

Thou Art My Lamp

For Thou art my lamp, O LORD;
And the LORD illumines my darkness.
[2 Samuel 22:29](#)

In the depths of the earth there are caves where no light is able to reach their caverns. When you descend into this world there are animals who, as they continually live in total darkness, are born without eyes because they will never need them. Spelunkers often use bright head lamps to find their way through the maze of stalactites and stalagmites, and if the light goes out, they will become confused, run into the jagged rocks, and may never find their way out. When there is no light in such a place, you can hold your hand right in front of your face and not be able to see it. It is utter darkness. Your eyes will never accommodate to the darkness, no matter how long you may be in the cave. And, after a time, that darkness is oppressive and frightening until the light is turned on again.

I remember visiting Merrimac Caverns when I was in my twenties and being fascinated with this underworld until the guide turned out the lights and we stood in complete darkness. Even though I knew my mother was with me, it was as if I was alone. I lifted my hand to my face, touched my cheek, and yet I could not see my fingers. My eyes strained to catch some glimpse of shape or color, and yet there was none. I remember distinctly a feeling of fear beginning to rise from deep within my heart, and I did not want to be in that place any longer. I was very relieved when the guide turned the lights back on, and especially relieved when we stepped out into the light of day.

Living without the Lord is to walk in complete darkness. We easily lose our way. Our steps are unsure and the way that once looked right to us dissolves into a welter of confusion and ends in death. Because we lack the light of the Lord, we are unable to discern danger and so we run into situations that will hurt us. When the spelunker in the cave turns his lamp back on, there is great relief and a sense of joy as he is able to continue on his way in safety. In the same way God allows us to walk safely in His light, as Jesus said in John 8:12: **“I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.”** If you are a follower of Jesus, you have His light with you at all times.

Thou art my lamp is located in the midst of a wonderful song of praise by King David that comprises all of Chapter 22 of Second Samuel. In this song David is exclaiming how God has helped him throughout his life.

When we look at the phrase *For Thou art my lamp* more closely, we must not overlook two small words: *For* and *my*. It is very important to realize the strength of these words. In the King James version the word *For* is also translated *Doubtless*. David states that he has *no doubt* that God is his lamp. David had experienced many instances where he was in the midst of darkness as enemies surrounded him, but God showed Himself faithful by being a light in those situations, and in giving David direction.

The word *my* is also very important as it indicates possession. God's lamp or light actually belongs to us as believers. What does this mean? It means that we have ready access to the light and guidance of God, and He will dispel darkness when it tries to invade our lives.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate how God is our lamp is to discuss what happens when we do not allow Him to be a light in our lives. We begin by looking at a familiar verse in Proverbs, Chapter 31:

She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. Proverbs 31:18

This verse is literally talking about what a hard and diligent worker the Proverbs 31 woman is, and that her lamp is on long into the night while she works. As we look at God being our lamp, let's assume the Proverbs 31 woman also does not *turn off* the lamp. She walks through each day confident in God's guiding light, not allowing oppressive darkness to invade her life. It must be emphasized that God Himself does not turn off the lamp; His light is ever burning. However, we can, through our actions, turn off that attribute of God in our life. How?

Doubt. Remember David said, "For [Doubtless] Thou art my lamp." Doubt can be especially efficient in quenching any light, particularly if we are walking through a difficult time. Our doubts and fears are all owing to the weakness of our faith. If we lack faith in who God is or what power He has, we will not believe that His light is there for us, and we will stumble in darkness. It grieves the Lord when we lack faith and allow doubt to overtake us, and He will say to us as He said to Peter, "**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**" (Matthew 14:31). Jesus does not cast us away when we are weak of faith, but He wants us to have unflinching confidence in who He is, because He wants us to walk in victory. On the other hand, Satan wants us to doubt the power, love, and guiding light of God because then we will become fearful, ineffective, and discouraged. Do not fall into that trap.

Not spending time in the Word. God's Word is a light, as declared in Psalm 119:

Thy word is a lamp to my feet,
And a light to my path.
[Psalm 119:105](#)

To neglect spending regular time in the Word of God is to remove one of the major means God uses to communicate with us and shed light in our lives. In addition, God's Word will teach anyone who has a humble heart how to walk on a godly path. He will speak to us with that still, small voice as we read the scriptures and He will illumine the truth to us. God has spoken to me in this way many times over the years, and I always feel encouraged when it happens.

When my husband and I were courting, he warned me that the life of a pastor's family is like living in a fish bowl. I knew that it was God's will for us to be married, and our wedding day was filled with joy. As we began our life together, I found that I was

becoming anxious about what people thought of my “performance” as a pastor’s wife. I even tried to struggle against my own personality and fit some unrealistic mold of how a pastor’s wife should be. This left me frustrated and it was making me lose confidence in myself and who I was in Christ. One day as I was reading in Hebrews Chapter 13, verses five and six jumped out at me—it was as if they were written specifically for me:

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"
⁶so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID.
WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?" [Hebrews 13:5-6](#)

The Lord spoke to me quietly and said, “I am your helper. You are in the center of my will as John’s wife. I will never leave you. Do not be afraid of man. Be confident in who I made you to be, and have peace in your heart.” What a joy and a relief it was to get this word from God through the scriptures! After hearing this I was able to set aside my anxiety about whether I was pleasing people, and walk in a way that I knew to be pleasing to God.

You too can hear God speak to you through His word. Spend time daily reading the Bible. I recommend beginning with the Psalms or Matthew. Be quiet before God and see what He reveals to you as you read.

Hiding sin. This is one of the biggest ways we extinguish the lamp of God in our lives, because we know the light will reveal our sin.

And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God. [John 3:19-21](#)

The natural man does not want God’s light to reveal his sin. It makes us uncomfortable and forces us to examine our faults. When sin is exposed, the conviction of the Holy Spirit shows us it should be cleaned out of our lives. If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that often we do not want to clean out the sin because it gives us some kind of satisfaction. However, if the sin is not confessed, we can never have victory over our troubles.

- Do you have an unreconciled matter between you and a brother or sister in Christ?
- Do you harbor bitterness toward your husband?
- Do you become angry with your children, a co-worker, your neighbor?
- Do you have lustful thoughts?
- Do you read, watch or listen to things that would displease God?
- Do you have an unbridled tongue?
- Do you lie?

Desire the lamp of God to be present in your life. Ask Him to shine the light on your sins, to reveal them to you one by one, and then sincerely repent. God is faithful and just and will forgive you if you come to Him in humility and confession.

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1 John 1:5-7](#)

Questions for personal study:

1. Read David's song of praise found in 2 Samuel 22:2-51.
 - How did God illumine David's darkness?
 - When has God's light shown the way through darkness for you?
2. Read Ephesians 5:1-11. What does it mean to walk as "children of light?"
3. Read Mark 5:25-34.
 - What character qualities do you see in the woman that resulted in Jesus being able to tell her that her faith had made her well?
 - Which qualities would you like to develop in your own life? Write a prayer to the Lord asking for help to increase your faith.

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