



*The* SHADOW  
KINGDOM

“THAT YE MIGHT WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD UNTO ALL PLEASING, BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK, AND INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD; STRENGTHENED WITH ALL MIGHT, ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS POWER, UNTO ALL PATIENCE AND LONGSUFFERING WITH JOYFULNESS; GIVING THANKS UNTO THE FATHER, WHICH HATH MADE US MEET TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT: WHO HATH DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, AND HATH TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON”

***COLOSSIANS 1:10-13***



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# SHADOW KINGDOM

## **LEARNING TO LIVE LIFE IN THE LIGHT**

How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb? ...Alright, I know, that's a horrible way to start a book. However, the truth is, this completely lame joke isn't all that far from the truth. Even though there has never been a 'brighter' time to live on this planet, it seems our days are getting dimmer. Although there has never been so much genius and as many educational advances as there are today, we are growing duller. Over the past several years the church of Jesus Christ has become the punchline of many jokes because the lights are on...yet nobody's home. As we sit Sunday after Wednesday in pews that are becoming more and more empty, as we watch the mass exodus of young believers from the church, as we witness those given victory live a life in defeat - the uncomfortable questions must be asked; *what has happened to the light?*

In 1 John 1:5 we find that our God *IS* light. He doesn't *have* light. He doesn't even *make* light. He Himself consists of LIGHT, and as such, in God there is NO darkness. None. Not a dark corner. Not a dimly lit room. In God there is NO darkness. Yet, although we serve a God of light, even though there is no darkness in Him- John 3:19 tells us that as people *we love darkness rather than light*. It is here that we find the paradox of current Christianity; we serve a God of light, yet *we love the dark*.

It's no secret that when light is present, darkness must leave. If you find yourself in a dark room with no way to see- and then you flip on a light switch- darkness vanishes. This is exactly what the Bible describes as the life of a Christian- because with God present in our lives, darkness has to go! However, although we may serve the God of light, though we may claim His bright ways as a believer; many of us have failed to forfeit the darkness. This leaves us with a compromised Christianity, a faith that mixes both light and dark and which results in a shadow or silhouette of the real thing.

The reality is, this type of faith is a figment of our imagination. Biblically there are only two Kingdomly options, *The Kingdom of the God of Light* or *The Kingdom of The Prince of Darkness*. If you are saved - you are royalty in the Kingdom of Light. Your feet and paths are lit by The King of Light. Darkness has been defeated in your life and you have now been transferred into the Kingdom of Light which will know no end...but don't be fooled- if you say that you have fellowship with the light, if you claim Christ the light and life of men- yet you walk in darkness- the bible says; *you are a liar* (1 John 1:6).

The God of light shines brighter than ever. His Kingdom has never been more illuminated than It is right now. Yet if our lives stand in the way of the Light, then the reality is, we are blocking the very light meant to define us. Instead of devoting our allegiance to the Kingdom of Light, instead of denouncing the Kingdom of Darkness, we have settled for the make believe *Shadow Kingdom*.

**What if this generation would rise up and admit;  
*we have a light problem?***

What if we confessed our dark desires? What if we agreed to do whatever it takes to always and at all times singularly walk in the light? What if we humbled ourselves and admit that God, His plan,

His church, His Word, and His ways are not the problem; *I am*. What we stopped the shadows. What if we dispelled the darkness from our lives? What if we allowed the God of Light to transform us into the Light of this world?

**JOIN THE NORTHERN OHIO YOUTH CAMP FOR  
A DEEP DIVE INTO THE TRUTH ABOUT DARKNESS,  
AND A LIFE CHANGING LESSON ABOUT THE LIGHT.**

# **ABOUT THIS BOOK**

The Northern Ohio Youth Camp is completely committed to reaching a generation for Christ, not simply for one week out of the year, but for a lifetime. It is for this reason that we offer special studies such as *The Shadow Kingdom* each year, intended to spiritually challenge, strengthen, and encourage young people and adults to grow further in Christ.

While at camp, it's easy to feel safe, sheltered, and secure from the cruel world that we live in. A week away from the news, our neighbors, and the nonsense of the culture- allows for most of us to feel physically exhausted, yet spiritually invigorated. Yet the truth is too often this causes for a great conflict to take place upon returning home as reality hits us full speed ahead. The book that you are now holding in your hands, *was sent to you, from God*. That's right-signed, sealed, delivered; *it's yours*. God placed you in this precise place in order that you would receive that which you need to spiritually succeed. Inside of this book you will find lessons, notes, questions, homework, and more. Each of which are specifically designed for *your* benefit.

We absolutely promise that this book will be of *NO* use to you while sitting on top of your dresser, in your nightstand drawer, or next to that french-fry under the passenger seat of your car (*ew!*) We equally promise that if you will truly take to heart the Promises and Word of God which saturates the pages of this book- *your life will never be the same*. Not because of anything we offer here at the NOYC, not because of a spiritual high, a chill down your spine, or a clump of Christian cliches- but *today* your life can be forever changed as you follow the lighted paths of The Eternal King of Light.

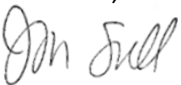
This book will be used during the week of the NOYC 2022 for our daily devotion class. Each day you will find the full lesson in its original form at the beginning of each of the 4 chapters. Following each lesson, you will find the devotion class notes for the day, where you will be able to follow along and take notes LIVE during devotion class.

Next, you'll notice that each lesson is followed by a set of personal questions regarding the theme of the day. We **highly** encourage you to take the time, either while at camp or upon returning home, to work through these questions. Head knowledge will never help defeat our darkness, but real life application of The Light always will!

Then, you'll find that each chapter offers bonus content which will be helpful in continuing in your study through *The Shadow Kingdom*. Lastly, in part two of this book you will find *The Shadow Kingdom: Hands on*, which features the 16 personal prayer stations which you will get to experience while at camp. It would be greatly beneficial to review and even go back through each of these stations once you are back home.

Know that along with the great cloud of witnesses which surround you, the staff of the NOYC have a sincere love and dedication to your spiritual wellbeing. Throughout the entire year, YOU are being lifted up in our prayers. It is our desire that through this book you will come to know and experience Christ in a more personal, powerful, and productive way. If there is anything we can do to help you along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to our camp coordinator at the number listed below.

In Christ,



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# THE TWO KINGDOMS

What is darkness? Our perception of darkness is usually brightened with minute amounts of light, and therefore we don't fully understand darkness, not the deep unrelenting darkness. We understand the darkness based off of situations we have been in. Like for instance, have you ever walked through your house at nighttime with the lights off? Has someone turned off the light on you while you were in the basement? What about walking through the woods after the sun goes down? Sure, these are dark situations, but is that *real* darkness? What I mean to say is, is that a darkness with the absence of any kind of light at all? In most dark situations there is an *awareness* of darkness, yet there is almost always some sort of ambient light which is pushing the real darkness away. Maybe it is a night light in the next room that gives you your bearings. Perhaps it is a light flickering off of some electronic device which gives you a point of reference. The reflection of the moon or light of the stars gives you enough light to see images or figures around you, or perhaps they give enough light so that you can actually see where you are stepping in the woods. In short, we probably don't understand what it means to be in true darkness because we almost always have some small amount of actual light that dispels part of the darkness. Yet true darkness, is a disorienting, hopeless void which is *absent of any kind of light whatsoever!*

So, what does light do? As light enters into areas, real physical areas in our surroundings, it really only has one purpose. It's not to find an object that was hidden, and it does not come into an area with the intention of illuminating that area for better visibility. Its' purpose, the only real thing that light is intended to do is; *make the darkness vanish!* That's really it, the light literally overpowers and vanquishes the darkness! As a byproduct to that victory, we reap the benefits of being able to see, we are able to find that which was before lost in the dark, but this is all because the light simply made the darkness

go away. It's in this simple understanding that we find that there are two opposing sides; a *Kingdom of unrelenting darkness* and a *Kingdom of vanquishing light*. These two kingdoms, one of which belongs to Satan and his demons, and one which belongs to God in His glory, are forever and always opposing one another. Humanity is created in one of these kingdoms, chooses to enter into the other and finds itself inadvertently creating a *third kingdom* that wasn't there before at all. Because of this mankind now is in desperate need of someone to save them, and all this happens in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis.

**“IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH. AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID; AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP. AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVED UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS. AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT: AND THERE WAS LIGHT. AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT, THAT IT WAS GOOD: AND GOD DIVIDED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS.”**

**-GENESIS 1:1-4-**

I can't fathom the darkness that covered the face of the earth in the beginning. In God's great design and plan He created the substance of this world, the heavens and the earth, and they sat in utter darkness. They were free of any of the beauty God would eventually make in them. They lacked any of the glory that the Creator would infuse into them. There were no amazing paintings sprawled across the sky or picturesque sights to be seen across the landscape. God had not yet put all of His creativity and awesome design on display. None of the vivid colors or breathtaking sights were known yet, because in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, but it was not the heaven or earth we think of. It was simply a black void, taking no shape or form. This does not seem like the handy work of God, yet we must make two important distinctions as we look at the creation of the universe: first, that this in fact is how God began His creation, *in the darkness*. Secondly, in this first step of God's creation He did not bask in the glory of it. He does not call this dark, formless void good!

But at a simple command; *“Let there be light”*, God sees that which is good. The good wasn’t found in something forged in the darkness. It was not in the shapeless, formless Earth that lacked any depth, dimension, creativity or beauty that God called good. When God speaks, and light comes bursting forth onto the scene, making the dark vanish, God calls the light itself *good*. The light that radiated from God, light which existed to separate the darkness away from what God would create. Light which would illuminate all of God’s handiwork and ingenuity. Light that would showcase the love and power and majesty of God in every detail of His creation. Light that would magnify His glory. Light that would allow every tree, rock, bird, river, mountain, creature, and human to live in perfect peace and harmony. Light itself is the first thing which God calls *good*.

As the creation story unfolds and we see all of the wonderful things that God brings into existence we must grasp this reality, that all of what God creates and everything that God calls good is known to be so *because of the light*. Without the light, which God created, there would be no way to see the rest of His creation. Now, I have no doubt God could have created all of the universe, in all of its’ wonder in that darkness and it would have been amazing, but what would the point have been? God is not the author of chaos or confusion and He knew exactly what He was doing. God created a world so perfect and beautiful that he wanted to see His creation, so He created light, and it was good. This world which God created in the beginning was a place free of pain or suffering. There was no anger or jealousy. Hatred and ill intent did not plague God’s original creation. Death and disease were not a part of this design. The light touched everything and everything was good.

**“AND GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND, BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD.  
AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE SIXTH DAY.”**

**-GENESIS 1:31-**

Part of that *“everything”*, was *us*. Humanity formed of the dust of the earth and given the breath of life from God Himself. We were the crowning jewel of God’s creation. In all of the beauty and

spectacular design of the creator, when He came to make man, He chose to make us in His image and His likeness. He made us as a replica of Himself, cast from the die of the Creator, to be like Him in every way. What image might this be? I mean sure we had arms and legs, a torso, some feet and of course a head....but is this all that it meant to be made in His image? What of His likeness? What of his character, nature and desires? The creation of man was designed by God Himself to be as perfect as the light which He made. Without jumping too far ahead, just trust me for a moment when I say, man was made in the image and likeness of the light of God itself.

God made man holy, pure, undefiled, kind, loving, good. He gave man dominion over all of His creation. Every beast of the field, fowl of the air, fish of the sea, and even down to the tiniest insect that crawled on the face of the earth. Everything was under the rule of mankind. They lacked for nothing because every fruit and herb yielding plant gladly gave its' very best to man as he gently tended this beautiful creation. Even the elements were docile, and man didn't worry about finding some cool refreshing place in the heat of summer or finding someplace to warm himself in the cold of winter. Everything that God made was perfect, and He put man right in the middle of it all to watch over it. It was a Kingdom made by God, made to be lived in, enjoyed and seen in the fullness of the light of God.

In the midst of this beautiful garden God planted a tree which contained the knowledge of good and evil. I know this may seem like a dark spot in all of this glorious light, but I would like for us to view this tree in a different way. Instead of seeing this tree as something God put in their midst to set them up for failure, or God putting a temptation there that they could not refuse, try to see it like this; *God was protecting them with this tree.* Adam and Eve lived in paradise and literally walked in fellowship with God. Did you ever think about why they were able to do that? What did God do that allowed them to be in perfect communion with their Creator? Why was God willing to come and dwell with man in the garden? It wasn't just that everything was good and perfect, but it was because God's Kingdom was a Kingdom of the purest light with absolutely no fellowship with the darkness. The reason is because He locked evil,

that darkness that would eventually confound all of humanity and corrupt the Kingdom of God's light, inside of *this one tree*. God, who is Holy in all of His being, separated the darkness- not just from His creation but also from Himself! ***The darkness was trapped in a tree!*** There was nothing for Adam and Eve to do but live in perfect harmony and peace in the kingdom of light, because God had taken the darkness and hid it from the knowledge of His creation. How hard is it to hide darkness? The only way to do it is with the light and this is exactly what God did out of His great love for His creation. The light of God was shining on all that was, and it was all good. There was nothing evil, depressing, malicious or dark that touched anything because God took that side of His creation and separated it from that which was good!

We know what happens next. For some time, things are quite literally perfect. Then one day something happened. Satan, in all of his slithery sliminess, came to tempt mankind with *the tree*. That very tree that God set up, not as a temptation, but *as protection*. That tree which kept all of the darkness at bay. The only tree which God said they could not have nor eat from. God knew that one bite from this tree would put mankind on the same path that Satan himself was on, a path of self-exultation. A pursuit of what was right in their own eyes. A path to try to be like God Himself, when in reality they already were made in His exact image, an image of light. Wouldn't you know it, that is exactly how Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit of that tree. *Take it and be enlightened, become filled with knowledge, be a god!* He claimed.

**“AND THE SERPENT SAID UNTO THE WOMAN, YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE: FOR GOD DOETH KNOW THAT IN THE DAY YE EAT THEREOF, THAT YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPENED, AND YE SHALL BE AS GODS, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL.”**

**-GENESIS 3:4-5-**

Satan was trying to convince her that her eyes were closed, and she was living in the darkness- even though God had created her in the light! Satan's temptation was simple: *eat of that tree and see the light of what God has been keeping from you*. What Adam and Eve

failed to realize was that this falsified light would not bring them to any higher authority than what they already had. They could not know good in any greater capacity, because all that they lived in was glistening in the light of God's goodness! ***The only thing eating the fruit of this tree would do was unleash the darkness.*** They would not increase, but in fact, they would diminish the domain that they already had been given. Through this tree their eyes would not actually be *opened*, but the opposite would happen, they would be *blinded* from all of the goodness which God created. If it wasn't so sad it would be ironic. The very thing Satan told them they could have, they already had, *the light*, and the only thing that they would get from taking and eating of this tree, was what God was protecting them from, *the darkness*. As we look at what happens next, we see the calamity that came from this choice.

