

WOMEN'S SUNDAY

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WOMEN'S SUNDAY "RISE AND SHINE"

Prepared by the Women of the Metropolitan Division, Central Territory.

Holiness Meeting

Drama—Sharing the Light

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Call to Worship—"Rise and Shine"

Our worship today invites us to rise and shine and give God all the glory He deserves.

(Read or sing this chorus)

Rise and shine, and give God the glory, glory (Repeat three times)
Children of the Lord!

Congregational Song #10

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"*

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving by the Congregation

Testimonies

Selected testimonies from women's ministry members, then open to congregation

Song # 9, "Sing and Make Music in Your Hearts," HC1-T9**

Song #99, "Shine, Jesus, Shine," HC8-T19**

Song #400, "Jesus Is My Light and Song"*

Responsive Scripture Reading

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Special Music—Solo, Songsters or Praise Team

Song #349 "Now I Belong to Jesus"*

Sermon—Leave the Light On

Time of Commitment

Chorus, "This Little Light of Mine"

Closing Song

"Total Praise," HC#109**

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you
The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious unto you;
The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.
(Numbers 6:24-26)

**The Salvation Army Songbook*

***Hallelujah Choruses*

HOLINESS MEETING MESSAGE LEAVE THE LIGHT ON

BY CAPTAIN LESA DAVIS

Scripture—Ephesians 5:8–21

Introduction

You would probably walk right by him if you saw him in a crowd, but Tom Bodett has one of the most recognized voices in America. In 1986 he was hired by an ad agency to record a series of commercials for a relatively small motel chain. During the very first recording session, he ad-libbed the line that made him (and the motel company) famous: “We’ll leave the light on for you.” Motel 6 has used this slogan ever since to sell weary travelers on the idea that they will provide a safe haven, a warm welcome and a comfortable home away from home at an affordable price. Wherever you’re going, however dark the road you’re traveling, Motel 6 wants you to associate them with the idea of light.

In the Scripture reading today, the apostle Paul reminds us that we are “children of the light” (Eph. 5:8). Our job is to keep the light on and to shine the light of Christ in a dark world. Our very lives are meant to shout, “rise and shine” to the rest of the world. Fulfilling that mission means we must do three things:

1. **Connect** to the source of light by live continually in God’s presence.
2. **Reject** any association with darkness by refuse to participate in acts of darkness.
3. **Perfect** our understanding and pursuit of God’s will by pursue goodness, righteousness and truth.

1. Connect

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

This text starts with a surprising statement. “... you are light in the Lord,” states the Apostle Paul in verse eight. He didn’t say, “You should really, really try to act like you are light,” or “You are light some of the time, but kind of dark at other times.” Instead, this passage opens with a confident statement that we—ordinary people like you and me, living our ordinary, everyday lives—are light in the Lord.

The second part of the statement is the most important

part. It is a statement of what we are “in the Lord.” When the light of Christ shines on us, we are transformed by it. We are light only when and if we are connected to Him. Our connection to Him must be an intentional and continual pursuit. It means we must live in constant awareness of His presence with us and in the world around us.

Illustration: There is a famous psychology experiment known as “The Invisible Gorilla.” In the experiment, a group of people are invited to watch a short segment of a basketball-like game and silently count the number of times the team wearing white shirts passes the ball. Participants are told that their ability to concentrate on the ball is being tested. However, something very different is actually under investigation. About halfway through the game, a female student wearing a gorilla suit walks into the scene, in full view of the players, and a camera, thumps her chest and walks off. She is fully visible for almost ten seconds. This experiment has been repeated at universities around the country, with diverse audiences under varying circumstances. The results are very similar, regardless of the participants.

At the end of the filmed game segment, the majority of people can usually give an accurate count of how many times the white team passed the ball. But when asked if they noticed anything unusual during the game, most do not recall seeing anything out of the ordinary. They are asked if they noticed anything other than the players, to which some are able to give limited information about the physical setting—the color of the walls or some unusual feature of the room. Finally, they are asked if they noticed a gorilla. Regardless of age, education level or any other factor, the result is pretty consistent—more than half of participants failed to see the gorilla at all. Researchers call this “inattention blindness.” The participants don’t have a physical vision problem. They can see the white team passing the ball. They just can’t see the gorilla on the same basketball court.

