is your Daddy home?"

"Yes", whispered the small voice. "May I talk with him?" the man asked. To the surprise of the boss, the small voice whispered, "No."

Wanting to talk with an adult, the boss asked, "Is your Mommy there?"

"Yes", came the answer. "May I talk with her?" Again the small voice whispered, "No".

Knowing that it was not likely that a young child would be left home alone, the boss decided he would just leave a message with the person who should be there watching over the child. "Is there anyone there besides you?", the boss asked the child.

"Yes" whispered the child, "A policeman". Wondering what a cop would be doing at his employee's home, the boss asked "May I speak with the policeman"?

"No, he's busy", whispered the child. "Busy doing what?", asked the boss. "Talking to Daddy and Mommy and the Fireman", came the whispered answer.

Growing concerned and even worried as he heard what sounded like a helicopter through the ear piece on the phone the boss asked, "What is that noise?"

"A hello-copper", answered the whispering voice. "What is going on there?", asked the boss, now alarmed.

In an awed whispering voice the child answered, "The search team just landed the hello-copper"

Alarmed, concerned and more than just a little frustrated the boss asked, "Why are they there"?

Still whispering, the young voice replied along with a muffled giggle: "They're looking for me."

Some Christians spend their entire lives hiding. The people around them desperately search for answers to life's struggles, while those secret Christians conceal the solution found in Christ. How tragic it is to hide from a lost and condemned world the knowledge and grace of an all-loving God.

- **The Light of the World – *"<sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world"*.**

**DISCUSS:** What do you think it means to be “the light of the world”?

**Light makes things visible.** Christians are the instrument God has chosen to make Himself “visible”. Christians are to make God known.

- **A City on a Hill – “<sup>14</sup>...A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”**

**DISCUSS:** What does it mean to say, “A city on a hill cannot be hidden”?

**ILLUSTRATION:** A City on a Hill ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Winthrop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Winthrop), <http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>)

The literal meaning of this scripture is not hard to understand. Because of its physical elevation, a city on a hill is impossible to hide.

But, consider the phrase “A City on a Hill” metaphorically.

John Winthrop was an English Puritan that led the first large wave of migrants from England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. It was during the trip to America that Winthrop wrote and delivered a sermon describing the ideas and plans to keep the Puritan society strong in faith and to portray their endeavor as God’s work in which they were responsible for. In that sermon he wrote...

***“For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.” – John Winthrop***

Winthrop saw it as a great responsibility for the colonist to live lives above reproach because the rest of the world would be watching.

**REFLECT:**

- **Have you ever stopped to consider yourself as a city on a hill with the eyes of people on you?**
- **Do you feel a responsibility to God to live a life above reproach as an example to others?**
- **A Lamp to be Seen – “<sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand...”**

To light a lamp and then hide it where it does not give off any light makes little sense. Yet, this is what many Christians do – they hide their light.

**DISCUSS:**

- **In what ways do Christians “hide their light”?**
  - **What are some ways you can put your “light on a stand” for all to see?**
- 2. Your Circle of Influence - “<sup>15</sup>...and it gives light to everyone in the house”**

Here it gets personal. Christians as a whole have a responsibility to be the light of the world. But, each individual is responsible for being the light “in the house”. In other words, our task at hand is to make God known to those within our circle of influence. Our circle of influence are those individuals God has put in our lives who are seeking the Truth. If every Christian does his part, then the light is shown to the entire world and God is known.

**Be a light to your circle of influence!**

**DISCUSS:** Make it personal. List the names of people that God has placed in your circle of influence to whom you need to make God known.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**REFLECT:** Will you put your light on a stand for these people to see?

**3. The Source of Your Light - <sup>“16</sup>*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds...”***

Every light has a source, whether it is the sun, stars, bulb, or flame. What is the source of our light? The answer is our good deeds.