**“AND THE EYES OF BOTH WERE OPENED, AND THEY KNEW THAT THEY WERE NAKED; AND THEY SEWED FIG LEAVES TOGETHER, AND MADE THEMSELVES APRONS. . . AND HE SAID I HEARD THY VOICE IN THE GARDEN, AND I WAS AFRAID, BECAUSE I WAS NAKED; AND I HID MYSELF.”**

**-GENESIS 3:7 &10-**

What actually happened when their “*eyes were opened*” was not some glorious enlightenment. Instead of finding something in this newfound knowledge to celebrate and rejoice in- they found only shame, resentment, and fear. Regret flooded over them both as they suddenly realized something that they had been shielded from before, and in that shame and embarrassment they heard God walking in the garden. For the first time since the beginning of God's creation we see what you and I are most accustomed to in this life as mankind hides itself from the presence of God. ***They ran to the darkness instead of standing in the light.*** With a guilt-ridden heart, with sweaty palms, and the heart-beating-out-of-your-chest feeling, which he had never known before, Adam declared “*I heard you and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.*”

The darkness had come, *the Shadow Kingdom had emerged*. That void, empty, shapeless thing, which God did call good, had been

released into His creation, casting a shadow on all the beauty that once was. Because the darkness was now creeping over His Kingdom God had no choice but to execute His judgment. He is Holy light and could not fellowship with this darkness. God begins by cursing the snake, the form which Satan took to tempt mankind. Crawling on its' belly, eating the dust of the earth would be the serpent's sentence. This might seem like an odd thing to curse Satan with, but when we understand what Satan had done, and who and what he was after- it makes more sense. Satan wanted to be like God- worshiped and adored, and he thought if he could get humanity to eat of that tree, then they would see for themselves how much better than God that he really was. He was looking for a Kingdom to rule and a people to love him. So, God took away that Kingdom of light. He cursed him to forever be in the darkness, in pursuit of that which he cannot have. To this day, Satan still lurks in the shadows, crawling on his belly and seeking whom he may devour. And who is he attempting to devour? God made humans out of dust, in a moment we will see dust is what we return to when we die, and Satan is cursed to eat the dust. His efforts are focused on *consuming every human in the darkness of his exile. Satan, who was once known as Lucifer, the morning star of God's angelic beings, is now a shadow of his former self.*

God then moves onto Eve. Where once she, like the plants of the earth, was fruitful, bringing new life made in the image of light, abundantly and with ease, she would now know physical pain like she could not have previously imagined. Childbearing would no longer be full of peace and comfort but would now be difficult, and even dangerous. The joy of new life would now only be known through the suffering of childbearing first. In her creation she was the perfect companion to her husband. Made of his flesh, complementing him in every way, a perfect addition to man. She was once at peace and unity with her husband, but now she would forever have a heart contrary to him. Now, by seeking power and authority over him, pursuing a separate and independent will from him, she is cursed, not to be under man's rule, but to no longer be in perfect union with him. *Love and companionship are now a shadow of what they once were.*



To the man who failed to listen to the voice of God, his perfect Creator, he would now know sweat and heartache. Where once there was a harmony between man and nature, there is now a conflict. Beasts that were once tame and friendly are now wild and unruly, turning from gentle creatures into dangerous predators who man could no longer rule over. Plants which once gave freely in the abundance of their fruit now require constant attention, becoming thorny and painful to work with. What was once was a cheerful and enjoyable task to do now became labor intensive, stressful and necessary for survival. Man fell to the mercy of the elements: rain, wind, sun, snow, and ice would all now be a frustrating part of simply enduring each day. Life, which was pleasant and eternal, was now difficult and fragile. The beasts, the land, the elements, and even time, all used to be good in the life of man. Now they work to bring about the death of man. ***All of God's creation, life itself, is now a shadow of what it once was.***

God looked at what He had made, what once shone brightly in the glory of His light, and now all He could see were *shadows*. What He once called good in His light, now He cursed in the darkness. What He once wanted to fellowship with, He now chose to cast out. Now, because they chose to live in darkness, away from the warmth and comfort of God's light, man would no longer run and hide from the presence of God, instead they would be banished from it, *exiled into the darkness with no way to return to the light.*

**“THEREFORE THE LORD GOD SENT HIM FORTH FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN, TO TILL THE GROUND FROM WHENCE HE WAS TAKEN.”**

**-GENESIS 3:23-**

In the treachery and trickery of Satan, and the misunderstanding of God's glorious light, man had now created its' own kingdom, a kingdom that he would have no control over. A kingdom he thought would be as good as God's. Instead, what he found himself with was *a broken kingdom, consumed by darkness*. The history of man is not often highlighted with bright spots of love, unity and peace. Far more often mankind plunges itself further into the darkness. Our

natural inclination is to violence, hatred, jealousy, cheating, lying, stealing, corruption, self-centeredness and the list could go on and on- each of which are the results of this shadowy kingdom. The fact is that left to our own nature, the nature we brought upon ourselves that fateful day in the garden, we have no hope of ever seeing the light of day. However, God did not leave us to our own selves!

We did not quite finish with Satan's curse earlier. God cursed Satan by taking away the kingdom he sought after and the people he desired to rule over, but then he took it one step further. Infused in this curse was not just the separation of God's Kingdom from Satan and mankind, but also the defeat of this Kingdom born in the darkness and the reunion of God to His creation!

**“AND I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN THEE AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN THY SEED AND HER SEED; IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD, AND THOU SHALT BRUISE HIS HEEL.”**

### **-GENESIS 3:15-**

Satan may not have gotten the kingdom he was after, but he got a kingdom, nevertheless. Ruling from the darkness of this Shadow kingdom Satan works tirelessly, like an angry despot to maintain his rule over this world. But God never intended to let Satan have the final victory in this world! This is the first prophecy in the scripture that tells of a King to come in a new Kingdom, exemplifying all of God's great light! After all this is God's creation, He pulled it out of the void of darkness once before and He certainly could do it again! Years and years begin to go by, Satan lurking in the shadows, corrupting the hearts of men and furthering their wicked nature that he tricked them into all those years ago. Satan thought his kingdom was secure and that he was winning the war! All the while God is patiently working, separating a people for His Kingdom. Shedding light into the darkness of Satan's empire through the divinely inspired commandments which He gave to His people. God was providing lands, conquering enemies, being merciful and loving and kind to them. Separating them from the wickedness and darkness of all of the regions of Satan's kingdom, so that He could ensure a bloodline for the King which was to come.

Now we fast forward about six or seven thousand years from when Satan claimed control over this Shadow Kingdom. God chose to use a young unsuspecting girl to fulfill the promise He made all of those many years ago. Through the seed of this woman, through the curse of her painful childbearing, she would deliver the One who would crush the head of the serpent once and for all. In a tiny town called Bethlehem, in a dirty, dusty manger ***God sends His light back into the world!*** It comes in the most peculiar and vulnerable of ways. Not like in the beginning, when the light overpowered everything. This time God Himself, the very source of light for His Kingdom, wrapped Himself in the weakness of our flesh, the very flesh that is consumed by the darkness of this world, and became a man! The very thing which God created to be an image of Himself. The very thing He had created to live in His light but that had been corrupted and grown accustomed to living in the shadows. Now God Himself came back, as that perfect image, and the light became a man! As God came and walked among us, it was not to fellowship with man as it was in the beginning, but to endure all of the shadows so that He could redeem man from the darkness which he could not escape. Remember what the purpose of light? When light enters into an area, when it comes into a physical space, what does it do? ***It vanquishes the darkness!***

**“THEN SPAKE JESUS UNTO THEM, SAYING; I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD:  
HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT WALK IN THE DARKNESS,  
BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.”**

**-JOHN 8:12-**

The coming of Christ meant the beginning of the end for the darkness. Jesus Christ was here to preach of His Kingdom. He would tell His people, and through His people they would tell the world, of a Kingdom of glorious light. A restored nation, glistening and basking in all its' beauty because there would be no hint of a shadow in it anywhere. In this Kingdom, peace would abound. Love would be full and unconditional. Unity would be restored, and harmony would be a reality again. In this Kingdom, God would once again look at His creation, the magnificent plan for man's salvation, and be able to say once again *“It is good.”*

The Kingdom of the Son of God would come through His suffering. He would be ridiculed, mocked, hated and those closest to him would betray Him. At the hands of evil men, He would suffer persecution, punishment and torture. He would die a death which He did not deserve, and He would bear all of the darkness upon Himself- becoming our sin. And in His final moments the darkness thought it had won. God turned away from His Son and in the middle of the day, as Christ hung there on the cross, darkness covered the face of the land, just as it was in the beginning. Satan thought he had defeated the light, and he had forever secured his Shadow Kingdom. Christ was laid in a tomb and those who knew him, who had followed Him, and loved Him felt as though they were defeated. If this were the end of the story, they would have been, but the light does not go down so easily when facing the darkness. Yet three days later, that magnificent Light came bursting forth out of the grave. Christ, now risen and shining brightly, held the keys to death and hell. The veil was torn and the Holy and pure light of God was once again available to all of humanity! What the darkness did not realize was that through this act of selfless love for His creation, by nailing all of the darkness of our sin to this cross, by dying the death we deserved and then raising from the dead to a new life, ***the darkness would once again be trapped in a tree!***

This is an amazing story, with an incredible ending, but the question has to be asked: *if this is true why are we still talking about a Shadow Kingdom?* I mean if Christ really defeated the darkness once and for all why is the darkness still a problem? In the garden God gave his creation a choice, a choice to trust Him and His protection, or to disobey Him and turn to the darkness. This same choice lays before us today, to trust Jesus Christ as our King and fall under his protection or disobey Him and turn once again to the darkness. The difference is that now we know what the darkness has to offer. There are no tricks or temptations which we are not aware of because we were born in the darkness. We did not start out in a state of good, but in a state of condemnation.

“HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED: BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD. AND THIS IS THE CONDEMNATION, THAT LIGHT IS COME INTO THE WORLD, AND MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT, BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL.”

-JOHN 3:18-19-

The curse that took place all of those many years ago has carried on to each and every human who ever lived. The darkness of sin is the natural state for mankind, but through the person of Jesus Christ we have the opportunity to come and live in that glorious Kingdom of light! As we examine our lives, we must ask ourselves this important question, ***which kingdom am I living in?*** We must look closely at our lives and realize *there is no middle ground*, no neutral zone, no gray areas when it comes to these two Kingdoms. ***We are either living in the darkness or we are living in the light!*** If we claim Christ, if we make the statement that our hope is Him and we are His disciples, then let us come out of the shadows. We each have an opportunity to choose where our citizenship lies: *in a dark and desolate kingdom which is merely a shadow of what it once was, or a better kingdom that is built upon better promises where the light shines on everything!*

**TODAY AND EVERYDAY;  
LET THE LIGHT OF CHRIST  
SHINE BRIGHTLY ON YOUR LIFE.**



- TRUE DARKNESS IS A DISORIENTING, HOPELESS VOICE WHICH IS \_\_\_\_\_ OF ANY KIND OF LIGHT WHATSOEVER!
- THE ONLY REAL THING THAT LIGHT IS INTENDED TO DO IS, MAKE THE DARKNESS \_\_\_\_\_!
- GENESIS 1:1-4
- GOD DOES NOT CALL THIS DARK, FORMLESS VOID \_\_\_\_\_!
- \_\_\_\_\_ ITSELF IS THE FIRST THING WHICH GOD CALLS GOOD.
- GENESIS 1:31
- Darkness was trapped in a \_\_\_\_\_!
- Satan, in all of his slithery sliminess, came to \_\_\_\_\_ with the tree.
- Genesis 3:4-5
- Genesis 3:7 & 10
- The darkness had come, the \_\_\_\_\_ had emerged. That void, empty, shapeless thing, which God did not call good, had been released into his creation, casting a shadow on all the beauty that once was.

- All of God’s creation, life itself, is now a \_\_\_\_\_ of what it once was.
- **Genesis 3:23**
- **Genesis 3:15**
- In a tiny town called Bethlehem, in a dirty, dusty manger God sends His \_\_\_\_\_ back into the world!
- **John 8:12**
- **John 3:18-19**

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# **THE TWO KINGDOMS**

## **SHADOW SURVEY**

**THE KINGDOM WHICH INFLUENCES YOUR LIFE WILL LEAD YOU IN A SPECIFIC DIRECTION. WHICH KINGDOM INFLUENCES YOUR LIFE MOST ON A REGULAR BASIS?**

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**DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE DARK INFLUENCES OF YOUR LIFE? IF NOT, WHAT CAN YOU DO DAILY TO TRY TO SPOT THE DARK INFLUENCE IN YOUR LIFE?**

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**IN WHAT WAY SPECIFICALLY DOES THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE?**

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**WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING IN THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS?**

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**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO WALKING IN THE LIGHT?**

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**IF THE LIGHT REALLY VANQUISHES THE DARKNESS WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU PERSONALLY?**

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**WHICH KINGDOM ARE YOU LIVING IN?**

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# **THE TWO KINGDOMS KEEP GOING...**

## **THE LIGHT HELPER**

If you have ever had the pleasure of *“holding the flashlight”* for someone while they work, then you fully understand the scenario that I am about to lay out before you. One person who is working needs some assistance with a project they are working on, and the other unlucky soul has the unique privilege of holding the flashlight so that they can see what they are doing. You know how this goes, the one doing the work says *“Shine the light right here”* and the one holding the light points it where it needs to go....*for a moment*. Quickly losing interest, the helper gets distracted by a noise, a mosquito, or most likely watching the other person work and in this lack of focus the light slowly drifts away from where it is needed. We all know how this goes, stern remarks turn into angered yelling, finally culminating in the frustrated worker saying to the helper, *“Just give me the light, I’ll figure it out myself.”*

If this little scene has ever occurred in your life, then you understand how frustrating it can be for both parties. When it comes to our spiritual lives however, we actually have a Helper whose sole purpose is to illuminate the will of God in our lives and to help us navigate the darkness of this life. When Jesus came into this world, He was the light of the world, but then He went away. When He left though, He promised to send Someone to help us along life’s journey. In John 14:26 we see;

**“BUT THE COMFORTER, WHICH IS THE HOLY GHOST, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME, HE SHALL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, AND BRING ALL THINGS TO REMEMBRANCE, WHATSOEVER I HAVE SAID UNTO YOU.”**

**-JOHN 14:26-**

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ have been recorded for us today. In the life of every believer, we have the help of the Holy Spirit, guiding our lives back to the teachings of our Savior. Unlike the helper with the flashlight, the Holy Spirit doesn’t lose focus or drift away from the truth of God. He is quite

literally fixed upon the truth of God at all times. This is the work that He most often does in the life of the believer, bringing to remembrance what we know to be true of our Redeemer.

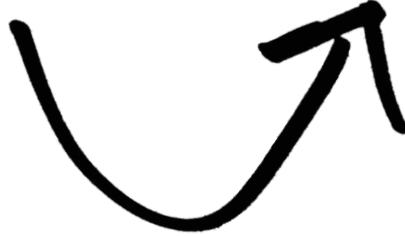
As you work your way through this life, lean on the help of the Comforter instead of trying to figure it out on your own. The Holy Spirit is the Helper Whom our Lord has sent. So, pay attention when He pricks your heart, tugs at your memory, and illuminates the straight path that leads to Heaven! The Holy Spirit was sent by our King for this very purpose; *to illuminate us to the truth, the light which the Son of God brought into this dark shadowy world.*

WATCH A SPECIAL EPISODE  
OF THE NOYC GODCAST

***'DISTORTED  
DARKNESS'***



SCAN





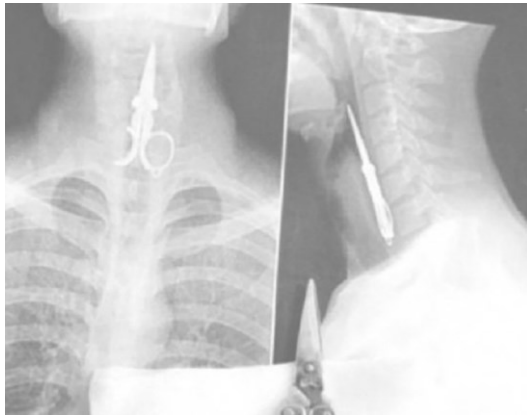
## ***THE SHADOW KINGDOM CAUSE***

### **EXPOSING, EXPELLING, AND ENGULFING THE DARKNESS**

Have you ever had an x-ray before? X-rays are sort of like magic, aren't they? A person who looks completely fine on the outside - can step behind an x-ray machine and find out that everything is not really as it appears. Take for example;



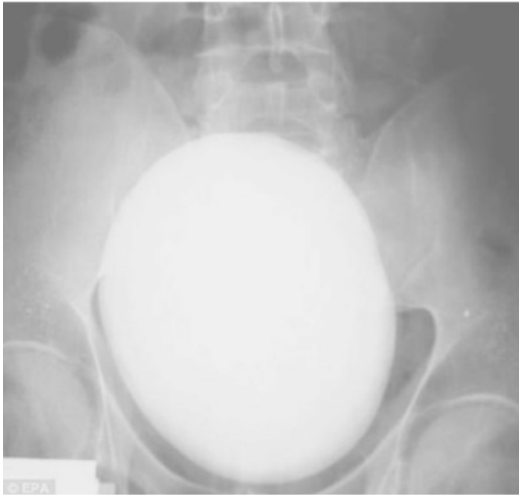
The x-ray that showed an engagement ring which was hidden in a milkshake for a surprise proposal. The ring obviously never made it on her finger...



The x-ray of a man who used a pair of scissors as a toothpick, which he accidentally dropped down his esophagus... at least he didn't run with them?!



The x-ray of a girl who was so surprised by her friend that she actually swallowed her spoon. (Be careful out there kids...)



This surprising x-ray showed a 7-inch kidney stone, which looked like an ostrich egg, deep down inside of this poor man.

An X-ray machine gives a glimpse into the unseen reality and the untold truth of what's really going on inside of a person. No matter how good a person might look on the outside- an x-ray machine shines it's bright, hot, invisible light down inside where it undeniably and irrefutably shows what's within a person. It could be said that x-

rays are brutally honest, because with an x-ray the unseeable is seen, and all outward perfections fade away.

**FACT-** God is light, and in Him is no darkness (*1 John 1:5*).

**FACT-** If you are a Christian, you have been delivered from darkness, and now, darkness has no place within you (*Col. 1:13, John 8:12*).