(NOTE: A shortened version of the actual video can be viewed online at www.theinvisiblegorilla.com. The video is only about a minute in length and could be shown as part of the message.)

The same thing can happen in our spiritual lives. We can become so focused on our own agenda and the details of our own lives that we lose awareness of God and what He is doing in us and around us. Our text today reminds us to focus on maintaining our connection to Him, the source of all light.

We maintain our connection to the Lord in many different ways—regular worship, daily devotions and prayer time, practicing our spiritual gifts as He leads us and in spiritual friendships. We give attention and energy to practicing spiritual disciplines (holy habits) because we know that they shape our lives and help us conform more and more to the image of Christ. Practices like Bible study, prayer, meditating on scripture, fasting, solitude, intentional simplicity and confession keep us focused on the Lord and strongly connected to Him.

2. Reject

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light” (Eph. 5:11,12).

Living as children of light means we refuse to participate in acts of darkness. Today’s text begins with a reminder, “You were once darkness, but now you are light” (v. 8), which comes right on the heels of a listing of several shameful behaviors to be avoided. The writer specifically mentions sexual immorality/impurity, coarse language and greed (Eph. 5:3–7). This is the context of those things that are to be rejected because they are “shameful even to mention” (v. 12).

Sexual immorality or impurity is described by the writer using the Greek word *porneia*, a broad word covering any sexual sin. This is obviously the word from which we get the English word “pornography,” but it covers a whole range of sins including prostitution, illicit sexual relations and is even used in the Old Testament to describe idolatry (because God is described as the husband of His people). In every form, it captures the image of someone chasing after something that is off limits. In this context, it makes sense to tie sexual sin, greed and coarse language together. They are all about misusing God’s gifts. What we do with our bodies, our tongues and our minds matter to God.

Illustration: While it is sometimes assumed that pornography is only a problem for men, there has been a dramatic rise in the past several years of what some people are calling “mommy porn”—graphically erotic books written specifically for women. In 2012, the porn novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* swept the publishing world, selling 60 million copies worldwide. In 2015 a movie of this book hits the big screen, making it more readily available to everyone. Aside from the content, one of the most disturbing things about the *Fifty Shades* phenomenon, is that it has been especially popular with teens and young adults who own handheld reading devices.

What was once off limits is now available with one click. As Christian women, we must realize that this is not a sign of progress or equality.

In Ephesians 5 Paul urges us to “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (v. 11). We live in a world saturated with darkness. We are bombarded with enticements to enter into every kind of sin or shameful behavior. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can, and we must, refuse to participate in them. We can refuse to view, download, read, rent, or purchase pornography in any form. We can refuse to enter into improper conversations or joking. We can test our own thoughts and actions for any sign of pursuing ungodly things.

One simple way to know if something is darkness or light is to simply ask, “What will this produce? Will this produce something that is good? Will this result in righteousness? Will I be closer to God’s truth if I follow this thought?” If the answer is that it will take our bodies or our minds into places that produce lust, confusion, anger or any other destructive end, then it’s fairly obvious that we should reject that action or thought. Because the world around us is indeed enticing, we must learn to listen to the Holy Spirit who is always moving us toward goodness, righteousness and truth (v. 9).

3. Perfect

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is . . . be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:15–21).

Living as children of light means we spend time and energy in order to perfect our understanding of God’s will for our lives. Paul urged the Ephesians to “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity” (v. 15, 16). He also encouraged them not be foolish, but to understand God’s will (v. 17). These instructions reinforce and build on the warning to avoid the deeds of darkness. These verses lay out a vision of what life in the Spirit (v. 18) looks like in real life.

If we are in Christ, if we are children of light, we spend our lives in pursuit of His will. We are attentive to His words and His ways. We follow His direction. We are honest with ourselves and with Him about whether our thoughts and

actions are appropriate. We invest our time and energy in things that produce goodness, righteousness and truth. We seek His will above our own.

Sometimes Christians struggle with the concept of seeking God's will in all our decisions. We may do so when choosing a career or a marriage partner. In fact, sometimes we believe the big moments in life are the only times to seek His will. This text is more concerned with finding God's intention for the way we live every day. Being wise in daily decisions, making the most of the opportunities that come our way every day, making worship a daily practice, giving thanks all the time and learning the fine art of submitting to each other should be a natural part of our relationships in the body of Christ.