**QUOTE:** Be prepared, and be careful not to do your good deeds when there’s no one watching you. – *Tom Lehrer*

This quote is somewhat humorous, but, there is truth in it. Remember, we are not to hide our light. If we are to shine our light and not hide it, we must let our good deeds be seen. In essence, **your good deeds are the light that you shine.**

**QUOTE:** Let each man think himself an act of God, His mind a thought, his life a breath of God; And let each try, by great thoughts and good deeds, To show the most of Heaven he hath in him. – *Philip James Bailey*

**DISCUSS:** What do you think Philip James Bailey meant by saying our good deeds can show the Heaven that is in us?

**4. Spotlight - <sup>“16</sup>*...that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”***

In theater plays and musicals, a spot light is typically used to bring attention and focus on one specific subject. As previously discussed, our good deeds are the light. I like to think of that light as a spot light. That being the case, who does our light bring attention and focus to. The answer is Jesus Christ. Our good deeds are not to bring attention to ourselves, but rather our good deeds are to cause others to praise our Lord and Savior. Our good deeds are to spotlight Jesus.

Light makes things visible. Light reveals. **Our light reveals and makes visible God.** Our light makes God known.

**DISCUSS:** How can our good deeds cause others to praise our Father in Heaven?

**QUOTE:** “The problem is not that students don’t believe in Jesus, but that they don’t believe in anybody who believes in Jesus.” – Jacob Aranza

**DISCUSS:** What do you think Jacob Aranza meant by that statement?

**SELF EVALUATION:** What have you done with your light? Do you hide your light? Have you made God known?

## CONCLUSION

### OPTION #1

One of the verses to “*This Little Light of Mine*” is

*Won’t let Satan blow it out, I’m going to let it shine.*

*Won’t let Satan blow it out, I’m going to let it shine*

*Won’t let Satan blow it out, I’m going to let it shine*

*Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

Because of our security in Christ, it is impossible for Satan to blow out our light. However, I think this verse speaks to the damaging effects to a Christian’s light from living a worldly life. A Christian’s light can become less effective and even nullified by giving in to the temptations of our immoral world.

It has been said that dirty headlights on a car can reduce night vision by as much as 50%. The obvious reason why is because the dirt on the lens cover prevents the light from shining through. Sin has much the same effect on our life. A dirty life can greatly reduce our ability to give off light. Only God’s brand of Windex called “Repentance and Forgiveness” can make us clean and allow us the full potential to give off the light that makes God known.

### OPTION #2

**ILLUSTRATION:** “The Littlest Candle” – Youth Specialties Hot Illustrations 1.0

Once upon a time a little candle stood in a room filled with other candles, most of them much larger and much more beautiful than she was. Some were ornate and some were rather simple, like herself. Some were white, some were blue, some were pink, some were green. She had no idea why she was there, and the other candles made her feel rather small and insignificant.

When the sun went down and the room began to get dark, she noticed a large man walking toward her with a ball of fire on a stick. She suddenly realized that the man was going to set her on fire. “No, no!” she cried, “Aaaaagghhh! Don’t burn me, please!” But she knew that she could not be heard and prepared for the pain that would surely follow.

To her surprise, the room filled with light. She wondered where it came from since the man had extinguished his fire stick. To her delight, she realized that the light came from herself.

Then the man struck another fire stick and, one by one, lit the other candles in the room. Each one gave out the same light that she did.

During the next few hours, she noticed that, slowly, her wax began to flow. She became aware that she would soon die. With this realization came a sense of why she had been created. "Perhaps my purpose on earth is to give out light until I die," she mused. And that's exactly what she did.

## Choosing Sides

**SCRIPTURE:** Joshua 24:14, 15

**FOCUS:** Each person must choose who they will make known.

**INTRODUCTION:** *(For the Teacher)*

Life is filled with choices; choices that many struggle with because they are indecisive. Writer/Journalist Malcolm Gladwell once said, "I suspect people who are indecisive are people who are far too enamored of analysis in all settings and are destroying their ability to make an instinctive judgment through over-analysis and that's dangerous." This seemed to be the problem with the Israelites as seen in the Old Testament. When it came to deciding what god or gods they would serve, they often remained dangerously indecisive. After taking the land of Canaan, Joshua calls the Israelites together to renew their covenant with God. He tells them they must choose who they will serve. God will not tolerate mediocrity. There is no straddling the fence. The lesson for us is that we too must choose. We must choose who we will make known.