**FACT-** God has shown His light into our hearts, and we no longer walk in darkness (*2 Cor. 4:6*).

**FACT-** If you are saved, you now belong to the eternal Kingdom of Light (*1 Peter 2:9*).

**FACT-** You're meant to demonstrate His light in and through your life (*Matthew 5:14*).

Yet, although these facts may be true, the reality is that more often than not, we live spiritually '*dim*' lives at best. The life the Bible describes as Christianity, and the life that we find ourselves living is not the same thing. It's almost like we're living a blurry picture of what a believer is meant to be. We have a similarity to the salvation of the Bible- but not a righteous replica. *Do we recognize that God's not the problem here?* God is light. As we learned in the previous chapter, He Himself literally lit all of creation. John tells us that Jesus was the light of men. In the book of Revelations, we find that in heaven there will be no sun, because God, Himself, will be our source of light. God cannot help but to shine and to do it brightly. In fact God does not have a light problem; He is shining brighter and stronger than ever. And yet the world, the church, and the lives of Christians everywhere appear to be darker and dimmer than ever before. The reason is that we are living a silhouette, a shadowy version of Christianity that is far from the bright, bold, belief of the Bible. Look at how Webster dictionary defines a shadow: "*a dark area produced by a body coming between rays of light and a surface.*" Two things are necessary to produce a shadow: *light, and an obstacle*. When light is shining bright, and something stands in the way of it's rays- the result is; *a shadow of darkness*.

If you are a believer- then Biblically, your life should be one of illumination, of explicit and inexplicable light. Whenever it's not then the uncomfortable truth is; *you're in His way*. You might be

saved, you may be on your way to heaven, you may have Christ-the limitless light of men living within your heart. Yet, in the way that you are living out your life, you're actually creating an obstacle to Christ. ***Your life is casting a shadow to the light.***

We've established that there are two opposing Kingdoms; *The Kingdom of light and the Kingdom of Darkness*. Yet, do we realize that we have introduced a third kingdomly option which was never meant to be? We are living in a Shadow Kingdom which has the light yet allows the darkness to remain- and it is robbing us of our victory.

However, like the person living with a 7inch Ostridge-egg-size kidney stone inside, most of us still go about our lives believing we're just fine. We may have a twinge of pain here, a woeful afternoon there- but we make ourselves look totally fine on the outside. We go to church on Sunday with our Bible under our arm and a smile on our face. We wear the Christian t-shirts, we listen to Christian music, we say the right thing, do the right thing. We play the part as if everything is totally fine in our lives. All the while we lack illumination. Our lives may look "*Christian*"- but they're not *godly*. They may look prim and proper, but they're not portraying any light. We may claim to *love* Jesus, but we're certainly not *living* like Him. Our lives are casting a shadow, we are the very thing standing in the way of the light and life of Christ.

This is exactly what we find taking place in the life of Peter in Matthew 16. Jesus had just asked the famous question; *who do men say that I am?* Peter finally has his gold star moment. After nearly two years of failing, faltering, flopping, and making a mess of it- we finally find Peter saying the right thing. Jesus asks; *Who do YOU say that I am?* To Which Peter proudly pronounces: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Jesus gives a unique moment of kudos as He calls Peter blessed, and then He graciously gives Peter a new nickname. Jesus tells Peter that upon this confession, upon this absolutely correct answer, Jesus is going to build His church- and even the gates of hell themselves can't stand against it. By now Peter's probably hearing angel choirs, he's glowing a bit, a big ole smile appears on his fisherman face. Finally, the foot shaped mouth



muttered something correctly. But Jesus wasn't finished- it appears as if Peter can't stop winning, Jesus goes on to say that He would give the keys of the Kingdom to Peter. I mean talk about a good day! Talk about a peak moment in Peter's life. Finally, after so many strike outs, after all of the stupid answers, finally, Peter got it right.

If we were to pause this scene right here, and just take a look around, it would appear that Peter was a saint. It would seem that he had his act together, that he was heavenly and healthy. He was saying the right things and giving the right answers. Yet, just as quickly as Peter gets it right- directly after his highest highlight moment- Peter is going to hit a new low like never before. In just a few verses we find Jesus telling His disciples about His coming death, and how He will suffer, and be killed- but that He would rise again on the third day, just as God had intended. It is here that we read;

**“THEN PETER TOOK HIM, AND BEGAN TO REBUKE HIM, SAYING BE IT FAR FROM THEE, LORD: THIS SHALL NOT BE UNTO THEE. BUT HE [JESUS] TURNED AND SAID UNTO PETER, GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN; THOU ART AN OFFENSE TO ME...”**

**-MATTHEW 16:18-19-**

...I've been called some not-so-great names in the past, but here Jesus calls out Peter on a whole new level. It almost seems like Jesus is being petty. I mean, frankly all that Peter was trying to do was save Jesus' life- undoubtedly a noble cause. Grasp this, because of Peter's upbringing, because of the traditions he was accustomed to, because of the culture of the day, because of his preconceived notions- *Peter was absolutely convinced that what he was doing was a good thing, a righteous thing, a godly thing.* Peter was certain that he was doing what God would actually want him to do. *That should scare every single one of us to death.* If Peter- one of Jesus' closest disciples, the man who totally gave up everything to follow Christ, who had Jesus pour His life and teachings into him- if the “*Christy*” things Peter did were deemed dark by Jesus- every single one of us should reconsider our religious ways.

Our biggest problem as Christians is our unwillingness to evaluate our will, ways, and works. We are so totally convinced that the *churchy* things we do, the *Christiany* things we do- the *godly* things that we do- are pleasing to God. When in reality, Jesus looks straight through them and sees Satan at work. He sees you sitting in church, doing a good thing, and yet He says; *get thee behind me Satan- you're desires are off*. Jesus sees you're WWJD t-shirt, your fish bumper sticker, He hears you listening to that Christian music- and He rebukes you; *you're an offense to me*. **Just because you're doing good things does not mean you're doing God things**. Just because light is present doesn't mean it's shining through.

We find that the underlying problem in the case of Peter was his desires, his motives, and the things that he savored. Jesus continues;

**“...FOR THOU SAVOUREST NOT THE THINGS THAT BE OF GOD,  
BUT THOSE THAT BE OF MEN.”**

**-MATTHEW 16:18-19-**

Even though Peter's actions seemed good, Jesus saw that still there was a problem on the inside. Just like an x-ray machine, Jesus looked straight through what everyone else could see on the outside- and Jesus saw within Peter there was a deeply rooted desire for darkness. Even though Peter's actions seemed spiritual, his desires were defective. Although what he tried to do seemed good- to God it was grotesque. Even though Jesus- the literal light and life of men stood before Peter and told Him God's will, Peter stood in Christ's way. Peter placed himself, his will, his ideas in front of the light, and as a result a shadow of darkness was cast. Do we realize just how real this scene is for each of us? Had the dark desires of Peter succeeded, Christ would have never gone to the cross. Each of us would be destined and doomed for damnation eternally. Satan and the Kingdom of darkness would have won- simply because of a dark desire that was deeply dormant within Peter.

Jesus doesn't tell Peter to get out of the way, He doesn't say Simon get behind me, or Cephas be seated- Jesus looks straight into the heart of Peter and says, get thee behind me *Satan*. Within this godly man, within this super saint, within this dedicated disciple was a dark desire which stood in the way of the light of God. Jesus doesn't pat Peter on the shoulder, He doesn't say we'll work on that, He doesn't excuse Peter's desire- Jesus looks straight inside of Peter and exposes the darkness- *Satan himself within*.

Jesus did not step down from heaven and give His life, so that you can merely change your outward actions. He did not save you so that you can stop drinking, stop swearing, stop stealing, stop murdering. He did not redeem you so that you would stop *doing* bad things. Even the Pharisees were morally house trained- they kept all of God's laws and even more of their own, and Jesus still called them snakes and vipers. Being merely moral was never the means for Salvation. God sent His Son to make you into an entirely new creation with entirely new desires altogether.

We read in Matthew 5:21 that Jesus says, "*you've heard it said thou shalt not kill.*" Jesus says '*that's not enough, you shouldn't even have an ill desire towards anyone.*' He continues; "*you've heard it said, thou shalt not commit adultery.*" Jesus says, '*that's not going to cut it in Christianity- don't even have a lustful desire for another person.*' He goes on to say that you've been told not to lie- Jesus says, '*don't even desire to say anything but pure and completely accurate truth.*' He continues; "*You've heard it said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,*" Jesus says- '*if you're My follower, you should desire the gain of your enemy so much, that you turn the other cheek and let them hit that too. If they take your coat, give them your shirt too, out of a genuine desire for their wellbeing.*'

Now honestly, which is harder? Refraining from murder *or* not wanting to murder at all? Not committing adultery *or* never having a lustful desire ever again? We read these words and think it's inconceivable- *and it is!* Yet what Jesus is telling us is that ***external acts are not enough. The only way to please God is if your desires themselves change.*** Because in this Kingdom of light, which you

belong to, *there is no darkness*. There are *no dark desires*. *No misleading motives*. Just like Peter, anything in our lives which limits the light of Christ, no matter how good it may be, is actually a ploy for darkness from the devil. Satan would love nothing more than for you to stop looking at porn, and yet to still think about it all day long. He would love nothing more than for you to stop gossiping, yet to have bad thoughts about every person you meet. Satan knows that as long as you stop doing it, but still want to- there remains a desire for darkness, and it is blocking the light and life of Christ. Your will is standing in the way and it's casting a shadow of the Christian you were saved to be. *Outward acts are not enough, God desires the very intent, the very will, the very wants of your heart to change*. God wasn't kidding when He told us that His thoughts and His ways are ridiculously far apart from our thoughts and ways. We are totally incapable of thinking like God. We are completely unable to do His will and to have His ways on our own. Just like Peter, more often than not, we will cast our will and our way, as if it's what God would want. When we do, our lives become an obstacle to the very light placed within us. As a result we're casting a shadow of what Christianity was meant to be. Jesus could look at most Christians today and boldly bellow; *get behind me Satan- you're an offense to me, because you care more about the things of this world, the things in your life- more than you care about the things of God*.

Like Peter you can look the part, you can act the part, you can do good things, you can say right things, you can keep the commands, obey the bible- and yet if you do not desire the things that God desires, and hate the things that God hates, then you are casting a shadow of darkness in your life. God sees straight through you, He sees what's really, truly taking place on the inside. He knows your deepest thoughts, your hidden desires, your selfish intents- and in response He says; *get behind me Satan*.

So, what's the answer then? If our desires are dark and we're casting a shadow upon the light and life of Christ, then how do we overcome the darkness? Well...you're probably not going to like it. After Jesus tells Satan to get behind Him, literally in the next verse, Jesus goes on to tell Peter;

**“IF ANY MAN WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOSEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT: AND WHOSEVER WILL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE SHALL FIND IT. FOR WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL? OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?”**

**-MATTHEW 16:24-26-**

Jesus is blunt, He doesn't mince words or beat around the bush here. Not only did He come to *expose* our dark desires, but here Jesus promises to *expel* our dark desires. He says the only hope you have against the desire for darkness, the very working of Satan himself in your life, is to deny yourself. The word deny here means to disassociate, to act as if you never knew, or to completely forget and lose track of. Jesus says unless that's what you're doing with your own life- darkness will forever have power over you. Unless you will deny the very person that you were before Christ, unless you will disassociate yourself from that old man, unless you will act as if you do not know that person that you use to be, unless you'll forget and lose track of your past interests- *you cannot be a follower of Jesus*. The reason is that, before Christ, you belonged to the Kingdom of Darkness. In fact, you were made from the very Kingdom of Darkness. In Genesis we read that God scoops up the dust of this world to form mankind from. John 3:19 tells us that this world loves darkness rather than light. Your very make up, as a person is dark, demented, dust. Your very desires are dark- and unless you deny yourself, deny that darkness within and its desires- God cannot accept you into His perfect Kingdom of Light. It's for this reason that the Bible continually tells us to crucify, mortify, deny, buffet, destroy, kill, and cast off that dark desiring dirt called the flesh. Rid your life of it, at all costs. To whatever extent necessary, put the flesh to death. Jesus tells us to lose our desires for this world, because this world is the enemy of God. This world is literally the opposing Kingdom which you have been delivered from. Until you make the decision to deny yourself, to crucify that dark desiring demented being within you- you will not walk in the light. Until you allow Him

to expel the desires of darkness, you will continue claiming Christ while loving darkness.

After you've had an x-ray that shows where the problem lies, a good doctor is going to provide you with the means of moving forward with removal of what does not belong within. A good doctor is going to give you the steps needed to address the problem- to remove that foreign object, or to crush that kidney stone. If our only need as believers were to see the sin in our lives, then the commandments would have been enough to expose us. Yet, Jesus came to fulfill the law- to unite God and man once again. Which means that Jesus not only came to expose darkness in our lives, but to expel the darkness within. To rid us of the dark desires. To remove the control of the kingdom of darkness that lurks in our lives.

He says unless you'll deny yourself, unless you will place your very way of living upon a cross- and let it die there- you will continually struggle with dark desires. Jesus did not come to make you slightly more moral, He did not come to make you new and improved, He didn't come to polish who you are, and make you pretty on the outside. The truth of the New Testament is that Jesus came to crucify the creature that dwells within you, the creature who desires darkness. He came to put to death the very person who you once were, so that the new creature who now lives would be like the God of light.

It's a little bit humorous just how much we all have a bit of Peter within us because spiritually we're all like cats with a laser beam as we lose focus and get distracted so easily by darkness. Yet, after Jesus exposes Peter's dark desires, after He tells Peter how to expel the darkness within- Jesus is going to give Peter a lesson in light that He would never forget. In the next few verses Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up to the top of a mountain. There on the mount of transfiguration, Jesus- this friend, this teacher, this man who Peter loved- actually turned into pure light. The bible says that Jesus Himself began to glow, His clothes were as bright as light, and His presence was dramatically changed as His face shone like the sun.

Peter of course gets all excited again, he starts spinning his wheels and trying to figure out just what he could do for God in this situation. Peter says *“Lord, let me build a tabernacle here in your honor. Let me do what I think You would want me to do.”* As Peter is plotting, we find a very peculiar thing taking place; *Light wins*. The light that was shining from Christ suddenly overwhelms and totally engulfs Peter, James, and John and God Himself suddenly says these words;

**“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED; HEAR YE HIM.”**

**-MATTHEW 17:5-**

As Peter and the disciples heard these words, now overwhelmed by the bright light, these men are humbled as they fall to their faces in fear. While Peter was so busy doing good things, so preoccupied with planning, plotting, and portraying a disciple- God engulfs Peter in the light, and tells Him; ***stop doing, and start listening to Jesus. Live in the light!***

Jesus not only came to *expose* our dark desires, He not only came to *expel* our dark desires- but Jesus came to *engulf* our dark desires. Just like the disciples on the mountain, God desires that our lives would become overwhelmed, overcome, and engulfed by the very light and life of Christ. That His very life would consume every aspect of the way in which we live. The Bible describes those who know Christ as *photizod*, or as we would say it, enlightened. It’s from this word that we get the word *photo* in English. The word literally means; *to bring to light, to make clear, or to instruct*. When you expose the dark film of a camera to the bright, hot light which develops the film- suddenly you are left with; *a photo*. What could not be seen before, suddenly becomes enlightened for all to see.

In Christ, we should live a life of transparency at all times, and before all people. That means that no duplicity, no hypocrisy, no fakeness, no facades should ever, ever be present in our lives, *ever!* The very person you are with your friends, should be the same person you are at Bible study. The same way you live when you’re alone and when

no one is around, should be the same way that you live when you're in the church pew. No matter who you're with, where you're at, or what you're doing- Jesus came to give you a life of transparency- a life engulfed in light with everything able to be seen. A life where no reproach, no shadows, no darkness is ever present in your life. You should be able to hand your cellphone over to any person without ever having to blush. You should be able to give your social media access to anyone without ever becoming embarrassed. You should never have to delete the history on your laptop. The words you say, the thoughts you have- should be easily publicized for the world to see without you ever breaking a sweat. If this is not the case, if your life lacks transparency, *then you're standing in the way of the light*. Your will, and your ways, your lusts, your desires are blocking the life of Christ and it's causing you to live in the shadows instead of in the light. God could look down at your life and tell you the same thing as He told Peter; *don't just do light like things, live in the light*. Allow the life and light of Christ to engulf the very person that you are!