All of these things are a natural outgrowth of being filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 18). With the Holy Spirit at work in us, we consider everything through the lens of what we know of the Lord and our relationship with Him. Some people have a mistaken idea that wisdom is somehow reserved for an elite group of theologians who sit around discussing the finer points of theology. In this passage we see that wisdom is available to everyone because the possibility of being filled with Holy Spirit is available to all believers. You may not have a doctorate in theology, but you can live as a wise person when you listen to His leading in your daily life. And when you do that, you will naturally make the most of every opportunity for seeking goodness, righteousness and truth even when the days are evil (v. 16).

Another natural result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is that our lives will overflow with thanksgiving, singing and worship (vs. 19, 20).

Illustration: One way of thinking about a life of continual thanksgiving and worship is to think of living your life out of the overflow of God's goodness. Obviously, it would be very difficult—probably impossible—to spend every minute of every day simply being thankful and singing

God's praises. We have to work, sleep, eat, shop and do all the other "tasks" of life. The concept here, though, is that we are so filled with the Holy Spirit that thanksgiving, joy, worship and singing naturally spill out over the top of those other things. When we fill our minds and lives with the things of God (back to those holy habits), they just naturally come out in our daily interactions.

The most troublesome part of this text comes at the very end when Paul instructs the Ephesians (and us) to submit to one another. Many people, and especially women, struggle with the idea of submission. Are we supposed to be doormats for others to walk on? Are we supposed to simply defer to the men in our lives? As Christian women, don't we have rights, gifts and abilities of our own?

In this case, Paul is simply telling us that all believers, men and women, must reject self-centeredness and give preference to the good of others. We submit to each other (seek the good for each other) because we submit to Christ. Our earthly relationships mirror our spiritual relationship with Christ. This is mutual submission, not one person or even one gender submitting to another, but the entire Christian community working together to seek God's will and His goodness for each other. We follow Jesus' pattern of sacrificial love in our interactions with each other. Our primary commitment and submission are to the Lord, and our relationship to each other is an expression of that love.

Conclusion

Since 1986, Motel 6 has been leaving the light on for weary travelers. Whether you like their motels or not, whether you've ever visited one of them, you know their slogan. Is the same true of you today? Are you leaving the light of Christ on for others around you? Are you living as a child of light? Do the words of the simple Sunday school chorus, "This Little Light of Mine," describe you? Are you letting your light shine every day?

Invitation and Commitment

Sing the chorus, "This Little Light of Mine."

Drama

SHARING THE LIGHT

Cast—Four people. Player 1 should project a smug, almost arrogant attitude.

Props needed: A lamp that can be plugged in and turned on, an extension cord, four candles, lighter or matches. If possible, lower the room lights to fifty percent.

Player 1: (Enters, places a lamp on a table and plugs it in.) I have come to share my light. (Turns on lamp)

Player 2: (Enters with an unlit candle and a book of matches) I have come to share my light. (Lights candle)

Player 1: (Looks at Player 2) Mine's brighter.

Player 2: That's nice. But I don't think it matters. Light is light.

Player 1: Oh, it matters. And my light is brighter.

Player 2: But mine helps me see.

Player 1: I can see better.

Player 2: And I can take my light into other dark areas. (Moves to her left.)

Player 1: I can move my light, too.

(Moves toward Player 2, but stops suddenly when cord reaches its end.)

Player 2: (Looks at Player 1, smiles smugly and moves one more step left.)

Player 1: (Tilts lamp toward Player 2, trying to reach her)

Player 2: I guess you have limitations to your brightness.

Player 1: (Returns lamp to table, then runs over and blows out Player 2's candle.) I guess you do, too.

Player 2: (Re-lights candle with match.)

Player 1: No fair. (Thinking, runs to side of stage and retrieves an extension cord, showing it to Player 2, holding it up as a trophy.)

Player 2: (aside) This can't be good.

Player 1: (unplugs light, plugs in extension cord and re-plugs light) Ta-da! (Picks up light and moves next to Player 2.)

Player 2: Okay, so you added six feet to your distance.

Player 1: Correction. I added six feet in every direction. (Moves around with lamp to prove her point.)

Player 2: Congratulations. But how does that get your light into the world? What about those in the back of the room?

Player 1: They'll just have to come a little closer.

Player 2: And what about those outside?

Player 1: They'll have to come inside.

Player 2: Once again I see limitations to your light. (Moves to blow out Player 2's candle, but she shields it with her hand.)