**GETTING STARTED:** (ILLUSTRATION: "The Roadkill Grill" – Youth Specialties Hot Illustrations 1.0

<b>The Roadkill Grill Menu, "A Taste of the Wild"</b>		
<p><b><u>Appetizers:</u></b></p> <p>Fried Deer Hide</p> <p>Rigor Mortis Tortoise</p> <p>Awesome Possum Blossom</p> <p>Critter Fritters</p> <p>Bug Juice Soup</p> <p><b><u>Rabbit of the Day:</u></b></p> <p>"Thumper on the Bumper"</p> <p><b><u>Special:</u></b> "Guess that Mess"</p> <p>Guess what it is and you eat free!</p>	<p><b><u>"Fender Lickin' Good"</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Entrees:</u></b></p> <p>Chunk of Skunk</p> <p>Rack of Raccoon</p> <p>Smear of Deer</p> <p>Cheap Sheep</p> <p>Flat Cat</p> <p>Wreck of Lamb</p> <p>Squeal Parmigiana</p> <p>Robin on the Hood</p> <p>Alley Cat-serole</p> <p>Braked Chicken</p> <p>Squiche Lorraine</p>	<p><b><u>Canine Cuisine:</u></b></p> <p>("You'll eat like a hog when you taste our dog!")</p> <p>Poodles and Noodles</p> <p>Slab of Lab</p> <p>Cocker Cutlets</p> <p>Ground Round Hound</p> <p>Hushed Puppies</p> <p><b><u>Desserts:</u></b></p> <p>Road Toad Alamode</p> <p>Armadillo Crunch</p>

*"Food is more fun when you hit it on the run!"*

Unfortunately, many unsuspecting animals end up on the menu of the Roadkill Grill simply because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. They were in the middle of the road.

And there are many young people who are in danger of becoming roadkill too. That's because they are "middle-of-the-road" Christians. They are neither on one side nor the other. They live for Christ when it's convenient, then live for themselves or for the crowd when that's more convenient. They are Christians on Sunday, but the rest of the week you can't really tell which side of the road they are on. They are middle-of-the-road Christians.

When the Israelites became established in the land of Canaan, Joshua issued them a command – *"choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve."* To Joshua, there was no middle-of-the-road. The Israelites would have to choose one side or the other. The same is true for Christians today. There is no middle ground. **We must choose who we will make known.**

Read Joshua 24:14, 15

**Who you choose to serve is who you choose to make known.** Joshua commanded the Israelites to decide one way or another who they would serve. Their response would also decide who they would make known.

## 1. Choose Now

### ➤ Choose for Yourself - <sup>15</sup>*"...choose for yourselves..."*

**ILLUSTRATION:** *"Dead or Alive?"* – Youth Specialties Hot Illustrations 1.0

*Two brothers were arguing about the wisdom of their parents. "Father is very wise," said the first brother. "We should listen to him and do what he says."*

*The second brother disagreed. "Father is not so wise! Why, we are just as smart as he is. I'll prove it to you!"*

*The next day the second brother went into the woods near his home and captured a small bird. He brought the bird home and said to his brother, "Let's go find our father. I will show you that he isn't so smart!"*

*The two brothers went into their father's study, the second one holding the small bird between his cupped hands. "Father, I have a question for you," he said. "I hold a small bird in my hands. Tell me, is this bird dead or alive?"*

*The boy was confident that his father would not answer correctly because if he said that the bird was dead, the boy would simply open his hands and show that the bird was alive. If his father answered that the bird was alive, he would crush the bird between his hands and reveal that the bird was dead. Then he would prove to his brother that his father was not so wise after all.*

*The boys' father considered the question for a moment and said, "My son...the answer is in your hands."*

Who you choose to serve and make known is left up to you. There is no copping out or making excuses. There is no blaming anyone else. It is a decision that cannot be made by God, your parents, or your friends. It is a choice that only you can make. And, it is something that you must accept full responsibility for.