It's for this very reason that we come to Christ and constantly pray that He would engulf our life with His light. We should pray that He would shine His big, bright, hot spotlight into every area of our lives. Don't just sprinkle some sparks here and there. Don't just turn on a night light now and then. Don't uncover the candle only on Sunday mornings- ask Him to engulf your life in His light. Expose, expel, and engulf every area of your life to the light of Christ. Or as David puts it;

**“SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART: TRY ME, AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS: AND SEE IF THERE BE ANY WICKED WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.”**

**-PSALM 139:23-24-**

The word *search* which David writes here means *to investigate and examine*. The word *try* means *to prove and scrutinize*. David is intentionally inquiring about an intense inspection completed by God Himself. David is pleading with God to take His pure, bright, intense spotlight- and shine it into every area of his life. Expose every



dark crevice and every shadowy corner. Bring all of David's life; his thoughts, actions, motives, and his desires, and totally expose them to the light. David recognized that God Himself is light, and that in Him there is no darkness. So if God is ever going to know David, and if David is ever going to be led into God's everlasting ways- then that means the darkness must go. Not some of it, not most of it; ***all darkness must be dispelled.***

When you truly come to the place where you desire the things that God desires, and you hate the very things that God hates- it's only obvious that you would appeal for Him to search your life for darkness. Ask that He would try your life, know your thoughts- totally and completely expose every piece and part of your life. Bust out every skeleton that's ever lived in your cowardly closets. Because you no longer desire to dwell in darkness- you now desire only God, Who is light. You're now dedicated to walking in His ways. Like Peter, we have to come to the place where we stop propping up our Christianity by our outward actions- and we start listening to Christ. The only hope for a Christian is to allow Christ to engulf every area of our lives in His light. Listen to His Word. Listen to His teachings. Listen to His calling. Listen to His leading. *Live in the light.*

Can I tell you that if you will pray this audacious and risky prayer from Psalm 139- God will answer. Don't ask Him to search your life unless you really want Him to. Don't shew away the shadows unless you mean it. Don't plead with Him to scrutinize your ways, unless you plan on listening. Yet, this is the only true way to walk in light. It's the only way to despise darkness- to cut off access to the devil's desires dwelling within.

Are you ready to see your life the way that God sees is? Are you willing to have your life exposed, expelled, and engulfed by the glorious light and life of Christ?

**IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE SHADOW KINGDOM BEHIND  
AND WALK DAILY IN THE LIGHT**



- HAVE YOU EVER HAD AN X-RAY BEFORE?
- NO MATTER HOW GOOD A PERSON MIGHT LOOK ON THE OUTSIDE- AN X-RAY MACHINE SHINES IT'S BRIGHT, HOT, INVISIBLE LIGHT DOWN INSIDE WHERE IT UNDENIABLY AND IRREFUTABLY SHOWS WHAT'S \_\_\_\_\_ A PERSON.

### **LIGHT FACTS:**

- **FACT.** GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS *NO* DARKNESS (1 JOHN 1:5).
- **FACT.** IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, YOU HAVE BEEN DELIVERED *FROM* DARKNESS, AND NOW, DARKNESS HAS *NO* PLACE WITHIN YOU (COL. 1:13, JOHN 8:12).
- **FACT.** GOD HAS SHOWN HIS LIGHT INTO OUR HEARTS, AND WE NO LONGER WALK IN DARKNESS (2 COR. 4:6).
- **FACT.** IF YOU ARE SAVED, YOU NOW BELONG TO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LIGHT (1 PETER 2:9).
- **FACT.** YOU'RE MEANT TO DEMONSTRATE HIS LIGHT IN AND THROUGH YOUR LIFE (MATTHEW 5:14).
- GOD DOES NOT HAVE A LIGHT PROBLEM; HE IS \_\_\_\_\_ BRIGHTER AND STRONGER THAN EVER.
- **A SHADOW:** "A DARK AREA PRODUCED BY A BODY COMING \_\_\_\_\_ RAYS OF LIGHT AND A SURFACE."

### **1. \_\_\_\_\_ THE DESIRE FOR DARKNESS (MATT 16:18-19)**

- JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE DOING GOOD THINGS DOES NOT MEAN YOU'RE DOING \_\_\_\_\_ THINGS.
- THOU SHALT NOT KILL < DON'T HAVE AN ILL DESIRE TOWARDS ANYONE
- THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY < DON'T EVER LUST AGAIN
- DON'T LIE < DON'T EVEN DESIRE DISHONESTY
- GET EVEN < TAKE THE HIT AND GIVE THEM THE SHIRT OFF YOUR BACK
- \_\_\_\_\_ ACTS ARE NOT ENOUGH. THE ONLY WAY TO PLEASE GOD IS IF YOUR DESIRES THEMSELVES CHANGE.

**2. \_\_\_\_\_ *THE DESIRE FOR DARKNESS* (MATT. 16:24-26)**

- **DENY:** DISASSOCIATE, TO ACT AS IF YOU NEVER KNEW, OR TO COMPLETELY \_\_\_\_\_ AND LOSE TRACK OF
- YOUR VERY MAKE UP, AS A PERSON IS DARK, DEMENTED, \_\_\_\_\_. YOUR VERY DESIRES ARE DARK- AND UNLESS YOU DENY YOURSELF, DENY THAT DARKNESS WITHIN AND ITS DESIRES- GOD CANNOT ACCEPT YOU INTO HIS PERFECT KINGDOM OF LIGHT.

**3. \_\_\_\_\_ *THE DESIRE FOR DARKNESS* (MATT 17:5)**

- STOP DOING, AND START LISTENING TO JESUS. \_\_\_\_\_ IN THE LIGHT!
- *PHOTIZOD*= \_\_\_\_\_. TO BRING TO LIGHT, TO MAKE CLEAR, TO INSTRUCT
- WE SHOULD LIVE A LIFE OF \_\_\_\_\_ AT ALL TIMES, AND BEFORE ALL PEOPLE. THAT MEANS THAT NO DUPLICITY, NO HYPOCRISY, NO FAKENESS, NO FACADES SHOULD EVER, EVER BE PRESENT IN OUR LIVES, EVER!
- PRAY THAT HE WOULD SHINE HIS BIG, BRIGHT, HOT SPOTLIGHT INTO \_\_\_\_\_ AREA OF OUR LIVES- ASK HIM TO ENGULF YOUR LIFE IN HIS LIGHT.
- PSALM 139:23-24
- IF YOU'RE EVER GOING TO KNOW GOD, AND BE LED IN HIS WAYS, THAT MEANS THE DARKNESS MUST GO. NOT SOME OF IT, NOT MOST OF IT; \_\_\_\_\_ DARKNESS MUST BE EXPELLED

**ITS TIME TO LEAVE THE SHADOW KINGDOM BEHIND  
AND WALK DAILY IN THE LIGHT**

# ***THE SHADOW KINGDOM CAUSE***

## **SHADOW SURVEY**

**WHAT IS A SHADOW? AND WHAT IS NEEDED TO FORM A SHADOW?**

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**WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL SHADOW?**

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**WHAT IS PRESENT IN YOUR LIFE THAT IS BLOCKING THE LIGHT AND LIFE OF CHRIST?**

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**ON A SCALE OF 1-10, HOW MUCH HAVE YOU 'DENIED' YOURSELF?**

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**WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD TO BE MORE INTERNALLY OR EXTERNALLY FOCUSED? EXPLAIN.**

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**WHAT STEPS COULD YOU TAKE TODAY TO RID YOUR LIFE OF ANYTHING WHICH BLOCKS THE LIGHT AND LIFE OF CHRIST?**

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# ***THE SHADOW KINGDOM CAUSE***

## **K E E P G O I N G ...**

**A KINGDOM OF SHADOWS IS ADMITTEDLY A RATHER UNIQUE TAKE ON SCRIPTURE. YET THE FASCINATING TRUTH IS THAT THIS PREMISE CAN BE FOUND ALL OVER IN SCRIPTURE. TAKE THE TIME TO EXAMINE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING VERSES. AS YOU DO, NOTE WHAT GOD IS SPECIFICALLY SAYING ABOUT LIGHT, DARK, AND SHADOWS.**

- **GENESIS 1:4**

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- **ACTS 16:18**

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- **ROMANS 13:12**

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- **1 CORINTHIANS 4:5**

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- **2 CORINTHIANS 6:14**

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- **EPHESIANS 5:8**

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- EPHESIANS 5:11

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- COLOSSIANS 1:13

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- 1 THESSALONIANS 5:5

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- 1 PETER 1:19

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- 1 JOHN 1:5

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- 1 JOHN 1:6

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- 1 JOHN 2:8

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- 1 JOHN 2:8-11

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OF THE NOYC GODCAST

***'THE KINGDOM  
OF DARKNESS'***



SCAN







# **ROYAL REFLECTION**

## **LETTING THE LIGHT LEAD YOUR LIFE**

If I were to say ‘*hide it under a bushel?*’ chances are something deep down inside of you has a raging urge to yell ‘*NO!*’ Hardly a kid grows up in church without hearing and repeating the song this little light of mine at least a thousand times. This song is totally biblical, right? Jesus told His disciples not to light a candle and hide it under a bushel. He said that as Christians we will be like a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. Yet even though we know that we’re supposed to ‘*let it shine, let it shine, let it shine,*’ what this fun Sunday school ditty did not teach us is exactly *how* to let it shine.

Through this study we’ve been focusing on eliminating the shadow kingdom. Removing anything that would hinder the light of Christ within our lives. We have been transferred from the domain of darkness and we now belong to a kingdom of limitless light. Yet, it’s important that we understand our role in this kingdom. Because although we are called to *be* the light of the world- our role is not to *create* light. In fact, it could be said that we have absolutely zero capabilities of making light in and of ourselves. You cannot do good things. You cannot refrain from bad things. You are totally and completely incapable of being, acting, looking, talking, or thinking like Jesus- *there’s no light there!* The fact is- although God has called you to be the light of this world- your life is about as dim as it gets. Yet, as impossible as it may seem- God’s plan for each and every person who belongs to His limitless Kingdom of Light is that we would give off a **royal reflection**.

In Genesis 12 we find that God makes a promise to Israel. He tells them that He would be their God, and that they would be His people. However, nearly four and a half centuries go by and Israel finds themselves living in a foreign land as slaves under the bondage of Egypt. They ate Egyptian food, they served Egyptian rulers, they wore Egyptian clothing, and lived in Egyptian houses. Instead of lives that looked like the God of Light, Israel found themselves living like

Egypt. They had dim and darkened lives that did not look like, talk like, think like, or live like God. Truth be told, after all of this time spent in Egypt, God's own people, called by His name- *barely knew Him*. You could say that Israel, *was in the dark, about Who this God of Light was*.

Even still, God keeps His promise, and He delivers Israel out of their bondage in Egypt, straight through a Sea named Red. On the other side of the desert God gives Israel the Law and in doing so this is what He says; *"This is Who I am. If you keep the Law, you will look like My people. If you will keep the Law, that tells of Who I, your God, Am- then you will give a visible representation to The God of Light. Anyone who looks at you- and sees The Law lived out- will know Who I, God, Am."* God gives Israel the commandments and in doing so He delivers them from their darkness. He tells them, *"leave behind Egypt, leave behind the dark way of living- and if you will allow my Law to enlighten your life- then you will be able to live like, look like Me, your God."* With the light of the law, you will no longer be in the dark about the identity of God. If you will keep the commands, then your life will be illuminated, because the law is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

Israel heard what God said, but still they were awkwardly uncomfortable with this plague-pronouncing, Pharoah-faltering, ocean-splitting God. So much so that they actually begged their leader Moses to go deal with God on their behalf. Go find out Who God is, and come back to enlighten us. We find that Moses heads up to the top of the mount, where he spends 40 days with God, and after returning to Israel- the most peculiar thing happens to Moses....

**"AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN MOSES CAME DOWN FROM MOUNT SINAI  
WITH THE TWO TABLES OF TESTIMONY IN MOSES' HAND, WHEN HE CAME DOWN  
FROM THE MOUNT, THAT MOSES WIST NOT THAT THE SKIN OF HIS FACE SHONE  
WHILE HE TALKED WITH HIM"**

**-EXODUS 34:29-**

Moses is in the presence of God for 40 days. (*That's a month and ten days for those of you who are counting.*) Can we admit... that's a long time? There were no fidget spinners, no video games, Moses didn't Netflix and chill on the mount, he had no smart phone in his pocket, no TikTok videos to swipe through. Even though he didn't eat, the mind of Moses wasn't fixed upon food. Though he didn't drink, his thoughts were not on his thirst. Moses didn't come up to the top of that mountain for a spiritual experience, for godly goose pimples, or a chill down his spine. His time spent with God wasn't defined as a 60-minute worship service or even a favorite song. We don't find Moses atop the mount checking his watch, or his calendar for that matter. Moses simply remained in God's presence, learning Who God was, hearing God speak- *for as long as it took*. Atop of Mount Sinai, it was just Moses, and the presence of God. Nothing more, and nothing less, and the results were astounding. After spending 40 days there with God- we read in that Moses, a man made of dull dust, a man who can't shine, a man who also came from Egypt, who had lived in the dark- *begins to shine*. Why? Because Moses had received the light, He had received the knowledge of Who God is.

When you get hungry, your body has an obnoxious way of letting you know it...enter the awful whale noises. When you're tired, your body might tell you through droopy eyes, or confused speech. Do you realize that when darkness is present in your life, it's evident that you've neglected your greatest need? More than blessings, more than healing, more than a feeling, more than answers, more than direction- *the greatest need in your life is always; to know more of God*. John tells us, not only is there no darkness within the identity of God- but in John 1:5 we read that God is in fact light Himself. Light is literally *Who* He is. To know more of God, to learn of His identity, to spend time in His presence- is to let the light shine into your very own life. It's to come to a brighter understanding. Biblically, to be a Christian means to be enlightened or to have your eyes opened. It's to walk in the light as He is in the light, and to reject all darkness. But where does the limitless light of this shining Kingdom come from? The answer is simply, *the knowledge of God*. He is the light of His Kingdom, light is literally His identity. It is by knowing God, by

spending time in His presence, that we receive the light in our own lives. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 2:4;

**“FOR GOD, WHO COMMANDED THE LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS,  
HATH SHINED IN OUR HEARTS, TO GIVE THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF  
THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.”**

### **-2 CORINTHIANS 2:4-**

Just like in the very beginning, where everything began in the dark of Genesis 1, and where God commanded light to shine amidst the darkness- Paul says, *He has done it again*. This time God is not speaking light into a formless void called space, this time, God is commanding light to shine in the dark depths of; *your heart*. When Light, the very identity of God penetrates the darkness of your soul- the Bible says that you have been enlightened. You have received the knowledge, the understanding, you have received within your dark heart the very identity of the God of light. To be a Christian means that God has commanded His light to shine in your dark heart.

Yet, why did God do it? Why did God say let there be light? It's so beautiful that the same answer given in Genesis 1 applies now, within the darkness of each of our lives. God commanded light to shine in our darkness *'to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.'* Do you realize the entire reason God spoke light was so that you could know Him? He literally spoke the sun into space so that you would understand His illuminated ways. God separated the light from the darkness so that we could know Him. This is precisely what takes place here in the life of Moses. A man who had spent his life in Egypt, a dark and destitute place of darkness. Moses goes up on the mountain and for 40 days he does nothing more than learn Who God is. Having intentionally spent time experiencing The God of Light- the light began to shine within the dark heart of Moses.

Yet, you do realize Moses didn't go up to that mount just to read about God? He didn't go up there to hear someone tell him Who God was. Moses went up to the top of that mountain to have God

Himself shine His light into His life. Moses went to obtain *the knowledge of Who God is*. The word used here by Paul for knowledge is not book smarts. He's not telling us to read up on God, or to learn facts about Him. The word Paul uses here for knowledge is the root word *ginosko*, which means *to personally experience, to become acquainted with, to perceive, or to understand*. This is what it means to know God. This is what it means to be enlightened by Who He is.

This is why, to be completely honest, I am desperately concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of most Christians. If being a Christian is having the understanding of Who God is shone into your dark heart- then what does that say for so many believers who lack any interest at all in Who God is? What does that say for the believer who neglects their Bible? What does that say for those who are begged to attend church, Bible study, and Sunday school? What does that say about those who lack a commitment to the Kingdom of the God of Light? The uncomfortable question has to be asked; *has the light been shone into your heart?* Has God beamed the knowledge, the experience, the understanding of Who He is into your life? *Do you even want Him to?!*

Folks the light that is meant to define your life isn't something you can manufacture, it's not something you can muster up or produce. Light doesn't happen because you keep a check list of dos and don'ts, because you attend church, or because you read and pray. You aren't lit because you are moral or because you don't do bad things. Your WWJD t-shirt, your I am Second bracelet, your Jesus fish bumper sticker is not the way that He intended for you to light this world. No matter how hard you try, no matter how much effort you exert- you *cannot* give off light in and of yourself. Light only comes from knowing God- *because He Himself is light*.

If you're a Christian, like Moses you have received the invite up to Sinai. God has personally extended an invitation to fellowship with Him. He says, come, get to know Me- experience Who I, Your God, Am. The channel, the doorway, the availability of light is wide open in the life of a believer- yet the unpopular truth is that few and far

between are willing to receive the Light. It is literally impossible to live a dull life that lacks light when you spend time in the presence of the God of light. The more you come to know God, the brighter your life will shine. The more you come to grasp His ways, the more aglow you'll be. And if your life lacks light- then the uncomfortable truth is, *you have failed to know Him*. You've stayed in the dark, at the base of the mount. Yet, if you are intentional in knowing Him, things will begin to get bright in the life of a believer. So much so, that like Moses, you, a dull dust form, will begin to shine bright as you let off light.

