

MESSAGE: BE A WITNESS THAT SHINES

CW 571:1

**“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life” (Philippians 2:14-16).**

GOD’S STARS VALUE HIS WORD

New employees in the marketing department don’t start writing and selling their first day on the job. They must first spend some time learning about their products and services. They can’t sell what they don’t know.

If you are going to be a witness for God, it is imperative that you know what you are talking about. The world has more than enough chatter about people’s personal opinions, and nobody is likely to change his or her mindset or lifestyle just because you say so. And so God’s stars drink deeply of God’s Word first for themselves before they attempt to share this water of life with others. Psalm 119:16 says, **“I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your Word.”**

Could you say that with sincerity? Or do you and your family need to get back into your Bible? Will you be in God’s Word this week? If you are, then you will **“shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.”**

CW 571:2

GOD’S STARS NEVER GIVE UP

Allied resistance to the invading Nazi armies sweeping through Belgium had collapsed. In June of 1940 it seemed as though all of Europe would fall. Winston Churchill had been Britain’s prime minister for only a month, but he rallied the entire nation with his words to the House of Commons: *We shall fight on beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets, and on the hills. We shall never surrender.* They didn’t. The Allies prevailed.

Satan is a far more formidable adversary than even Hitler, but he can be beaten, too. Never give up! Christ Jesus has crushed Satan’s power over us and gives us the strength, through the Holy Spirit, to say “no” to his temptation to give up. No matter how great our losses, wounds, sins, and failures, all who hang onto Jesus in faith will ultimately inherit everything. St. James calls this splendid toughness “perseverance.” **Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).**

Being a Christian star doesn’t mean that you never fall. It means that you never quit believing in Jesus. Only then will you **“shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.”**

## GOD'S STARS MODEL JESUS' LOVE

People use the word “love” all the time. Generally they mean that they respond favorably to things and people who are loveable. People love flowers, chocolate, sports, and cars. People love other people when they are nice or good-looking.

Jesus' love is different. Jesus loves the unworthy, the dirty, the broken, the failures. Jesus didn't “fall” in love with us. He *chose* to love us. His love is unconditional, universal, and free. His love is not a reward for our worth. His love gives us worth.

He invites—commands—his sisters and brothers—you and me—to reflect and radiate that kind of love out into our loveless world. **“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10).** Jesus' sad prophecy was that over time the love of most would grow cold. What an absolutely marvelous way for his stars to bear witness—to love as he loves.

Look around you. Who needs your love today? When you show the love of Jesus to others, you will **“shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.”**