- **Choose This Day** - *“<sup>15</sup>...choose for yourselves this day...”*
  - **Choose This Day to Know** – (for the lost) **Before you can make God known, you must first know him for yourself.** The time is urgent for you who are lost. You need to choose to know God today, for tomorrow may be too late.
  - **Choose This Day to Make Known** – (for the Christian) As stated in the previous lesson, people are watching you. Your circle of influence is looking to you for answers. You must choose to make God known today and everyday following. **Someone’s eternal destiny could be in your hands.**

## 2. Choose Sides

- **Big “G” or little “g”**

You only have two to choose from and there is no in between. You either choose to serve the one true God (big “G”) or you choose false gods (little “g”).

**ILLUSTRATION:** No Middle Lever

Some restaurants offer complimentary ice cream to their customers as they walk out the door. You may have seen their ice cream making machines that have three levers. You pull the lever on the left and you get vanilla ice cream. You pull the lever on the right and you get chocolate. There are always those who have a hard time choosing which to get. That is what the middle lever is for. You pull that lever and you get a mixture of both vanilla and chocolate. This works fine for ice cream but **when it comes to choosing who you will serve and make known, there is no middle lever.** Our God is a jealous God. He will not tolerate those who want to serve Him and others.

- **Choosing Big “G”** – *“<sup>14</sup>Now fear the Lord and serve Him with all faithfulness”*

To fear the Lord means to have proper respect. It means to recognize His place as the ultimate authority in your life. **To choose God means that you will serve Him with total commitment. Only by doing this can you make Him known.**

- **Choosing Little “g”**

- *“<sup>15</sup>...If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you...”*

It is sad that many proclaiming Christians find it undesirable to follow the Lord's commands. They see God as the ultimate killjoy keeping them from having "fun".

Those Christians find themselves thinking the grass must be greener on the other side of the fence. What they fail to realize is that a fence is used for protection. Parents will put a fence around their yard to protect their children or animals from wandering out into the road. God's commands (fence) are meant for our protection. **When we travail outside of God's commands, we put ourselves in compromising and dangerous situations.**

**DISCUSS:**

- **Why do some think serving God is undesirable? What mistake are they making in their thinking?**
- **What are some specific ways disobeying God's commands put us in compromising and dangerous situations?**
- ***"<sup>15</sup>...whether the gods your fathers served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living..."***

The worship of the gods the Israelites encountered in Egypt and Canaan is not practiced today. But, America does have its false gods. Some are these are worshiped by Christians – the God of Lust, the God of Materialism, the God of Self, the God of Power, etc.

**DISCUSS: What and how are false God's worshiped in today's world?**

### **3. Choose Boldly – *"<sup>15</sup>But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord"***

**ILLUSTRATION:** Signing Up for a Youth Event

Many Youth Pastors/Workers have experienced the following when trying to get students to attend some youth event. A sign-up sheet is put out and the event is publicized. The Youth Pastor/Worker puts out informational posters, talks it up, and tells the students how beneficial the event will be to the student's lives and how much fun they will have if they just go. It is sad but often true that none of those things make any difference to many students. All they really want to know before they commit to attending is, "Who else is going?" These students wait until they see who else signs up before they put their name down.

Joshua didn't wait to see who was going to "sign up" to serve the Lord before making his choice. He told the Israelites he didn't care what they chose to do. He boldly proclaimed that he and his house were going to serve the Lord.