Moses comes down from the mountain and he had the light- it was actually and factually present in his life. Yet now all aglow Moses had a choice; *let the people see him or allow them to see God*. Easily, Moses could have impressed the people that day by his spirituality, his ability, his insight, the fact that God had chosen him. Yet, as Moses comes down the mountain, we find that Moses *rejects* his own life.

**“AND TILL MOSES HAD DONE SPEAKING WITH THEM, HE PUT A VAIL ON HIS FACE.”**

**-EXODUS 34:33-**

Do we grasp what Moses does here? He willingly chooses to veil his appearance- to cover up who he was. He chooses to infringe upon his own identity, all to demonstrate who God was to the people who were in the dark. As long as the people could see Moses and his face, they could not receive the identity of God. But if Moses would humbly veil himself, become unseen- then and only then could the people come to know God for themselves. Like many of us, Moses could have told God *'But if I veil my face, they won't be able to see me.'* To which God could have replied; *'that's precisely the point!'*

Have we forgotten that the life of a Christian is a life of a laid down identity? Being a believer means you've counted the cost; you've made the logical decision to lay down your life and reject who you are because you've received who He is. It's not up for debate, it's not a negotiation, it's not even something you can simply disobey- if

you belong to the Kingdom of Heaven then Jesus says you *will* lay down your life;

**“WHOSOEVER WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF,  
AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE  
HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT; BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE  
AND THE GOSPEL'S, THE SAME SHALL SAVE IT.”**

**-MARK 8:34-**

Today we hear many people quote John 3:16 and claim that *‘I’m a whosoever’*, but where are the people who are willing to be a Mark 8:34 *‘whosoever?’* Jesus says – everyone is welcome- but first there are stipulations to consider; *deny you and then find Me*. The word Jesus uses here for deny means *to forget oneself, to lose sight of who you are and your interests*. Jesus says to be a Christian is to reject your very own identity. What Jesus is explaining here is a trade-off. He says if you will deny yourself, if you’ll forget, and lose sight of you and your interests- He will then give you His life and His interests. Every single person who lives in This Kingdom of Light has a Singular identity, and that identity is; Christ. No other identities make it into this Kingdom- Which He laid down His life just to purchase. If God allowed you to belong to His Kingdom, yet keep your will and ways- suddenly there would be darkness within this pure Kingdom of Light. *He can’t do it*. He tells us to lay down our will, our way, our words, our very life- and take up His life- if and only if we want to enter The Kingdom of Eternal Light.

This is the same thing what we find Moses doing in Exodus 34- having received the knowledge of the light and life of God, Moses counts the cost; *His life, for God’s*. With the vail now covering who he is, Moses loses sight of himself, he lays aside his own interest, he makes the trade and rejects his own life because he had found the light of God. So many Christians today are claiming Christ but have yet to reject themselves. They have yet to lose their life in order to find His life. They have not veiled their own identity. Instead of laying down our lives, we’re often too busy pointing to our lives- our achievements, our accomplishments, our sermons, our songs, our

trophies, our promotions, our families, our hobbies, our careers. Instead of losing sight of me, more often than not we're saying *look at me*.

Have you ever wondered why in the world we have a moon? The Earth- *obviously important*. The Sun, *pretty imperative*. But, the big-ole rock that does nothing and that can sustain nothing- honestly seems pointless. The moon has no rings, no water, no life, not even breathable air. The moon is just a big bolder that basically spins and goes nowhere. Yet God, in all of His creative genius, knew that there was a necessary role that only the moon could fulfill. We read in Genesis 1:16;

**“AND GOD MADE TWO GREAT LIGHTS; THE GREATER LIGHT TO RULE THE DAY,  
AND THE LESSER LIGHT TO RULE THE NIGHT...”**

**-GENESIS 1:16-**

God makes the Sun, this magnificent and mighty light that has amazing abilities and powers, that can light up an entire solar system- and then He creates this itsy bitsy, tiny little rock called the moon. While the sun rules over the day, the purpose of the moon is nothing more than to give light when it's dark by reflecting the light it receives from the sun. The meaning of the moon is not to impress, it's not to garner an audience, or to make a name for itself- God made the moon and called it lesser. He gave the moon no other purpose than to point us, to remind us, to keep our sights on the sun.

Even though the moon has no light in and of itself, and although it has received all of its light from the sun- every 18 months we find a phenomenon known as a solar eclipse taking place. During a solar eclipse the moon places itself in the way of the sun's light, and as a result a direct shadow is cast upon the earth, plunging us into total darkness. Instead of reflecting the sun's light, the identity of the moon blocks the identity of the sun- and the result is *a shadow*. The ironic thing is that in doing so, the moon actually contradicts its very reason for being created. Because God made the moon, for one



reason and one reason only; *to be a lesser light amidst the darkness*. Yet, the very minute that the moon blocks the light that it is meant to receive- in doing so it cancels its very reason for creation.

Too often we think that because we have received the light, we're all set as believers. We convince ourselves that coming to the altar was the hard part, and it's just smooth sailing now that we're saved. The problem is that if we are unwilling to reject our own lives, we are actually casting a shadow upon the very identity of God. We are actually cancelling the very reason that He saved us in the first place. God says "*amidst this dark world- I want you to receive My identity and reject yours.*" When you choose to live for yourself, when you are selfish or self-centered, when you make your own plans, when you busy your life with your own interests- you are blocking the very light that has been given to you, and the result is a shadow of darkness cast upon the identity of Christ. You're literally eclipsing God, Who you're meant to shine. It would be no different than Moses coming down from the mount and telling Israel, who was in darkness and who needed to know of God- to look at him. Look at his glow, look at his face, look at how great he was. Israel would have remained in the dark- and Moses would have forfeited the entire purpose of the light he had been given.

As we look around at Christianity today- can we be honest enough to admit that there's a whole lot of ourselves that still needs to be denied? Can you honestly say that you have you denied your life? Have you come to the place where you have rejected the very person that you are? Have you lost track of your interests, lost track of the way that you want to live- and as a result- have you found the light of God? If you look at what defines your life; *your desires, your attitudes, your motives, your actions, your thoughts*- do they look more like *you* – or- like *Jesus*? Does your life demonstrate His identity- or are you casting a shadow of darkness upon His identity?

Chances are most all of us here today are not going to take a sabbatical and climb a mountain and sit there for 40 days in order to get to know God. So how exactly do we reject our image and receive His? It's not some formula, it's not a complicated series of ritual- it's

really quite simple; *deny yourself in every moment*. Don't just keep the commandments, don't just do churchy things, don't just practice religion- but be intentional about *receiving* and *rejecting*. Regularly veil, lose track of, deny your very own desires, and wants. When you want to say that thing you know you shouldn't, *deny yourself*; get so caught up in who Jesus is, that you lose track of who you are. When you want to go to that website or open that app; *deny yourself*- recognize that this temptation is trying to make you live for you and not for Him. When you sign up for that sporting event or that extracurricular that's going to cost you time away from God and His house- *deny yourself*, put that veil on – and make the decision to know more of God and less of you. *Because that's what it means to be the Christian that you are!*

Anytime our life lacks surrender, anytime we fail to lay down our way of living- we are totally and completely blocking the light and life of God. Even if we have spent time in His presence, even if we've read our bibles, even if we've prayed, or attended church- even if His light has been shone in our hearts- if you are still living for yourself- then you're casting a shadow of darkness upon His identity. Your flesh is eclipsing the very light that you were created for. Like Moses, the only hope of the light shining through, the only chance of the presence of God in your life- is to reject, veil, deny, lose yourself- for His and the Gospels sake.

We find that not only did Moses receive the light, not only did he reject his life, but Moses goes on to *reflect* the light of God to those in darkness. God knew that in order for the world to be rejuvenated and ready for a new day every 24 hours– nighttime would be essential. However, there was a problem. If the Sun is present, then it can never be dark- and thereby it can never be night. So, God made the moon, a lesser light – and He placed the moon over the nighttime, so that no matter where we would go, and no matter what time it may be- light could always be seen – *even when it may not necessarily be present*. We look up at the moon in the dark night sky, and we see a brightly illuminated lunar phenomenon. Yet, scientifically, just like mankind, the moon has *no* light in and of itself. It cannot give off light, although it is meant to shine brightly. Each

night as the earth rotates, the moon comes into view upon this dark earth. Yet having rejected its own dark identity, and now having received the light of the sun- the moon begins to literally reflect the light it has received. The moon gives a reflection, a representation of the light of the sun- even while the sun itself is not present. So that even amidst darkness, even during the night- *the light of the sun can be seen.*

**“AND AFTERWARD ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL CAME NIGH: AND HE GAVE THEM IN COMMANDMENT ALL THAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN WITH HIM IN MOUNT SINAI.”**

**-EXODUS 34:32-**

Do you remember Israel’s problem? After nearly 400 years, God’s people had forgotten Who He was, they were in the dark about His identity. Meaning, that the greatest need for these people dwelling in darkness was to know God. Yet notice that Moses does not march Israel atop the mountain themselves, he doesn’t try and rub off some of his-light-like ways onto the people. Moses, who had been in God’s presence, learning of God’s ways- for 40 days- actually begins to glow like God. He actually begins to reflect the light of God upon his own life. So now, Israel, who had dwelt in fear at the foot of the mountain, who was in the dark about God’s identity, who had not been in God’s presence– could actually see the presence of God reflected upon Moses. It could be said that day, that Moses was the light of Israel. He was the city on a hill among the people. He shone brightly, though his life was dim.

You do realize that God made you and He saved you with a purpose and a plan for your life? He didn’t deliver you from the kingdom of darkness to sit idly on the side lines until heaven someday. He did not save you because He thinks you’re swell. He didn’t save you because you cried tears or because He likes your smile. God saved you in order that you would be a lesser light amidst the darkness of this world. He saved you with a job to do, a plan to process, a purpose to prioritize. The bible tells us that God desires that all people, of all tribes, nations, and languages would come to *know Him*. However, there’s a problem. God is 100% pure light, which

means that He cannot be present here in this world of darkness- and allow darkness to still exist. It's for this reason that God created mankind, a second, lesser being which reflects Who He-the God of Light is- to this dark world. God's plan was that you would show this world of darkness just Who God is. Show this world how God thinks, how He acts, how He talks, how He loves, how He reacts. Demonstrate to this world how faithful God is, how reliable He is, how constant He is. Display to this world that He is Holy, that He is powerful, and almighty. In the way that you live your life, reflect the light that is God to this dark and dreary world.

The truth of the bible is that *YOU* are the plan of the I Am. You are His weapon against darkness. You are the agent sent by the Kingdom of Light, to defeat the kingdom of darkness from within. When the world looks at you, they should see an ambassador of the Kingdom to which you belong. They should be able to see a resemblance, a reflection of just Who your King, the God of light, is. To be a Christian is to give a visible reflection of the invisible God. If this is true, and if you are a Christian, then ask yourself; *what are you reflecting?* By the way in which you're living your life, as a reflector of God- *what image are you portraying of Him?* Are you telling the world that God is a loudmouth? A hot head? Are you portraying an image of ignorance? Of indifference? Are you telling the world that God is merciful? That He is love? That in Him is no darkness? What does your life say about your King?

Do you recognize that as a Christian- you're Moses here, you yourself have experienced God- you have been in His presence- you have received the light shone into your heart. Yet this world has not, this world is in the dark about the identity of God. All that the onlooking world can see of God is *what they see in you*. The way you reflect God will shape the very way that those around you understand Who God is. Will those looking on see you, another pointless lump of dirt that has no light capabilities of its own? Or will this world see your life aglow? Shining brightly against the backdrop of the darkest circumstances- because of the light of God that shines within. There should always and at all times be a sheen to your salvation, a reflection of the righteous God Whose light shines upon

your life. This is what it means to be a Christian. Not to walk an aisle during an altar call, not to shed a tear, not to attend church- being a Christian means that you have laid down your life and you now allow His will, His way, His works to be seen in and through you.

**TO BE COUNTED AMONG THE REDEEMED IS  
TO BE COUNTED AMONG THOSE WHO GIVE  
*A ROYAL REFLECTION  
TO THE KING OF LIGHT.***



## **1. \_\_\_\_\_ THE LIGHT (EXODUS 34:29)**

- THE GREATEST NEED IN YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS; TO \_\_\_\_\_ MORE OF GOD.
- 2 CORINTHIANS 2:4 *“FOR GOD, WHO COMMANDED THE LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, HATH SHINED IN OUR HEARTS, TO GIVE THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST.”*
- TO BE A CHRISTIAN MEANS THAT GOD HAS COMMANDED HIS LIGHT TO SHINE IN YOUR DARK \_\_\_\_\_.
- **GINOSKO: TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE, TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH, TO PERCEIVE, TO UNDERSTAND.**
- HAS GOD BEAMED THE KNOWLEDGE, THE EXPERIENCE, THE UNDERSTANDING OF WHO HE IS INTO YOUR LIFE?
- DO YOU WANT HIM TO? YES | NO
- IT IS LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE A DULL LIFE THAT LACKS LIGHT, WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_ IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GOD OF LIGHT

## **2. \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR LIFE (EXODUS 34:33)**

- MOSES COULD HAVE SAID ‘*BUT IF I VAIL MY FACE, THEY WON’T BE ABLE TO SEE ME.*’ TO WHICH GOD COULD HAVE REPLIED; ‘*THAT’S PRECISELY THE POINT!*’
- MARK 8:34 *“WHOSOEVER WILL COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME. FOR WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT; BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL’S, THE SAME SHALL SAVE IT.”*
- **DENY- TO \_\_\_\_\_ ONESELF, TO LOSE SIGHT OF WHO YOU ARE AND YOUR INTERESTS**
- EVERY SINGLE PERSON WHO LIVES IN THIS KINGDOM OF LIGHT HAS A \_\_\_\_\_ IDENTITY, AND THAT’S CHRIST. NO OTHER IDENTITIES

MAKE IT INTO THIS KINGDOM- WHICH HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE JUST TO PURCHASE.

### **A. THE LESSER LIGHT**

- GENESIS 1:16 “AND GOD MADE TWO GREAT LIGHTS; THE GREATER LIGHT TO RULE THE DAY, AND THE LESSER LIGHT TO RULE THE NIGHT...”
- THE PURPOSE OF THE MOON IS TO GIVE LIGHT WHEN IT’S DARK BY \_\_\_\_\_ THE LIGHT IT RECEIVES FROM THE SUN
- SOLAR \_\_\_\_\_ THE MOON PLACES ITSELF IN THE WAY OF THE SUN’S LIGHT, AND AS A RESULT A DIRECT SHADOW IS CAST UPON THE EARTH, PLUNGING IT INTO TOTAL DARKNESS. INSTEAD OF REFLECTING THE SUN’S LIGHT, THE IDENTITY OF THE MOON BLOCKS THE IDENTITY OF THE SUN- AND THE RESULT IS A SHADOW.
- WHEN YOU CHOOSE TO LIVE FOR YOURSELF- YOU ARE \_\_\_\_\_ THE VERY LIGHT THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU, AND THE RESULT IS A SHADOW OF DARKNESS CAST UPON THE IDENTITY OF CHRIST. YOU’RE LITERALLY ECLIPSING GOD, WHO YOUR MEANT TO SHINE.
- DOES YOUR LIFE DEMONSTRATE HIS IDENTITY- OR ARE YOU CASTING A SHADOW OF DARKNESS UPON WHO HE IS?
- DENY YOURSELF IN \_\_\_\_\_ MOMENT

### **B. \_\_\_\_\_ THE LIKENESS (EXODUS 34:32)**

- NO MATTER WHERE WE WOULD GO, AND NO MATTER WHAT TIME IT MAY BE- LIGHT COULD ALWAYS BE SEEN – EVEN WHEN IT MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE PRESENT.
- GOD SAVED YOU IN ORDER THAT YOU WOULD BE A \_\_\_\_\_ LIGHT AMIDST THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD.
- WHAT DOES YOUR LIFE SAY ABOUT YOUR KING?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- THERE SHOULD ALWAYS AND AT ALL TIMES BE A \_\_\_\_\_ TO YOUR SALVATION, A REFLECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS GOD WHOSE LIGHT SHINES UPON YOUR LIFE.

# ***THE ROYAL REFLECTION***

## **SHADOW SURVEY**

**WHY DO WE HAVE A MOON?**

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**WHY DID GOD MAKE MANKIND?**

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**EVEN THOUGH THE MOON HAS NO LIGHT AND CAN MAKE NO LIGHT, HOW DOES THE MOON SHINE AT NIGHT?**

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**EVEN THOUGH WE CAN'T MAKE LIGHT OURSELVES, HOW DOES THE CHRISTIAN SHINE?**

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**WHAT IS AN ECLIPSE?**

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**HOW DO WE ECLIPSE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IN OUR LIFE?**

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**WHAT ARE THE THREE WAYS WE SHINE LIGHT IN OUR LIFE?**

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## **THE ROYAL REFLECTION KEEP GOING... RECHARGE THE REFLECTION**

If you own a cell phone, or have ever played with any sort of remote control toy- then you understand the concept of rechargeable batteries pretty well. After a long day of play, the battery that makes our favorite device function becomes drained of power and suddenly your phone is flashing a red light or that remote control truck begins to move in a sluggish manner. There really is only one obvious thing to do with a battery that's losing it's charge; *recharge*. Give it again what it once had so that it can again do what it once did.