Player 1: No fair!

Player 2: And while your light is brighter than mine, I don't know how you can really share it.

Player 1: What do you mean?

Player 2: Watch this.

(Player 3 enters with a candle, walks to Player 2 and lights it from her candle.)

Player 1: (Points lamp at Player 3, who shields her eyes)

Shine!

(Player 3 withdraws to the side.)

Player 2: I have more candles. I'm willing to share.

Player 1: No thanks. I think I'm good with what I have.

Player 2: If you say so. (Exits with Player 3)

Player 1: See, it's not so bad.

Player 4: (Enters with an unlit candle.)

Can you give me a light?

Player 1: (Stares blankly at Player 4, then turns off her lamp.)

Martyn Thomas is a soldier of the Norridge Citadel corps. Printed with permission of the author.

Responsive Scripture Reading

RISE AND SHINE

(Based on Ephesians 5:8–21)

Reader 1: Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Reader 2: Wake up! You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

All: Live as children of light!

Reader 2: The fruit of light is goodness, righteousness and truth.

All: Live as children of light!

Reader 1: Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness.

All: Live as children of light!

Reader 2: It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

All: Live as children of light!

Reader 1: Make the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

All: Live as children of light!

Reader 2: Don't be foolish, but understand the Lord's will.

All: Live as children of light!

Reader 1: Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Reader 2: Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord.

Reader 1: Give thanks to God for everything.

Reader 2: Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

All: Live as children of light!



WOMEN'S SUNDAY AFTERNOON TEA

BY CAPTAIN HEATHER HOLMAN

Rise 'N' Shine

Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-21

Introduction

Use this special tea as an event to which the women can invite their friends with the goal of introducing them to the women's ministries program.

Decorations

Teapots, teacups, sunbursts and vibrantly colored flowers will make the room feel cheery and alive. Visit a thrift store and purchase enough teapots for centerpieces and teacups for each woman attending the tea. Also, buy enough extra teacups to use as invitations. Ask each member of the women's ministries group to write invitations to give to their friends. Attach them with string to the teacups. This will serve as a reminder to their guest as well as provide a nice keepsake.

Use white tablecloths. Place large sunbursts made from bright yellow card stock, felt or foam under each teapot. Fill each pot with vibrantly colored flowers, either silk or fresh. Have teacups at each place setting. The women will use them and then take them home as a remembrance of the event. Provide tissue and a plastic bag to put the teacups in at the end of the meal.

Refreshments

Place two or three small rectangular holders around the teapot centerpiece with assorted tea bags for the guests to choose from. Have piping hot water available to make the tea. Serve individual bird's nest breakfast cups, along with an assortment of scones, whipped cream, jellies and jams. There are a number of recipes available on the Internet. Following are a couple of sites:

<http://tiny.cc/7vcehx>,
<http://tiny.cc/hzcehx>

Welcome

Play contemporary Christian music as women enter the room. Assign members of the women's ministries group to greet the women as they arrive and escort them to their assigned table. Prepare bright yellow name badges made of construction paper, felt or foam, cut in the shape of a sunburst and lettered with their name and the Scripture verses from Ephesians 5:19, 20. Have blank ones available for any woman whose name was not available ahead of time.

Program

Once the welcome and opening prayer have been given, serve the bird's nest breakfast cups along with English muffins or assorted breads, followed by the scones and tea. After the meal has been served, allow the women time to visit with each other while the music is played softly in the background. Assign a hostess to each table to encourage the women to get to know each other and specifically include those women who are guests and may not have been to the women's ministries program before.

Ask the women's ministries secretary to share about the group, day and time of the regular meeting, and the program content of upcoming meetings.

Thank the leaders for their time and dedication to the program. Give each of them a small bouquet of brightly colored flowers as an expression of appreciation.

Ask another member of the group to lead in singing a chorus that expresses praise and thanks to the Lord. "Sing and Make Music," by General John Larsson, #9 (HC1-T9) from *Hallelujah Choruses* would be a good choice.

Share the devotional "Be Imitators of God" and close with prayer.

Be Imitators of God

Read Ephesians 5:8–24.

We are constantly challenged on the use of our time. No matter what stage of life, your time is valuable and what you do with it matters. It seems as though someone constantly wants us to do something for them. Women are the caregivers, the listeners and encouragers. As Christians, we want to share our love and show Christ through all we do.