**If we are going to truly make God known, we need to be bold in our decision to serve him and not swayed by the choices of others.**

**DISCUSS: What are some actions you can take that will boldly show to others that you have chosen God's side?**

## **CONCLUSION**

**ILLUSTRATION** - "The Choice" – Youth Specialties Hot Illustrations 1.0

*Centuries ago in China a teacher would call one of his students to the front of the room. He would hold out both hands and explain to the chosen student that one hand held a valuable gold coin and the other was empty. He would invite the chosen student to choose one hand or the other. If the student chose the coin, he would be allowed to keep it. But if he chose the empty hand, the teacher would strike the boy with his clenched fist. If the student decided not to choose at all, he could return to his seat.*

*This ritual was practiced each day in the teacher's classroom. Because the students knew of the teacher's strength and skill as a fighter, they were afraid to make a choice. They knew that to be hit by him would result in serious injury.*

*On the rare occasion that a student would choose a hand, the teacher would ask, "Are you sure?"*

*As the student looked more closely at the teacher's hard fist and even harder scowl, he would invariably change his mind and hurry back to his seat.*

*Finally, Chin was called to front of the room. Chin's father had died in the wars five years before and his family was having trouble getting by. Chin needed the gold coin.*

*The instructor held out his fists. Chin studied both hands for a long time. His classmates stared at him, expecting him to simply return to his seat as each of them had done. Finally Chin pointed to the teacher's left fist.*

*"Are you sure?" the instructor asked.*

*Chin nodded.*

*"Would you like to forget about your choice and return to your seat?"*

*Chin shook his head no.*

*The instructor's fist shot out and struck Chin squarely in the face, knocking him to the floor.*

*Chin lay on the floor looking up at his teacher in a daze. Then the instructor turned both fists over and revealed that each of them held a gold coin.*

*“You cannot expect anything for free,” the teacher told his class. “There is a price that comes with everything.”*

*The teacher helped Chin to his feet, smiled, and placed the gold coins into his hand. He never repeated the exercise again.*

Some people are afraid to make choices. Like the students in the classroom, they are afraid of failure. They are afraid of pain. They are afraid of commitment. They are afraid it might cost them something.

Life is full of choices and contrary to popular belief, the best things in life are not free. They are costly, but worth it. Do you have the courage to step out from the crowd and choose the way that offers the greatest reward? Do you have the courage to make God known?

## **No Time to be Silent**

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 Kings 18

**FOCUS:** Christians will be constantly faced with the question, “Who is God?” To make God known, we must be prepared to boldly answer, “The Lord, He is God!”

**INTRODUCTION:** *(For the Teacher)*

Francis of Assis once said, “Preach the gospel all the time. If necessary, use words.” The problem is that many Christians are silent in word and in action when asked the question, “Who is God?” Elijah poses that very question to the Israelites on Mt. Carmel. Their response is total silence. It is only after fire comes down from heaven that the Israelites respond, “The Lord, He is God!” Why does it take something drastic before some will acknowledge that the Lord is God? With the condition of our world, there is the desperate need for people to know who is God and for God to be made known. Lost souls are at stake. This is no time to be silent. We need to boldly proclaim, “The Lord, He is God!” and thereby make God known.

### **GETTING STARTED:**

The following is background information the students will need before beginning this lesson.

- Ahab becomes King of Israel and is labeled the most evil king of Israel to date. He worshiped Baal and married a Baal priestess, Jezebel. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal he built in Samaria. (1 Kings 16:29-34)
- Because of this evil, Elijah is called to bring a curse on the land that it will not rain except at his word. This punishment is not by random choice. Baal worshipers saw Baal as responsible for the rains that brought forth the abundant harvest in the land of Canaan. God is setting them straight by showing He is the one with the power over the elements. (1 Kings 17:1)
- Three years pass without rain and God sends Elijah back to Ahab. Elijah calls for a showdown between himself and all the prophets of Baal to take place at Mount Carmel. It is at this battle of the prophets that the big question will be answered, “Who is God?”

### **DISCUSS:**

Wikipedia defines God as, “the English name given to a singular being in theistic and deistic religions (and other belief systems) who is either the sole deity in monotheism, or a single deity in polytheism.” That’s quite a mouthful. It is also very impersonal and empty.