The truth is that no matter how long you've been saved, no matter how bright the light of Christ once shined in your life- as long as you're alive, you will always need *more light*. It's no coincidence that the moon rises over the earth every 24 hours. Continually returning, constantly receiving the very light it was intended to reflect. This is exactly what we find happening in the life of Moses;

**“BUT WHEN MOSES WENT IN BEFORE THE LORD TO SPEAK WITH HIM, HE TOOK THE VAIL OFF, UNTIL HE CAME OUT. AND HE CAME OUT, AND SPAKE UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT WHICH HE WAS COMMANDED. AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SAW THE FACE OF MOSES, THAT THE SKIN OF MOSES' FACE SHONE: AND MOSES PUT THE VAIL UPON HIS FACE AGAIN, UNTIL HE WENT IN TO SPEAK WITH HIM.”**

**-EXODUS 34:34-35-**

We find that Moses was not a one and done Christian. He did not go to the top of the mount and coast until heaven. He had not yet arrived at a place where he no longer needed to know more. Moses continues to climb the mount, and with each ascent Moses takes off the vail- totally humbled, transparent, opened before God. There Moses would receive God's presence again, he would bask in the brightness of God, and then, once again Moses would descend with his face veiled to the people.

In 2 Corinthians 3:7 Paul tells us that after some time, the shine on the face of Moses began to grow dim. This tells us one plain fact about the light that

we've received; *it's brightness is dependent upon our return*. The more often you spend time in God's presence, getting to know His life and light- the brighter your life will shine. The opposite is also true. The less time you spend coming to the knowledge of Who He is- the duller and dimmer your life will be. If you find your life is lacking light, if you have fallen into temptation, if you lack a desire for the things of God- *it's time to return to the light*. It's time to once again devote your life to knowing more of Him.

There is no place for coasting in Christianity. There should never be a plateaued place where you've learned enough, had enough, and have done enough. From now until all of eternity- the life of a Christian should be spent basking in the brightness of our King. Coming to more and more knowledge of Who He is. Many people lack an interest in learning about God, and His will, Word, and ways. I'm afraid that eternity will come as quite a shock when they come to realize that forever and ever- heaven will be spent coming to know more of the God of light. As Jesus put it in John 17:3

**“AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD,  
AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM THOU HAST SENT.”**

**-JOHN 17:3-**

In heaven the sun is not going to exist, and there will also be no moon. Because one day, as we each enter and forever live in the eternal Kingdom of Light- our King, The God of Light will illuminate the entire Kingdom. On that endless day, *we will know Him as He is, and we will be like Him* (1 John 3:2). Jesus tells us, this, this is eternal life; know The One True God. The fascinating thing about eternity is that it goes both ways. Something that is eternal knows no end, but it also knows no beginning. If you are a Christian you will spend infinity and beyond knowing The God of Light from His presence, why not start now? Why not spend all of this life recharging, bringing yourself back time and time again to know more of Him- after all, if your faith is in Jesus- today and every is a part of our eternal life.

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***'DIVIDED FROM  
THE DARKNESS'***



SCAN





## **FROM CAVE TO KINGDOM**

God's kingdom of light is clearly established in the finished work of Christ. When the Son of God, bearing the sins of all humanity, died upon the cross at Calvary, the chief cornerstone of this glorious Kingdom was set in place. Just as He prophesied, the temple of this kingdom was raised up in three days, when He once and for all defeated the darkness. The kingdom of God that Christ built however is *not* a physical place. This cornerstone and this temple are not built upon a geographic location, and they do not contain materials that are earthly. The Kingdom which God has built is spiritual. It is a kingdom meant to rule Its people by laws which are written on the heart of man, instead of on tablets of stone. It is a kingdom which is built upon better promises and with a steadfast hope. This kingdom will have a profound impact, not just on our eternity, but also our lives here and now. God has set up a Kingdom to change the very dark and shadowy desires of man into a singular desire above all else; *to surrender our lives and fervently pursue God's will, His pure and holy light.*

This Kingdom reigning in our hearts is leading us to an Eternal Kingdom, the culmination of what Christ has started here on earth. We are likely all familiar with Heaven's splendor and beauty. We sing of it and testify of it often. We are no doubt waiting and anxious to get there and see our Savior face to face! Although these are good and encouraging things to dwell upon (*the Bible actually encourages us to do this in several places*) we often use the idea of Heaven as our escape from *this* life. We look upwards and cry out "*even so come Lord,*" as we grow embittered and hardened towards the people of this world. We claim victory in Christ with our words, but we live as though we cannot gain victory in our lives. We feel as though we cannot change this world, so instead, we just hang on and wait for the Lord to bring us a new one. *Our hearts are weak.* In any prolonged battle that we find ourselves in we simply throw in the towel, beg God to bring us out of the storm, and to give us rest or just take us home. My friend, the Kingdom of Light is not meant to be ours beyond Heaven's pearly gates, but It is supposed to be lived

vicariously through each life changed by the power of Christ. Before God ever establishes His eternal Kingdom here on earth, He wants us to live in it now, in the midst of all the darkness of this world *with a zealous and tenacious heart!* The Hebrew phrase for this is *Rak Chazak Amats*. A group of men under David's reign would exemplify this phrase and become some of the most fearsome and legendary warriors ever known, *but they did not start out this way.*

**“DAVID THEREFORE DEPARTED THENCE, AND ESCAPED TO THE CAVE ADDULLUM: AND WHEN HIS BRETHREN AND ALL HIS FATHER'S HOUSE HEARD IT, THEY WENT DOWN THITHER TO HIM. AND EVERY ONE THAT WAS IN DISTRESS, AND EVERY ONE THAT WAS IN DEBT, AND EVERY ONE THAT WAS DISCONTENTED, GATHERED THEMSELVES UNTO HIM; AND HE BECAME A CAPTAIN OVER THEM: AND THERE WERE WITH HIM ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED MEN.”**

**-1 SAMUEL 22:1-2-**

David has been on the run for some time at this point, hiding from his paranoid father-in-law who is actively seeking to kill him. If you know the story, then you know that God has already stripped the kingdom from Saul and anointed David to be the next legitimate King of Israel. Up until this point David has proved himself in battles and as a military leader under King Saul. He has been a faithful and compassionate aid to King Saul. Johnathon, Saul's son and the would-be successor to the throne, has pledged allegiance to David which only served in furthering Saul's rage. God's will is taking shape and laying the groundwork for David's reign at every turn, and yet Saul will not accept it. He has murder and vengeance set in his heart. So, David runs. Cast out of the royal court he finds himself some eight miles outside of his hometown of Bethlehem, taking up refuge in a cave at Addullum. It is in this rejection that David first meets *his band of misfits.*

David's family and those in the surrounding area hear that he is close by and hiding from the blood lust of King Saul, and so they go to see him. Among those who traveled to see David are *the distressed.* Those who knew David and were in anguish for him because of the treatment he was receiving. The distressed knew David, his strength,

his courage, and most of all his heart. They were broken for him and the way that he was rejected by the one who should have rejoiced over him.

Those who were *in debt* went to him as well. The reign of King Saul was bringing economic turmoil to the land, and many could not pay debts that they had come to owe. Facing prison or even death for this debt, which was beyond their ability to pay, they instead turn to David. He is a noble and honorable man who finds value, not in the ability of these men to pay their debt, but in their loyalty and devotion to him.

Finally, we find *the discontented*. Those who were aggravated with King Saul. This was the man who was supposed to be the remedy for the problems of the people of Israel. Instead, he had turned into a self-absorbed King. His interests were not honoring to God, they were not on governing his people, but instead this king was focused solely on the preservation of his own crown. The people had no doubt heard of his jealous fits, and for the discontented, the actions of their mad king did not represent the Kingdom God had promised to them. *So, they went to David.*

The distressed, the indebted and the discontented. This rag tag group of people did not seem like the army of a great King. As a matter of fact, they weren't. They were nobodies, plucked from the obscurity and disappointment of life. Yet each of these three groups found the opportunity to serve David, the future king, in his greatest hour of need. This would-be king running for his life would be the very man that this band of misfits would pledge their allegiance to.

The Bible isn't clear on how long David is in exile, but most scholars believe it is likely a time period of at least eight years, if not longer. At some point during this time of exile this group of four hundred devoted men increases to a number of six hundred. We see at least two places, at Keilah and in Ziklag, where David and this group of untrained, poorly equipped, ill-suited men take military campaigns against the enemies of God even before David becomes the rightful king. They spent years running and fighting without ever obtaining

the kingdom. Yet these men would continue to remain faithful and true to their king. Out of this group of warriors there would rise a small group whom David would appoint as captains over his army. Rising through the ranks with their extraordinary courage, devotion, and fearlessness we find those named in God's Holy Word as *David's mighty men!*

**“THESE ALSO ARE THE CHIEF OF THE MIGHTY MEN WHOM DAVID HAD, WHO STRENGTHENED THEMSELVES WITH HIM IN HIS KINGDOM, AND WITH ALL ISRAEL, TO MAKE HIM KING, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD CONCERNING ISRAEL.”**

**-1 CHRONICLES 11:10-**

Now there is no doubt that some of the exploits of these men happened after David had ascended to the throne. It's also very likely that many of them took place before David would ever actually take his place as King of Israel. Whether David was ruling from a throne or from the depths of a cave, it did not matter to these men. To these men David was their king, and they would follow him without hesitation. *For they found strength with him in the kingdom!* They found a strength, that they had never known before, in all of the running and hiding. They found in following David a reason to endure, even in exile. They found in David a hope for a kingdom that, though it was not yet a reality, was worth fighting for. They found strength to do more and be more than they could ever be under the leadership of Saul. Looking at what some of these men did, it is easy to see the strength that they found by following David.

There was *Jashobeam* who killed eight hundred with his spear at one time! Not five or ten or even twenty, but eight hundred would die at the spear of this one warrior in one battle, *Rak Chazak Amats*.

There is *Eleazar*, who took his stand alone in a barley field and defended that plot of land from the enemy. He continued to fight until his hand would become one with the sword- the man becoming indistinguishable from the weapon. Though wearied, the sword would not leave his clutches and in all his strength, blow after blow,



he fought on until finally he had wrought a great victory that day. It was only then, when the enemy was dead, that everyone else had the courage to return and scavenge the bodies of the slain. Eleazar had it, *Rak Chazak Amats*.

Then there were the three at the cave of Adullam, where the band of misfits had first come to David. Upon David's request, these three would go and fetch him a drink of water. I know that doesn't sound all that heroic, but what if I told you that these three would travel the eight miles from that cave to David's hometown of Bethlehem, where the Philistine army had gained control and built fortifications. What if I told you these three would fight their way through the camp of the enemy, defend themselves long enough to draw water from the well, and return the eight miles back to David just to give him this drink. Simply because *he asked for it*. *Rak Chazak Amats*.

Being outmatched was never an issue for these men, as they would kill hundreds compared to their small numbers. The reputation or the size of the champions they faced never disturbed these mighty men. Even wild beasts would not deter them. On one snowy day, when one of David's mighty men had fallen into a pit, *he would slay a lion!* He did not think of better times, or wallow in his misfortune, but rather he rose to the challenge at hand because that was what he had to do for the kingdom to endure, *Rak Chazak Amats*.

Uzziah was one of David's mighty men. Even when David had betrayed him, and when he was actively planning to kill him, Uzziah would faithfully return to battle and even his death, at the request of his king. *Rak Chazak Amats*.

If the Kingdom of light has not been clearly seen or understood up to this point, I hope you are able to see it in these men. These mighty men found in David someone who was worthy to follow. They found a man who was after God's own heart, and he in return would find a place in theirs. This level of devotion and commitment is what it is to live in the Kingdom of light. To fight and put your life on the line when there is no sight of a reward. To many a Christian if there is no blessing or benefit, then they aren't willing to follow their King. Yet

for these rag tag followers, there was no immediate benefit to following David either, as their lives became targeted, and they too would be hunted by Saul and his army. Jesus gives this warning to us as well. He told us that in following Him, we're signing up for a life of struggle and rejection. The life of the Christian is a lot less like being in the royal court of King Saul, and a lot more like being in exile with the future King David. Ask yourself, if your life was not blessed in any way, and you only knew heartache and struggle, *would you still be willing to follow Christ?* Is the promise of the kingdom to come and more importantly the privilege to follow Jesus Christ himself enough? Do you need the blessings and favor of God to fuel your faith in this life? If we're honest with ourselves many of us can't even come to church on a snowy day, let alone slay a lion. It's far more likely to give in to peer pressure or cultural norms, than to resist them and stand firm on the Word of the Lord. Instead of living in the Kingdom of Light, instead of finding ourselves numbered among those who are mighty, we live our life in the shadows. Running from the battlefield, only to return when the mighty have gained the victory, and it is safe to collect the bounty of their courage.

This should not be so in our life. Christ has not called us out of the darkness to remain hesitant and cowardly. He has called us into his marvelous light to follow Him without doubt or fear, with full assurance that He has obtained our victory. Unlike David, who remained away from the battle and sent Uzziah to his death in order to cover up his own sin, *our King came to the battle*. He came to our rescue when He put on *our* flesh, and *our* weakness, and bore *our* sins upon the cross. Freely submitting to death on *our* behalf. In the shedding of our great King's blood, our sins have been covered and we have been made free from the jealous fits of the mad king of this world. Do we not have every reason to follow Him? Is He not a cause worth devoting ourselves to? It is our good and reasonable service, so much more than that of the men who would follow David so faithfully, to devote our lives to *this* King! The Kingdom of God far exceeds the kingdom David would take control of, yet we often find that our lives are little more than lip service to Christ. Our actions revolve around our own desires, instead of that of our King. What

made David's mighty men so mighty wasn't the acts of bravery and battlefield victories. *It was their uncompromising commitment to a King without a physical kingdom.* This, in a nutshell is what our lives should be, and this unfortunately is so often where we fail.

**“AND THAT HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THEY WHICH LIVE SHOULD NOT HENCEFORTH LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO HIM WHICH DIED FOR THEM, AND ROSE AGAIN.”**

**-2 CORINTHIANS 5:15-**

The men who followed David, who would become renowned for their heroism and bravery, gave their lives to a mere mortal man. Their lives were a beacon of hope to those around them. They were full of resilience and fortitude in the face of every overwhelming obstacle and trial that they would face. They would defy the odds again and again. Their rebellion against darkness would, in time, help all of Israel to see the worthiness and righteousness of David's reign. *This is kingdom living at its finest.* Enduring the trial without the reward, knowing that one day all will be well. This is what a peculiar people look like. *Living without, as though they have.* This is what it is to live out praises to our King, who has plucked us from the darkness and brought us into His marvelous light! We were not a people before, but now under the reign of Christ, we have been made into a family. There is strength in this Kingdom. Strength to do more, and be more than we ever could under Satan's dark reign.

Yet, *we are weak.* We hesitate. We doubt. We return to the whims and wishes of the mad king who rules from the darkness. Like a man beholding his face in a mirror, we forget the wretched state we were in prior to coming to Jesus. When trials and temptations come our way, we lack the strength of character to stay true to our King. Our lives do not resemble the mighty men of David, but those who sat by and lived under the rule of King Saul. Our failure does not come from the leadership of our King, for ours is the King of kings and Lord of lords. *The fault is our own and it comes from our lack of devotion to Him.* He is not a mortal man like David. He is the Son of the living God, the true and anointed King who has not yet taken His place

upon His eternal throne. This does not mean that the Kingdom is not His or that it does not exist. David's kingdom was clearly seen in the lives of his mighty men, and Christ's Kingdom is to be seen, like a city set upon a hill, through the lives of Christians everywhere.

It was in Jesus' own example of prayer that we see His desire for our lives. *"Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."* It is Christ's desire that His Father's Kingdom and will would come and be done *on earth*. We are to live in the Kingdom *now on earth*, as it is in heaven. That means that all of the joy, peace and love of heaven is to be lived out in our lives *now*. The glory and honor that are rightfully God's, should be given to Him now, while we are still yet in exile. Living in this victory is the hope that caused David's mighty men to be so brave and valiant. Not that they might receive a part of David's kingdom when he took the throne, but that while they were fugitives and running for their lives they were *actually living in his kingdom*. This is what Christ has done for us. He has given us a part in His beautiful Kingdom *now*. To be lived in and built by our lives, while in this dark and wicked world. We are children of the light. Joint heirs with Christ in all of His majesty and glory. Our lives should not be spent wallowing in pity and sulking in the shadows. In the heart of every believer a Heavenly Kingdom exists. Brick by brick, scripture by scripture, prayer by prayer, good work by good work this Kingdom is built and thrives in all who bow before the Holy one of Heaven!