Ephesians 5:1, 2 states, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” Being an imitator of Christ is to live in love and out of love, just as Christ demonstrated His love to us. Every Christian is called to imitate God because we are His children. As children imitate their parents, we are called to imitate our heavenly Father’s love to everyone we meet. Each day we are challenged to set our hearts on things above, to imitate Christ and in so doing becoming more like Him every day. This should be our heart’s desire.

Is there a habit in your life that you need to break? Have you been imitating the world and its false hope of secular love? Is there an area that you need to avoid? Ephesians 4:22–24 gives us encouragement when it says, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

We are created beings, made in His image, to be His hands and feet. We no longer need to live in darkness, but are His lights walking in His ways. Be encouraged today that the old self can be gone and your attitude can be centered on Christ and imitating Him. Galatians 5:22, 23 describes the fruit of the Spirit, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” What evidence do others see that the Holy Spirit controls your life? What fruit of the light do you see in your life?

As we encourage one another, we are called to “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph 5:19, 20).

How then should spirit-filled believers relate to one another? Ephesians 5:21 states, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” When our attitudes and hearts are centered on Christ, we will give of ourselves to others out of love for Him. Christ, who was without sin, took our sin on Himself out of love for us. We are to empty ourselves of selfish desires and to reflect His love by serving others.

What aspect of your Christian life do you want to practice more consistently? What can you do this week to make your Christian living more consistent? How can you relate to others today in new, joyful ways?

ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM

BY MAJOR KATHY HELLSTROM

Program Outline

Welcome

Invocation

Luncheon

*The Light of the Past
(Highlights of the Past Year and Finance Report)*

*Singing In the Light
"Sunshine, Sunshine," Song #316*
"Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam," Song # 844**

*Letting Your Light Shine
Local Leaders Recognition*

*Special Music
Solo "Shine" by Matt Redman
(Available at <http://www.praisecharts.com/matt-redman>
or choose another song about shining your light)*

*Sharing the Light of His Word
"Rise and Shine"*

*Closing Song
"Jesus Bids Us Shine" Song #841**

Benediction

**The Salvation Army Song Book*

Theme Scripture

"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

Decorations and Centerpieces

Place a small table in front of the podium and cover it with a tablecloth. Arrange different types of sources of light on it—flashlight, lantern, small table lamp and candle. Place them at different heights so they can be more easily seen. Intersperse with silk flowers and leaves.

Ask the women who own kerosene lamps if you can borrow them. You will need one for each table. If you don't have enough, check at thrift stores and garage sales for additional lamps. Fill them with oil and check the wicks to be sure they can be lit. Set them on a mirror and arrange a few silk flowers around them.

Table Favors

Purchase small, inexpensive flashlights and put them at each place. These can sometimes be purchased at the 99 cent store or check www.banders.com, where they are just over \$1.00 each. Another source is www.orientaltrading.com where they are \$6.00 a dozen.

Local Officer Recognition Introduction

The women's ministries program in The Salvation Army has always tried to be a light to those who have been walking in darkness. The women who belong to this worldwide organization have been serving their communities for over a century, visiting the sick, raising money for missions, doing service projects for their local corps and a myriad of other project which have helped to make their community and the world a little brighter.

These programs don't just happen. There has to be someone who is willing to organize, recruit and follow through if anything is to get accomplished. It is hard to find good, dedicated local leaders who are willing to serve in this way. We are very blessed to have leaders in our group who have been shining their light over the past year.

Invite Leaders Forward

At this time, we'd like to recognize those who have so faithfully served in our women's ministries programs this last year.

Call the women by name to the front giving their title and explaining briefly their responsibilities.

Challenge

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5:14 – 16, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Today we praise our Father in heaven for the good deeds you have done in His name. We thank you for the countless hours you have spent fulfilling your role in our women's ministries (or Home League or the name of the program). We have been able to accomplish great things and have had wonderful programs because of your willingness to give of yourselves and in so doing letting your light shine. We are truly blessed by you and as a token of our appreciation we'd like to give you a decorative candle to remind you to continue to let your light shine wherever you may be. *(Give a decorative candle to the leaders.)*

Prayer

Let's pray. Father, we thank You that You give us the opportunity to serve You. Jesus came to be the light of the world, setting before us the perfect example that we are called to follow. We thank You for each of the women before us who are following You; for their service; for their hearts, and we ask that You would continue to use them as shining lights in a dark world. May we all shine our lights before men and point them to a loving Savior who gave His all for each of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Rise and Shine

(Designate someone at each table to dim and turn on and off the kerosene lamp during the devotional at the appropriate time. The lights in the room should also be dimmed and turned back on again when called for. If the room is too dark to see what they are reading, the speaker could use a small flashlight.)

