

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

This powerful passage from John 1 is read and quoted often, particularly around Christmas, but it's a strong comfort at any time of the year. When I pray, I often form mental pictures of what I'm praying about, and this mental picture of the Light shining in the darkness is especially helpful to me.

We're all pretty well-acquainted with darkness of one kind or another. Watch the news. Visit a hospital. Struggle with illness: physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. Grieve the loss of a loved one. Lose your job or suffer a serious financial crisis. These are things that touch all of us at one time or another. I think it's safe to say that in many ways, the world itself is dark; sometimes, that darkness becomes up close and personal. When we're in the midst of it, we don't always see the Light, or feel it, at least not immediately. And yet, the Light shines on.

One of the reasons I like this passage is because it's realistic and honest. Nowhere does it guarantee that the Light will remove all the darkness. For now, the darkness is still in the world and often invades our own hearts, as well. And yet ...

No matter how strong the darkness seems to be, it does not overcome the Light. No matter how things look, how discouraged or even hopeless we may sometimes feel, the Light shines on. No matter what, the Light is more powerful than the darkness, and it continues to shine.

For those who follow the Light, there's always hope. There's always joy. We have instructions from Philippians 4:

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

I've heard it said, "The battle is in the mind." And I believe that's true. When the darkness moves in and tries to set up housekeeping, remember that it CANNOT overcome the Light. Picture the Light in your mind, and ask for God's help to keep your thoughts steady according to the Philippians passage. The Light is our truth, our comfort, our rock of safety in this world. And the darkness cannot overcome it.