**"AND WHEN HE WAS DEMANDED OF THE PHARISEES,  
WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD COME, HE ANSWERED  
THEM AND SAID: THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH  
OBSERVATION: NEITHER SHALL THEY SAY, LO HERE! OR, LO THERE!  
FOR, BEHOLD, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU."**

**-LUKE 17:20-21-**

Christ literally said it Himself, My Kingdom is not to be seen with these eyes. You will never enter into city gates or see the vineyards that belong to the Lord. You will never drink from the fountains or

sit in the shade of the cities of God's Kingdom. You will never rest on the hillside or lift praises in the temple of the Kingdom of God. And you will never see your King sitting upon His throne ruling with majesty and wisdom. These places do not exist in *this* world, and until the Lord returns, they will never exist *here*. But the Kingdom can be, dare I say, *it must be real in your heart!* The wonder and beauty and splendor of Heaven's country must be so real and so overwhelming in your life, that although you cannot see it with your eyes, your soul possesses a perfect picture of this country! This was what drove David's mighty men to do what they did, to be who they were, and to serve David with unfailing faithfulness. This is what will cause us to step out of the shadows and serve our Lord with unmatched devotion. In thinking about David's mighty men, it is probably easy to conclude that they are just what legends are made of, heroes of days gone by. To believe that there is no way anyone could ever live up to that now. I am here to tell you of a different conclusion. One that ends with a remnant of devoted followers.

The parallels to us today are almost uncanny. Those of us who follow Christ are often *the distressed*. Broken by the failings of our sin, yet undone by the strength, love, and compassion of our Savior, shown to us at the cross! In this sacrificial love we find the heart of a true King worthy of our devotion, and so we go to Him.

Are we any different than those who were *in debt*? A recognition of that which is owed because of our sin, and the weight of this unbearable debt burdening us to the point of despair. Complete hopelessness in the darkness of this world. Rather than facing imprisonment and death for all of eternity, we go to Jesus, who does not demand that we *repay*, but only that we *repent*. We find in Jesus someone who only desires our devotion to Him, despite how little we can offer.

What of our *discontentment* when we realize the failings of our current king, and all of the darkness of his ways? We have left the mad king and have chosen a life of exile from the pleasures of sin. We now seek a peculiar life in pursuit of the good pleasure of our King! The sparkle and allure of sin has worn off, and from a longing

for something more, we go to Jesus! You see we are not so different from these men who went to David. Like them we are a band of misfits looking for a place with the coming King!

**“FOR YE SEE YOUR CALLING, BRETHREN, HOW THAT NOT MANY WISE MEN AFTER THE FLESH, NOT MANY MIGHTY NOT MANY NOBLE ARE CALLED.”**

### **-1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-**

David did not choose those men because they were already mighty, nor did God choose us because of our great skills, our depth of knowledge, or because we have royal blood already flowing through our veins. It is not in what we can bring to the Kingdom that God has called us to Him, for we bring nothing of value to God's Kingdom. So, what is it then that God wants from us? What is it to live in the Kingdom of Light? The answer is found in what these men showed to David, *Rak Chazak Amats!* A life lived in zealous courage, with an unwavering loyalty to Christ. It is in this group of men that David would find a few who were so brave and so courageous, that he would stake his kingdom upon their shoulders. *Warriors devoted to David without doubt.* Not easily scared or frightened. Soldiers who would show unwavering determination in the most insurmountable of odds. Defiant warriors who performed outrageous feats for their king! In time they would see their king take his rightful place on the throne, but for much of their faithfulness the kingdom only ever existed in their hearts.

It is in the heart of every believer that Christ has established His Kingdom. In his discourse with Pilate, Jesus said *“My kingdom is not of this world...”*, because He was building it in the hearts all of those would believe in His name. Those who would believe in His finished work on the cross and at the tomb! It is in this unwavering belief, in the depth of the heart, that the victory of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom thrives!

So, I say this to all you who were once distressed, *be of good cheer for our King is coming.* All you who were once in debt, *live in the liberty of the one who has freed you!* And to all you who are

discontented with the darkness of this land, *find comfort in this fact, the light has vanquished the darkness and we now bear that light in this dark place.* Live in courage, with a tenacious and zealous heart for God, just as the mighty men did for David!

Though the darkness still surrounds us, and though we have not yet fully escaped its grasp, follow your King, your Light, to the ends of the earth! Though your feet have never trod on the streets of gold, walk through this life by faith. Let God's Word be a light unto your path and trust the guidance of your King. *Rak Chazak Amats!* Though you have not touched the gates of pearl or walls of jasper, touch the Lord by the feeling of your infirmities. Cast your cares upon a compassionate and kind King who cares for you, *Rak Chazak Amats!* Though your ears have not heard the angel choirs lifting praises unto God, hear the saints in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Play your instrument with passion and humility, so as to bring glory to the Name above every name, *Rak Chazak Amats!* Though your eyes have not found rest upon the shining face of Jesus, and though you have not yet seen Him sitting in all of His glory upon the throne, let Him rule with absolute authority from the throne room of your heart, *Rak Chazak Amats!* Though you have not seen all the beauty and wonder of Heaven's country, look upon His Kingdom. Look at your brothers and sisters. Look at those whom God has redeemed. See the distressed, the indebted, and the discontented. See the band of misfits not worthy of the Kingdom! Those who are unable to give anything to our King. Look at each life whom God is shaping, molding, and forming into a creature of glorious light. Look at how God uses all of the brokenness of His people to bring glory unto Himself. See the beauty in the struggle and heartache for we know that what we are fighting for *is worth it.* I say this to all you, this ragged bunch of nobodies, this band of misfits, it is time to rise up and become the mighty whom God would stake His very Kingdom on! *Rak Chazak Amats!*

John Wesley once said, *"Give me one hundred men who love only God with all their heart, and hate only sin with all their heart, and we shall shake the gates of hell and bring the Kingdom of God in one generation."* I believe this generation could be *that generation.* I

believe in this group there are some, who although you may not be worthy, or trained, or feel ready to shake the gates of hell- could do just that. The only question that remains; *will you do what they did?* Will you, like the few misfits who would become mighty, forsake all and follow your King? To be mighty for the Lord doesn't mean you have to become a Pastor. It doesn't mean you have to be recognized by many. You don't have to travel the country and sing. You don't have to teach or run a ministry. *Just devote yourself to Him.* Stand your ground over the little plot of land and cling to the Word. Go the extra mile to get that cup of water. Show compassion as He has shown compassion. Do the will of your King above all else. Don't give in to temptations of the darkness.

**STEP OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND WALK IN THE LIGHT,  
FOR YOUR KING IS THE KING OF LIGHT!**





- ***RAK CHAZAK AMATS- A ZEALOUS AND TENACIOUS \_\_\_\_\_, NOW!***
- **1 SAMUEL 22:1-2**
- **IT IS IN THIS \_\_\_\_\_ THAT DAVID FIRST MEETS HIS BAND OF MISFITS**
- **RISING THROUGH THE RANKS WITH THEIR EXTRAORDINARY COURAGE, DEVOTION AND FEARLESSNESS WOULD COME THOSE TO BE NAMED IN GOD'S HOLY WORD AS DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN!**
- **1 CHRONICLES 11:10**
- **THIS LEVEL OF \_\_\_\_\_ AND COMMITMENT IS WHAT IT IS TO LIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT.**
- **THEIR UNCOMPROMISING COMMITMENT TO A KING WITHOUT A PHYSICAL KINGDOM.**
- **2 CORINTHIANS 5:15**
- **LUKE 17:20-21**
- **THE KINGDOM OF GOD MUST BE REAL IN YOUR \_\_\_\_\_!**
- **1 CORINTHIANS 1:26**

# **FROM CAVE TO KINGDOM**

## **SHADOW SURVEY**

**HOW IS YOUR APPROACH TO LIVING FOR CHRIST? ARE YOU JUST WAITING FOR THE DAY OF VICTORY OR ARE YOU LIVING EACH DAY AS IF YOU ALREADY HAVE IT?**

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**IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU LIKE THE MISFITS THAT CAME TO DAVID?**

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**WHO DO WE HAVE TO TURN TO IN ALL OUR FAULTS AND FAILURES? WHAT IS OUR KING'S RESPONSE WHEN WE TURN TO HIM?**

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**HOW DEVOTED ARE YOU TO CHRIST IN YOUR LIFE?**

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**WHAT COULD YOU DO PRACTICALLY TO REMIND YOURSELF YOU HAVE ALREADY OBTAINED VICTORY IN CHRIST?**

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**IN WHAT WAYS COULD YOU LIVE OUT THE MOTTO RAK CHAZAK AMATS?**

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# **THE TWO KINGDOMS KEEP GOING...**

## **CHILD LIKE LIGHT**

Remember what it was like when you were a kid? When you could create an entire world with your imagination? I can remember vividly using an old fishing vest of my fathers for a military vest as I played “war.” Pinecones weren’t something that fell from the trees but were incoming grenades from the enemy! The kids riding their bikes down the street were enemy scouts, coming down the road in panzer tanks! As a crow flew by in the sky I could see the B-52 bombers flying past as I yelled out “Go get em boys!” And of course, how could I go to war without my trust M! Garand rifle, made from that perfectly shaped stick I found lying there in the wood pile. Looking back, it’s clear none of that was real, but to an eight year old boy, during the fourth of July season it was as real as the war my family was teaching me about.

As a child it is easy to make believe and to create something out of nothing. When we get older, our lives become more complicated and the weight of responsibility causes us to lose touch with that child-like ability. Funnily enough though, this is exactly the way Jesus describes how we are to enter His Kingdom. In Matthew 18:3 the Bible says

**“AND, SAID, VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”**

**- MATTHEW 18:3-**

I don’t think that Jesus is telling us here that we need to create something in our minds. The Kingdom of God is a very real thing and Jesus describes this to us over and over. Instead, what Jesus is doing is reminding us of how our faith should be towards this Kingdom.

Jesus knew that we would face many hardships in life. He knew that it would get frustrating at times. He even warned that this life will be a life of persecution and exile. This leaves us with such a longing to be home, in a place where we belong. The problem is that, if we let that feeling fester for too long, it can lead to a bad attitude towards the here and now. Simply put, that’s not the way we show the Kingdom of Light to this world!

Remember Jesus' instructions and let your faith be like that of a little child. Don't see the bad situation as a defeat or an obstacle that can't be overcome, but as a good gift from God meant to bring you closer to Him. Don't view the people of this world as your enemy, but through faith see them as those who God has called you to witness to. An entire new world is created through the imagination of a child, and through the faith of the believer- the goodness, love, mercy, and hope of our King shines out into the darkness. So, grow up and be a kid again, that the world might see the love of our King and they would go to Him!

WATCH A SPECIAL EPISODE  
OF THE NOYC GODCAST

***‘THE KINGDOM  
OF LIGHT’***



SCAN



A stylized black and white logo of a castle with three towers. The word "THE" is written in a bold, italicized, sans-serif font across the top of the castle's central opening. Below it, the words "SHADOW" and "KINGDOM" are written in a larger, bold, italicized, sans-serif font, with "SHADOW" on the top line and "KINGDOM" on the bottom line, both spanning the width of the castle's base.

**THE**  
**SHADOW**  
**KINGDOM**

PART TWO  
***THE SHADOW KINGDOM:***  
HANDS ON

## **LIGHT AND LAMP OF LIFE**

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Imagine being in the very center of a cave that runs deep into the earth, where no light from the sun could reach. A place that is so dark that you could put your hand right in front of your eyes, and though you know it is there, you cannot see it. There is no plausible way for you to get anywhere because all you know is complete blackness. The landscape around you is foreign, and you constantly stumble, trip and fall because the darkness prevents you from understanding your surroundings.

But then someone enters that cave with a lamp. Just a simple lamp which produces light, and this lamp makes all the difference. Because of the light of that lamp, you now see the rocks that you once tripped over and hurt yourself on. With the lamp actively and vigorously fighting against the darkness you can see a path that is smooth and easy to walk upon. By simply pointing the lamp to the left or right of the path you are walking on the darkness, which once so easily led you into dangers, now flees instantly, and you are able to see where you could have been seriously hurt without the light to guide you.

### **READ:**

- *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*  
**Psalm 119:105**
- *“For thou art my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness.”* **2 Samuel 22:29**
- *“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts”*  
**2 Peter 1:19**

Just like in the middle of a cave during the black of night, we live in a world of darkness. We’re unable to see every hazard, harmful hole, or snare that lies in our path. It’s for this reason that we are in



desperate need of *the light*. God's Word enlightens our path- it provides His bright wisdom and guidance where we otherwise could not see. The uncomfortable truth is, if we are stumbling and tripping through life, if we lack direction or guidance- chances are we have neglected the light; God's Word.

Look back over your life in the past several days, weeks, months, and even years. Consider how many of the difficulties, struggles, and sins could have been avoided- had you allowed God's Word to light your path.

**WRITE A PRAYER ASKING GOD TO GIVE YOU A DESIRE FOR HIS WORD. ASK HIM TO SHOW YOU THE TRIP HAZARDS THAT MAY LIE IN YOUR PATH. ASK HIM TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO YOUR LIFE AND TO BE A LAMP TO YOUR FEET.**

**DRAW YOURSELF HOLDING A LANTERN IN THE MIDDLE OF A DARK CAVE.  
WRITE PSALM 119:105 UNDERNEATH.**

# **LIGHTLESS MEANS LIFELESS**

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## **WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GROW A PLANT?**

The bible tells us that Christ is our foundation, He provides the fertile soil where seeds of the Gospel can grow. Jesus tells us that He is the wellspring of water which will never leave us thirsting. Yet, a firm foundation and water springing up within us will be of no benefit at all- without light.

In the garden of Eden, light was pure and present - as a result we find life at every turn. Fruit was forthcoming, leaves were lavish, and produce was plenteous. Yet, after man chooses sin, we find mankind removed from the garden of Light, as the consequence of darkness falls upon our lives; fruitlessness. In Genesis 3 God tells Adam and Eve that their world will now be filled with thorns and thistles. Case in point; *fruitlessness is a result of lightlessness.*

Life cannot be sustained, and fruit cannot grow *in the dark*. If our lives lack fruit; the very thoughts, actions, words, and desires of Christ - it's because darkness is present somewhere in our life. Simply put, you cannot abide in Christ, our light and life yet lack fruit.

### **READ:**

- *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Ephesians 5:11*

**ACTION:** Answer the following questions;

**IS YOUR LIFE FILLED ABUNDANTLY WITH LOVE, PEACE, JOY, LONGSUFFERING,  
GENTLENESS, KINDNESS, FAITH, AND MEEKNESS?**

**DO YOU LOVE, BLESS, AND PRAY FOR YOUR ENEMIES  
AND THOSE WHO DESPISE YOU?**

**DO YOU FOCUS AND THINK ON THINGS ABOVE-  
THE THINGS OF GOD MORE THAN THE THINGS OF THIS EARTH?**

**DO YOU SERVE OTHERS?**

**ARE YOU SACRIFICIAL?**

**PRAY THAT GOD WOULD OPEN YOUR EYES TO THE DARKNESS IN YOUR LIFE WHICH IS LIMITING LIFE/FRUIT FROM FLOURISHING.**

**DRAW A SEED BEING PLANTED IN FRESH SOIL. AS YOU DO, PRAY THAT GOD WOULD OPEN YOUR EYES TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRUIT TO FLOURISH IN YOUR LIFE. WHAT COULD YOU DO TODAY, TO LIVE A LIFE THAT PUTS JESUS ON DISPLAY?**

## **BLINDED BELIEF**

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### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BLIND?**

Blindness comes in many shapes and sizes. Some people are color blind, meaning they are unable to see certain colors. Others suffer from night blindness, as they struggle to see in the dark.

Scientifically, total blindness is defined as the inability to see due to the lack of light within the eye. Even though most blind people still have eyes, for one reason or another they are unable to correctly see the world around them as it really is.

### **THE BIBLE OFTEN REFERS TO A CONDITION CALLED SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.**

#### **WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS TO BE SPIRITUALLY BLIND?**

Spiritual blindness is the inability to see as God sees, it is lacking the enlightenment of God within your life. Even though you may believe in God, you may serve God- you may have eyes, the bible states that without the mind of Christ; you are in the dark and cannot see.

### **READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES;**

- **Jeremiah 5:21** *“Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not...”*
- **Psalms 135:16** *“...eyes have they, but they see not;”*

These verses are speaking of a person who has the means to see, yet who is unwilling to see. A person who is intentionally choosing blindness. God has equipped them with eyes, yet they choose life without sight, they are choosing to remain in the dark.

It takes God's light- obedience to His will and way in your life- in order for you to be able to see. When we choose to reject God's will and neglect His ways- we are choosing to live in blindness. We may have eyes to see, but we are making the decision to live in the dark.