Wherever you go you find lights of different kinds: fluorescent lights, table lamps, chandeliers, candles, spotlights, streetlights, flashlights and headlights. All of these different types of light come in numerous styles. But no matter what they look like, all have a common purpose, which is to provide a source of light so people can see where they are going. When they are turned on, the light dispels the darkness.

When you get up in the middle of the night, it's much easier to reach your destination if there is some kind of light to help you find your way. You may keep a flashlight by your bed, or have nightlights in various locations in your house. When you try to find your way in the dark, you end up either stumbling over some miscellaneous item that was left on the floor, or ramming your toe into a table leg. You might even trip and fall. You need some source of light to help you safely reach your destination.

Light is an interesting phenomenon, as light and darkness cannot co-exist. This is something that we know, but don't often think about. The instant you turn on a light, there is no more darkness. A room cannot be light and dark at the same time. It's either one or the other. The first thing we do when we enter a dark room is to turn on the light. Why is that so? Because we know that the moment we flip the switch, there will be no more darkness.

I've asked one woman at each table to dim the lamp on her table. *(Don't turn them off completely, just enough so the room is a little darker. Also have someone dim the room lights.)* See what a difference light can make? In this day, we would find it very difficult to function without electric lights. Remember the last time the power went out during a storm and how difficult it was to do everyday tasks?

Do you know that the Bible has a lot to say about light? Listen to what Paul says to the Ephesians on this subject of light. *(Read Ephesians 5:8–21.)*

Paul tells the Ephesians that they would be “light in the Lord” (v. 8). Before they knew Christ, they were walking in darkness, but once they received Him as Lord and Savior, they were walking in the light. Once we become children of the light, we are to live like Jesus. Paul goes on to tell the Ephesians, and us, that our lives should be filled with goodness, righteousness and truth. We live in a world where people no longer have a moral center. They have turned their backs on God. Therefore, it's more important than ever for Christians to live lives filled with goodness, righteousness and truth.

In Revelation 22:5 we read, “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.” God will give us light. He is the ultimate source of light.

Matthew records Jesus telling His followers to let their light shine before men. He said, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Light doesn't do any good if it's hidden. It must be exposed to

fulfill its purpose. When we are living as children of the light, the light we shed dispels the darkness. We can point the way to the Savior. When our lives are filled with goodness, righteousness and truth, the light that shines forth dispels the darkness.

(Ask the assigned women to turn off the table lamps and the room lights so the room is in darkness. Once it is dark, light one candle.)

Even a little light can go a long way. When the room is in darkness, this candle seemed quite bright. Your eyes automatically turn to it. We are naturally attracted to the light.

(Have the women turn up the table lamps.)

While we could see with just the one candle lit, it is certainly much easier to see when the table lamps were turned up. *(Turn on room lights.)* Turning on the overhead room lights made the room even brighter.

When we let our light shine, we dispel the darkness. People will be able to see how our lives are different and it will make a difference in their lives. We saw that one candle helped to dispel the darkness. But as more sources of light were added, it became progressively easier. If the world's darkness is to be extinguished, it will take all of us doing our part. For too long Christians have been hiding their light and it has hurt the world in which we live. We must wake up and allow our light to shine to help others to find their way to Christ.

We should be following Paul's direction and “Live as children of light. Having nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them . . . everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible” (Eph. 5:8–13). In other words, it's time to rise and shine!

Gleaming Light

From the deep dark earth it came
No beauty of it's own
Until the Master craftsman with His hand
Designed and shaped this simple stone
With form and symmetry His own.

Soon icy brilliance glowed intense
The craftsman's hand had turned
reluctant fragment into gleaming light.
Reflecting beauty, dancing free
A gem of pure intensity.

Lord take the rough edges of this finite me
And fashion for eternity
The tarnished parts of my humanity
A soul reflecting Thy eternal light
A precious gem of beauty in Thy sight!

—Colonel Valda E. Bate

