

IN A DARK PLACE

Finding hope during the darkest seasons of life



Have you ever been in the house at night when the power went out? What do you do? Most people get up right away and look for a light, but some wait for a moment to see if the lights will come back on, and when they fail to come on right away, accept the darkness and go to sleep, waiting for daylight. The same may be said of our spiritual and emotional responses. When the blues come, most immediately get up and try to find the positive, but others are too tired to get up, so they just wait and end up getting stuck in the darkness. All of us have fallen into this trap at some time or another. Some troubling event occurs at just the wrong time, and we have no motivation to get up and look for the light, so we wait.

Everyone old enough to read this has likely found themselves trapped in emotional darkness at some point in their lives. A difficulty occurs, and while we would usually get up and look for the light, the event came at the wrong time, and we can't seem to find the motivation or courage to get up, so we sit in the darkness, waiting for the sunlight of circumstance to shine on us again, but circumstances are not as predictable as the rising sun. They may not change any time soon, which puts us in a dangerous position. When we fail to get up right away and look for the light, we fall into deeper darkness. As a result, many get stuck in the darkness of their own mind for years.

The good news is that we don't have to remain stuck in the darkness because the light has come to us. That's right. The Bible gives us the key to finding the way out of the darkness. David said, "The Lord is my light," so when darkness comes, people "should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Ps. 27:1; Acts 17:27). Still, many refuse to find God and instead choose to wallow in darkness. The Bible warns of this condition, saying, "the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light" (John 3:19-21).

The Bible refers to sin as darkness, yet many people who are trapped in darkness continue chasing after sin, thinking it will somehow help, but sin only leads to more darkness. Drugs, sex, porn, abortion, lies, divorce, unwillingness to forgive, pride, anger, jealousy, and other sins only lead us deeper into the darkness, while Christ is offering light! John says, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God is the source of light. He is the source of all good things. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). He is the fountain of "love, joy, peace," and every positive emotion (Gal. 5:22).

Think of God as a power plug and yourself as a cell phone. When we plug a cell phone into the outlet, it not only provides power for the day, but the phone also provides light. In the same way, we must plug into God to give us power and light, but in order to plug into sin, we must first unplug ourselves from God, cutting our connection. If our phone remains unplugged, it will lose its power, the light will begin to fade, and it will finally shut down. Sadly, instead of going back to the plug for power, many continue to chase after sin, thinking it will spark some kind of light in them, but it only leaves them in deeper darkness. We must find the light. The good news is that the light has already come.

I once wrote a story called *The Open Door*. The story takes place in a dark prison with many cells, where people are trapped without hope. Then late one night a man comes in and unlocks all the cell doors. The next morning, as the prisoners wake up, they are told that the doors are unlocked, but many refuse to believe or check the doors. The good news of the story is that the door to the dark prison has been unlocked for those who want to come out. If you are suffering in darkness, the door is open. Jesus has made a "way of escape" (1 Cor. 10:13). He came to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isa. 61:1).

While people sit in darkness, God comes very close to them, "in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). When the light went out, God put Himself within your reach. He knew that you had no strength to come to Him, so He came to you. He is standing right beside you, but you have a part to play. You must reach out your arms and feel after Him. You must grope in the darkness, feeling all around, until you lay hold of Him, knowing that He is not far from you. God has put Himself within our reach, but we must reach out, searching through prayer and Bible study. James says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (Jas. 4:8).

It's time to stop wallowing in the darkness. God will give you the power to defeat the demons in your life. James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." As Satan puts defeating thoughts in your head, say through Christ, "Get behind Me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23)! I still remember visiting my brother at his house. While he was working in his yard, we were approached by a bee. I ran, but my brother stepped forward and swatted the bee with his glove, scaring it away. It's time for you to move on offense and let the devil flee for a change. Turn to Jesus, and you will find a new motivation for life and a new power to defeat whatever darkness is in your life.

So many people think that they naturally have light in themselves, but that is a lie. Our light comes from God, for it is "God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts" (2 Cor. 4:6). When we come to the source, God gives us light. Once you receive the light, reflect the light. "Let your light so shine before men" (Matt. 5:16). This is a crucial element in defeating the darkness. As long as we focus on our problems, we will stay in darkness. Our only hope is to focus outside of ourselves. In helping others find the light, we will find light. Many addicts of various vices found Christ and turned their life into a ministry to help others struggling with the same sins. In serving others, they found light.

Still, some continue to wallow in past darkness that they cannot seem to escape, but we must rise up, "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead" (Phil. 3:13). Let go of the past. Forgive those who have hurt you and ask forgiveness of those you have hurt. If they are dead or out of reach, simply ask God for forgiveness. No matter how bad your sins are, "He is faithful and just to forgive us" (1 John 1:9). For those fearful of the future, "do not worry," but put your trust in God, for "your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matt. 6:31, 32). Don't let past or future fears sink you into despair. God is in control.

No matter how bleak things appear, you have a bright future. Let me illustrate. Let's say you just had the worst day of your life. You got in a fight with your spouse, you lost your job, you wrecked your car, and then your house burned down. As you sit alone in an alley, a man approaches you and hands something to you. You look down and see that it is a check written out to you for two million dollars. At once, feelings of despair dissolve and give birth to hope. Why? Your circumstance is exactly the same. The check has not been cashed, you still have no money, and you have all the same problems. You fear that the check may be a joke, but the chance that it might be real inspires you with hope.

God is offering you a future full of hope. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope...And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you" (Jer. 29:11-14). In spite of how you may feel, God is not far from you. If you will just grope around in the darkness, He will be found by you, and "you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Couldn't you use a little hope?

HOPE TRACTS



**FREE BIBLE
STUDIES**

**MAKE PRAYER
REQUESTS**

**WATCH VIDEOS
ONLINE**

**READ AND DOWNLOAD
BOOKS AND TRACTS**

**PURCHASE MATERIALS
AND GET INVOLVED!**

www.hopetracts.com