Jesus once asked Peter, “Who do you say I am?” Peter responded, “You are the Christ.” (Mark 8:27). In Peter’s response, he acknowledged Jesus as Lord and God. In today’s

lesson, that same question is presented to the Israelites. Whether you realize it or not, it is also a question that is put forward to you on a daily basis. **What is your answer to the question, “Who is God?”**

### 1. The Question Posed – “Who is God?”

*<sup>21</sup>Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.’ But the people said nothing.*

- *“How long will you waver between two opinions?”*

The implication here is that the Israelites were being indecisive. This is the same as discussed in the previous lesson. The Israelites were playing in the “middle-of-the-road.” Just as Joshua, Elijah is telling the Israelites they are going to have to choose.

- *“If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”*

This is similar to the question posed to the Israelites by Joshua as studied in the previous lesson.

*“...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.” – Joshua 24:15*

This time, the two choices for the Israelites are God or Baal. They must choose who they will follow. Remember who they choose will be who they make known.

- *“But the people said nothing.”*

When posed the question in Joshua’s day, the Israelites loudly proclaimed, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey Him.” (Joshua 24:24)

Elijah boldly asks, “Who is God?” Their response? Crickets. Nada. Zip. Silence. Obviously, the Israelites have strayed away from God over the years.

When asked the question “Who is God?”, the Israelite’s silence gave their answer.

#### **DISCUSS:**

**You are asked on a daily basis, “Who is God?” It may not be in the form of a verbal question, but you are still continually asked that question.**

**When you’re in the locker room and the guys start telling dirty jokes, you’re being asked, “Who is God?”**

**When you're asked to go somewhere you know you are not supposed to go, or at a time when you should be in the House of God, you're being asked, "Who is God?"**

**When you turn the radio on...**

**When you sit down to watch TV...**

**When you're with your boyfriend/girlfriend...**

**Your actions speak volumes about who you think God is.**

No one says you have to be silent. Elijah definitely wasn't. Elijah made God known, and you can to.

- **What are some other ways you are asked the question, "Who is God?"**
- **How can you give the answer, "The Lord is God"?**

## **2. Standing Tall**

*<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to them, 'I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets.'*

### ➤ **Standing Tall Against the Odds – 1 Vs 450**

**ILLUSTRATION:** Wolves o' Plenty – Youth Specialties Hot Illustrations 1.0

An organization in Montana offered a bounty of five thousand dollars for every wolf captured alive. Two hunters named Sam and Jed decided to head for the hills and make some money capturing wolves. Day and night they scoured the mountains and forests searching for their valuable prey. Exhausted after three days of hunting without any success, they both fell asleep.

During the night, Sam suddenly woke up to find that he and Jed were surrounded by a pack of fifty wolves, with flaming red eyes and bared teeth, snarling at the two hunters and preparing to pounce.

Sam nudged Jed and said, "Hey, wake up! We're gonna be rich!"

**When faced with a crisis, we can choose to be frightened and cowardly, or strong and courageous.** What courage and faith Elijah must have. Elijah is facing seemingly incredible odds, 1 Vs 450, but hey, God gets all the glory. God was going to make sure that when all is said and done, no one can ask the question, "Who is God!"

**When we face incredible odds and we overcome by our faith in God, the strength and power of God is seen and God is made known.**

➤ **Standing Tall Against the Crowd**

Elijah may have been the only prophet of God left, but he was probably not the last follower of God. Where were the others? They were probably scared. They had probably become quiet and secretive about their worship of God. Some Christians are the same way. They are secretive and quiet about their worship. It is almost as if they are ashamed to say, “The Lord is God.”

Not so with Elijah. Elijah took the same stance as Joshua. To Elijah, it didn't matter what anyone else was doing.

