

Introduction:

- A. It is no secret that I'm not much for science, but I think I'm on to something big. Glowfolks. Maybe you've heard of glow worms, which are really female beetles who can switch on a bioluminescent glow on the underside of their abdomens to attract males. It's all about the interactions of complex chemicals in their bodies, which I won't go into now, but those little beauties glow like an LED light. So I'm thinking if you could mix up a big batch of those "complex chemicals"—which means you'd have to buy a big chemistry set—you could make it like a big bath and a person could get—well—*baptized* in it and then we'd glow like big walking glow sticks. **Glowfolks**. It would give a whole new meaning to the phrase, "*she has a healthy glow about her.*"

There are some interesting challenges with this, if you think about it. Going to a movie, for example. Or 'lights out' at camp. Or playing hide-and-seek. Or those laser tag places—you'd be a sitting duck in there. Some jobs would definitely be out of the question—army night patrol, for example. Spy. But there are other jobs that would be perfect—cave explorer, electrician's helper, emergency traffic cop when the power goes out. **Glowfolks**. You heard it here first.

- B. The Bible tells Christians, "Live as children of light." Glowfolks. Turn to **Eph. 5:8-14**. Let's study what that involves, because **glowfolks** like us are definitely in a class by ourselves. Being children of light means we have to approach life differently than everyone else.

I. BECOMING GLOWFOLKS WAS A MIRACULOUS TRANSFORMATION (5:8)

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light."

- A. The expression "children of light" reminds us that we were born again as glowfolks. Being light is now part of our spiritual DNA; it is in our spiritual genes.
- B. Note that before we were not just in darkness; we were darkness. We were like walking shadows. **Eph. 4:18** says that people without Jesus are "*darkened in their understanding.*" Like trying to learn in a library with only night lights, we couldn't see the truth. The Bible says that we were in Satan's "dominion of darkness," a worldwide realm of deadly dark, shrouded in a killer fog, sinister and malevolent; life lived in a world of dark alleys. Then there is dark death—the ultimate 'lights out.' We were already dead, carrying our coffins on our backs. And we were blind. We could not see where we were nor where we were going. We felt life with our senses. Illus.: Remember Helen Keller, the woman who was born blind, deaf, and unable to speak? She wrote, "*Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the whore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbor was.*" [#2037] That was our spiritual life—our most real and important life—without Christ.
- C. "But now you are light in the Lord." Our minds are illumined. We are free from Satan's dominion and are citizens of a kingdom where there is no need for sun or moon because God himself is our light. Death has lost its sting and shroud. And though "I once was blind, I now can see." We were darkness on our own, but we "*are light in the Lord.*" Illus.: Here is a candle, burning bright. I was like an unlit candle thrust into that flame. There's the flare of igniting, and now my candle burns in the other candle's flame. It is like that that we are "*light in the Lord.*" Remember how Moses came down from the presence of the Lord on Mt. Sinai with his face glowing from being in the glory of God? Well, that is what happens to us inwardly. We really are **glowfolks**! We always underestimate ourselves and our capacity to affect the world around us. We do not really believe that we are distinctively, brightly different at the very core of our beings. Illus.: Some years ago I read a story about a Sunday evening service in a little church. The pastor was preaching that May evening when there was a tremendous thunder clap and the lights went out. Pitch dark. One deacon stumbled back to a closet where they

kept the little candles for the Christmas eve service, and eventually everyone had a little candle. Ben Florida, the pastor, wrote later, *“We began to gather up our belongings and headed for the back door. Peering out into the night, we could see by the lights of the traffic the rain falling in sheets. It looked like the entire city was dark. And there we stood. A little band of Christians, each clutching a little light, safe and dry in the church, fearing to venture into the storm and darkness outside.”* [#3446] That’s like us, only we don’t just *hold* candles, we *are* candles—impervious to rain or storm. We’re **glowfolks**.

II. THERE IS A SECRET TO GLOWFOLKS’ LIGHT (5:8-10)

A. The key command in this paragraph is, *“Live as children of light,”* or *“Walk as children of light.”* If you glowed in the dark, how would you walk? **Carefully**, for one thing, knowing that people were looking at me. **Confidently**, for another, because I could see where I was going. And **compassionately**, for people around me need the light I have and they lack.

B. Paul says in v.9 that light has fruit, which sounds strange, but it isn’t hard to understand what he means. The fruit of light—the living, organic outgrowth of being **glowfolks** is a cornucopia of virtues—*“goodness, righteousness and truth.”* **Goodness** implies a kind of generous, open-hearted, selfless living—full of grace. **Righteousness** is when our minds and wills are obedient to God’s Word. **Truth** is what squares with all that God says, and in particular, that puts the truth of the gospel in shoe leather. Back in **Eph 4:15** Paul turned the word ‘truth’ into a verb: *“truthing in love.”* Glowfolks ‘truth’ out loud.

These qualities are what people actually see when we shine. You don’t measure our brightness as believers in lumens, but in these qualities. *“I saw some of those glowfolks at school today,”* a kid tells his folks over supper. *“Really! Were they greenish or like big lightning bugs, or what?”* *“No, they were...oh, I don’t know...good. Good with a kind of glow. They live like God is constantly whispering in their ear—go hear, say this, don’t do that. And there’s something true about them; authentic, wise, insightful.”*

C. So do we set out to be good, righteous and true? Well, yes, in a way, but Paul puts it this way in **v.10**, “Find out what pleases the Lord.” We walk into a day, facing one situation after another. Conversation in the car pool, a staff meeting, a class that gets into what’s right and wrong, an invitation to a movie or a concert, a sales call that goes badly, kids that dump pureed chicken and sweet potatoes all over the floor. There—right there in that moment—find out what pleases the Lord. Pray, sort through what you know of Scripture, call a Christian friend for counsel, remember what we talked about in church or Growth Group. Whatever pleases the Lord in that situation will have the holy glow of goodness, righteousness and truth about it. **When we do what pleases the Lord we shine.**

We’ll have a tough time sensing the Lord’s will if we never spend time with him, if we aren’t in the practice of studying the Bible alone and with others and if we rarely pray. Illus.: Someone got a nightlight—one of those phosphorescent things that doesn’t actually have bulb—that said on the box, *“If you want me to shine in the night, keep me in the light.”* That’s the secret of glowfolks’ light!

III. GLOWFOLKS ARE NO LONGER AT HOME IN THE DARKNESS (5:11-14)

We have to continue to live in this dark world, this morgue, this country of the blind. But we must be reoriented to our life here.

A. We must not do what people in darkness do (vv.11-12). *“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness.”* Again and again the Bible has warned us not to go back to that old way of life, from which we’ve been rescued. Don’t go back to the sexual immorality, don’t go back to the anger, don’t go back to the lies and pretense, don’t go back to the greed. Jesus has saved us from all that, so don’t go back.

B. We will inevitably expose dark and shameful secrets (

C. Sometimes our light births other lights

D. So we sing our song to the dark world around us (v.14)