**To Elijah, it didn't matter what it was that God wanted him to say.**

**To Elijah, it didn't matter if it was unpopular.**

**To Elijah, it didn't matter if it was politically incorrect.**

**To Elijah, it didn't matter if it was offensive.**

**To Elijah, it didn't matter if people didn't understand it.**

**To Elijah, it didn't matter if people were going to ridicule him and talk behind his back.**

**To Elijah, the only thing that mattered was that he spoke the truth of God.**

**By standing tall, Elijah made God known.**

**QUOTE: “The man who kneels to God can stand up to anything.” - Anonymous**

**3. No Help from Baal**

***<sup>26</sup>...Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. ‘O Baal, answer us!’ they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered.***

These prophets had chose Baal to be their god, but when it came time to put their god to the test, Baal bailed on them. It is sad that people turn their backs on the Lord God in favor of worshiping and making known other gods. It is during the hardships of life that they finally realize their awesome mistake. **It is during the times that people need help the most that the false gods they have trusted are silent.**

**QUOTE: “I’m paranoid. I do this and I do that. I can buy anything I want. I can have anything I want, but I’m still not happy. I wonder why I’m not happy?” – Eddie Murphy**

**DISCUSS: What are some “false gods” that people sometimes turn to that, like Baal, in time of need, give them no response?**

#### 4. An Altar in Ruins

***<sup>30</sup>Then Elijah said to all the people, ‘Come here to me.’ They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins.***

How sad is this? The Israelites had been without rain for three years. They were suffering from a terrible famine. The implication is that no one once sought the Lord’s help. The altar of the Lord was in ruins.

I believe this altar was symbolic of the relationship Israel had with the Lord at this time – broken and in ruins. Before Israel could once again declare the Lord as God, the altar had to be repaired.

Many Christians are in the same situation. They are in a broken relationship with God. Before God can be made known, that relationship has to first be repaired.

**REFLECT: What is the condition of your altar? Is it in need of repairs?**

**DISCUSS: What can one do to repair a broken relationship with God?**

#### 5. The Question Is Answered

***<sup>38</sup>Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, ‘The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!’***

➤ Fire from Heaven

It took fire from heaven before the Israelites would proclaim, “The Lord, He is God!”

**DISCUSS:**

**Why does it take drastic measures for some to admit that the Lord is God?**

**What will it take for you to acknowledge the Lord as God of your life and for you to make God known?**

➤ God Made Known

Because Elijah spoke the truth of God and stood tall with his actions, **Elijah revealed God to the nation of Israel. Elijah made God known.** Israel could no longer ask the question, “Who is God?” for the answer had been made clear.

**What kind of Christians will it take to make God known?**

- **Christians who love Jesus Christ more than they love their personal comfort.**

- **Christians who love holiness more than they love popularity.**
- **Christians who when asked the question, “Who is God?”, are not silent but answer boldly, “The Lord – He is God!”**

**ILLUSTRATION:** (The following letter was written by a young pastor in Zimbabwe who was later martyred for his faith)

*I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made—I’m a disciple of his. I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I’m finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.*

*I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don’t have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on his presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and labor with power.*

*My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my Guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the enemy, pander at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.*

*I won’t give up, shut up, or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must keep going until he comes, give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until he stops me. And, when he comes for his own, he will have no problem recognizing me. My banner will be clear.*

If we all could take on the attitude of this young pastor, it would be evident to all those around us who God is. Our very lives would make God known.

## **CONCLUSION**

By making God known, lives will be changed. But as illustrated below, that change has to start with you.

**ILLUSTRATION: “The Man Who Changed the World” - Hot Illustrations 1.0**

Once upon a time, a man set out to change the world. Before long he discovered that the world was far too big for one person to change. So he decided to change his

country. Crooked politicians and special interest groups unfortunately thwarted his efforts, so he decided to change his neighborhood. But his neighbors simply closed their doors and shut their windows, so he decided to change his family. Instead of changing, his children rebelled and his wife threatened a divorce and things only got worse.

Finally, the man decided to change himself.

And when he did that, he changed the world.