**ASK YOURSELF; AM I WILLING TO EVALUATE EVERY AREA OF MY LIFE IN ORDER TO SEE AS GOD SEES? IS THERE ANY AREA OF MY LIFE WHICH IS 'OFF LIMITS' TO GOD? IF SO, YOU MAY HAVE EYES, BUT YOUR EYESIGHT MAY BE MISSING.**

**CIRCLE THE DARK DESIRES LISTED BELOW WHICH ARE PRESENT IN YOUR LIFE.**

Abuser of self (*polluting your body*) | Adultery | Anger |

Anger with others | Arrogance | Attention Seeking

Backbiting (*talking behind someone's back*) | Brawling (*fighting*)

Bitterness | Blasphemy | Boasting | Breaking promises

Burying what's given to your care | Conceit | Carousing Clamor

Complaining | Coveting | Contention (*arguing*)|

Corrupt (*impure*) speech | Cowardice | Cunningness

Debating | Deceit | Defrauding | Denying Christ

Desiring praise of men | Disobedience to parents | Dishonor

Dishonesty | Dividing people | Divorce

Double tongued (*insincere statements*) | Drunkenness

Effeminacy (*unlike your gender*) | Enmities | Envy

Emulations (*ambition to excel*) | Evil thoughts | Extortion  
False witnessing | False Humility | Fault finding | Filthiness  
Foolishness | Foolish talking | Fornication | Forceful  
Fathers, provoking children | Fearfulness | Gossip | Gluttony  
Greed | Lusting | Hatred | Hard hearted  
Heresy (*mere religious opinions*) | Harshness | High mindedness  
Homosexuality | Hypocrisy | Idolatry | Idle Words (*unhelpful*)  
Immorality | Impurity | Immodest | Impatient | Jealousy | Jesting  
Judging | Knowing to do good but not doing it  
Laying up treasures on earth | Living for pleasure | Laziness  
Lovers of self | Loving others more than Jesus  
Lying | Malice | Malignity (*bad character*) | Mocking | Murder  
Murmuring | Pride | Presumption | Puffed Up | Quarrels  
Reviling | Ridiculing others | Rude | Selfishness | Stingy  
Self centeredness | Sensuality | Slander | Stealing  
Sedition (*stirring a revolt*) | Self will | Self Pleasure | Self focus  
Strife | Swearing | Swindling | Sorcery | Temper | Treachery  
Traitor | Trust in riches | Unbelief | Unforgiveness | Unmerciful  
Unthankful | | Ungratefulness | Unwilling | Unfaithful  
Variance (*lack of consistency*) Worry | Wrath  
Warring | Wildness

ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU EYES THAT ARE WILLING TO SEE. ASK HIM TO SHOW YOU THE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE WHICH ONLY HE SEES. ASK HIM TO POINT OUT THE THOUGHTS, ACTIONS, ATTITUDES, DESIRES, WORDS, AND DEEDS THAT ARE NOT LIKE HIM. PRAY FOR ENLIGHTENMENT.

WITH THE BLACK LIGHT, READ THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES PROVIDED

- **Matthew 13:14** *“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:”*
- **Mark 8:18** *“Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?”*
- **Isaiah 6:10** *“Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.”*
- **Ezekiel 12:22** *“Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.”*
- **Acts 28:27** *“For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”*
- **Romans 11:8** *“(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.”*



## EXTERNALLY EXPOSED

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The Garden of Eden put God's original plan for man on display. The temperature was perfect. The weather was great. The animals behaved. The food practically fell into their mouths without any effort...yet as uncomfortable as it may be, we forget that as a part of this perfect plan for paradise; Adam and Eve were fully exposed before God. Nakedness, or transparency between God and man- was always a part of God's perfect plan.

Yet, as a result of sin entering the picture, we find that Adam and Eve began to look at their external condition as God's greatest concern. The irony is that God had known of their condition all along. Still today, many Christians focus foremost on their outward condition. They occupy their time with how the world sees them, how the church sees them, and even the way in which God looks at their outward actions. As a result, just like Adam and Eve, we sew fig leaves together, covering the outside, while leaving our heart- the very place where God dwells, in a dark and dirty condition. God's desires that we would return to His original plan in paradise; transparency. His desire is that we would live in His presence, spiritually exposed- transparent, and lacking all duplicity.

**WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE TO LIVE A LIFE THAT HAS NOTHING TO HIDE? A LIFE THAT COULD ACTUALLY BE SEEN AND HEARD AT ANY TIME AND AT ANY PLACE? WHAT IF WE REFUSED TO EVER SEW FIG LEAVES AGAIN? WHAT IF WE WOULD SEE OUR SINS, CONFESS OUR SIN, AND OVERCOME OUR SINS IMMEDIATELY?**

### **READ:**

- *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."*  
**Proverbs 28:13**
- *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*  
**1 John 1:9**

**PRAY THAT GOD WOULD GIVE YOU THE COURAGE TO STOP HIDING THE DARK DESIRES, AND INSTEAD TO EXPOSE AND EXPEL THE DARK DESIRES THAT DWELL IN YOUR LIFE. ASK HIM TO HELP YOU TO LIVE TRANSPARENTLY - REFUSING TO SEW FIG LEAVES ANY LONGER.**

**DRAW YOURSELF AS A TRANSPARENT PERSON. USING A YELLOW CRAYON OR MARKER, DRAW GOD'S LIGHT SHINING DIRECTLY THROUGH YOU.**

## **UP-H-EVIL**

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**IF YOU WENT TO A DENTIST WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAVE A CAVITY, WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT HIM TO DO ABOUT IT?**

**IF YOU CALLED AN EXTERMINATOR WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD AN INFESTATION, WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT HIM TO DO ABOUT IT?**

Exposing the problem is only part of our need. The commandments were given to point out our sins, yet the life of Christ was given to expel our sins. God desires to not only show us our dark desires but to remove every dark motive, selfish instinct, and fleshly feeling that we have.

**HOW DO YOU EXPEL DARKNESS? (E.G. IN A CAVE, DARK ROOM, ETC.)**

**READ:**

- *“Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”* **John 8:12**

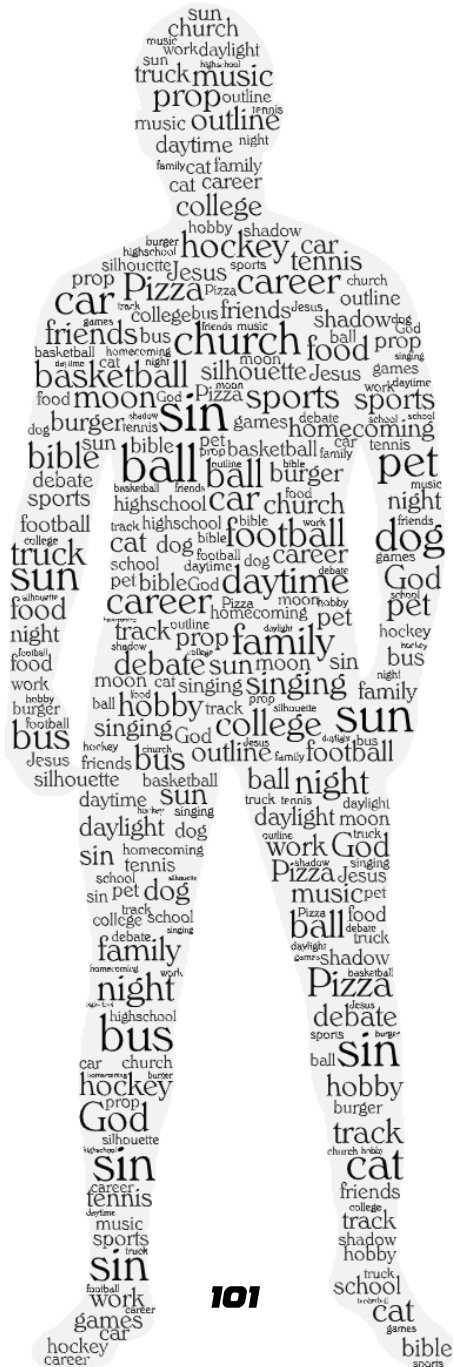
The bible tells us that Jesus is light, and anyone who claims to be His follower will not walk or live in darkness. Whenever we find an area of darkness in our lives, such as a negative thought, a selfish attitude, or an impure motive- our job is not to try and remove the darkness ourselves. Instead, God desires that we would bring that darkness to Him, so that He can shine His light upon it, and expel the darkness. Our job is to simply seek Jesus, our light.

God desires to expel sin and darkness from our life by exposing it to His hot, bright, light with laser precision. When we expose our lives, our sins, and our desires to His light- it will result in sin becoming expelled. However, just like a dentist or exterminator- exposing the problem will do us no good unless we are willing to listen to the expert and allow him to expose

**WRITE DOWN A SIN(S) WHICH GOD HAS EXPOSED/ REVEALED IN YOUR LIFE.  
THEN, WRITE OUT PSALM 139:23-24, REPLACING THE PRONOUNS WITH YOUR NAME.**

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

SEARCH THE WORDS SHAPED LIKE A PERSON FOR THE WORD 'SIN'. AS YOU DO, REMEMBER THAT WE ARE TO ASK GOD TO SEARCH OUR LIVES JUST AS CLOSELY.



# **POINTING TO THE PROBLEM**

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NAME A FOOD THAT YOU HATED WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER?

**READ:**

- *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” 2 Corinthians 5:17-18*

The bible tells us that as believers, God has made us into brand new creatures. As new creatures- our old appetites have passed away, and the things we like have been made brand new. Meaning that Christians live a life of new desires and appetites. Meaning, God will convict us of any area in our life which does not look like Jesus. What we once saw as good, He will show us as evil. What we once lacked interest for, He will teach us to love. The things we use to indulge in, will repulse us.

Have your appetites been changed? Do you still take part in the same sins that you did before becoming a Christian? Do you view church, praying, the bible, and serving God in the way that Jesus Himself would?

**READ EACH ITEM LISTED BELOW. ON THE LEFT SIDE OF EACH WORD, YOU WILL FIND A CHECK MARK FOR THE THINGS THAT GOD DESIRES, AND A 'X' FOR THE THINGS THAT GOD DESPISES. ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF EACH WORD- BE HONEST, AS YOU PLACE A CHECK MARK OR X BASED UPON YOUR OWN DESIRES.**

**HOW ALIGNED ARE YOUR DESIRES WITH  
THE DESIRES OF GOD?**

**GOD'S DESIRES**                      **MY DESIRES**

- |                                     |                  |                          |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Sacrifice        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Selfless Love    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ambition         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Purity           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Riches           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Charity          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Selfless Service | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Pride            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Laziness         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The Bible        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Truth            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Prayer           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Patience         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unforgiveness    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Commitment       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Order            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Meekness         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lowliness        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Harshness        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Busyness         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rudeness         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Sarcasm          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Bitterness       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**HAS HE TRULY CHANGED YOUR APPETITES?**

**ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU HIS DESIRES, AND FOR THE STRENGTH TO LAY DOWN YOUR DESIRES. ASK HIM TO WALK BY FAITH IN THE REALITY THAT AS A CHRISTIAN, YOU ARE A LITERAL BRAND NEW CREATION, WITH A NEW WAY OF LIFE, A NEW APPETITE, AND NEW DESIRES.**

**DRAW AN ARROW, THEN WRITE OUT PSALM 51:10 INSIDE**

- *“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”*



# **COMBUSTIBLE CHRISTIANITY**

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## **BE HONEST, HAVE YOU EVER USED THE POWER OF THE SUN TO SCORCH A TINY LITTLE PESKY ANT?**

When an ant walks on its own under the broad and vague power of the sun, it is left unharmed, and can infest for another day. Yet as many ornery boys, girls, and grown men have discovered, with the use of a magnifying glass, the powerful rays of the sun can be concentrated and even harnessed into a weapon.

The light and life of Christ has little effect upon the life of a Christian when we are vague and broad in our approach. Our lives will never look like a biblical Christian, and will always lack victory and abundance when we are lax and loose with the life of Christ. However, if a believer will be intentional, laser focused, and will magnify Jesus in their life- the sin, desires, attitudes, words and actions which are not like Christ will begin to fall away. Christianity should always begin first and foremost with a focus upon Jesus, then His life will take care of the dark spots in our life.

### **READ:**

- *“...the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.”*  
**Psalm 18:28**

NOT you, but He will enlighten your darkness.

- *“...seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth...Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”* **Colossians 3:1-5**

Notice the order of operation: *seek Jesus, the things above, then the sins will become scorched*

Being a Christian is more than just doing 'Churchy' things. A Christian is a person who is concentrated on Christ. The more you narrow in, focus on, and gaze upon Jesus- just like the magnifying glass, the more the things that are not like Him- will fall away.

**WOULD YOU SAY YOUR FOCUS ON JESUS IS MORE LASER FOCUSED, OR BROADLY APPLIED?**

**ON THE MAGNIFYING GLASS BELOW, WRITE DOWN THE STRUGGLES YOU FACE IN YOUR LIFE IN SMALL LETTERS. IT MAY BE A SIN, A SELFISHNESS, AN ATTITUDE, A THOUGHT, A TRIAL, OR A BURDEN THAT YOU FACE. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD HELP YOU TO FOCUS SINGULARLY UPON HIM WITH A LASER PRECISION. ASK HIM TO OPEN YOUR EYES TO THE FACT THAT YOU CANNOT OVERCOME OR CONTROL THESE SITUATIONS, BUT YOU CAN MAGNIFY HIM. THEN, WITH A MARKER, WRITE THE NAME JESUS OVERTOP OF THE STRUGGLES YOU HAVE WRITTEN.**



## **DISPEL THE DARKNESS**

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If you were wearing a coat that was doused in water, you may consider taking it off after time, yet without urgency. If you were wearing a coat that caught fire however, chances are without hesitation, and out of pure instinct, you would quickly cast off the blazed blazer in a fury. The willingness to remove something reveals how seriously we take the threat.

**READ:**

- *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light... But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*

**Romans 13:12-14**

For many people, our first fear in life is; the dark. Shadows, silhouette, and things that go bump in the night scare us from a young age. However, when light is present, there is suddenly no reason to fear the dark. In the life of a Christian, we no longer have to fear or bow down to darkness- because we have been given armor of light- a defensive weaponry which surrounds, and protects us from the dark, which is made of pure light; named Jesus. However- this armor of light only benefits our life, if we first cast off the darkness.

The Christian life should be spent moment by moment casting off darkness, and putting on Jesus our armor of light. Yet, like a wet coat, often times we hesitate, wait, or even procrastinate from casting off the works of darkness. This then prevents us from putting on the armor of light- leaving us then exposed to further darkness. If you lack a will, desire, or rapid removal of darkness in your life- the truth is, you have yet to take the threat of darkness seriously. This also reveals that you lack a desperation to put on Christ, our armor of light.

**BELOW, WRITE ANY 'WORKS OF DARKNESS' THAT MAY BE PRESENT IN YOUR LIFE. THIS COULD BE A DESIRE, A MOTIVE, A WORD, ACTION, OR THOUGHT THAT IS NOT LIKE JESUS.**

**PRAY THAT GOD WOULD SHOW YOU THE URGENCY TO REMOVE THE WORKS OF DARKNESS FROM YOUR LIFE, REMEMBERING THAT THE BIBLE SAYS NOT TO PROVIDE FOR THE FLESH.**

### **COMPLETE THE PUT ON, PUT OFF ACTIVITY LISTED BELOW**

*Read each verse, circle whether the bible tells us to put these things off or on. (the first one has been completed for you)*

- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • FORMER CONVERSATIONS THAT ARE CORRUPTED BY DECEITFUL FLESH
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • THE BREASTPLATE OF FAITH AND LOVE
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • ANGER & WRATH
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • THE HELMET OF HOPE OF SALVATION
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • MALICE AND FILTHY COMMUNICATION
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • HOLY HEARTS OF MERCY
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • OLD DEEDS
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • KINDNESS, HUMBLENESS, MEEKNESS, LONGSUFFERING
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • CORRUPTION
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • IMMORTALITY
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • CHRIST
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • THE OLD MAN (*WHO YOU USE TO BE*)
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • THE ARMOR OF GOD
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • THE NEW MAN (*WHO GOD SAVED YOU TO BE*)
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • RENEWED KNOWLEDGE
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • CHARITY
- PUT OFF | PUT ON** • THE BOND OF PERFECTION

Eph 4:22 | Col 3:8-9 | Romans 3:14 | 1 Corinthians 15:53 | Gal 3:27 | Eph 4:24 | Eph 6:11 | Col 3:10 | Col 3:12 | Col 3:14 | 1 Thes 5:8

## **INCONCEIVABLE ILLUMINATION**

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Currently the record for the brightest light on earth belongs to the Luxor Hotel in Las Vegas where the famous “*Sky Beam*” shoots a bright light into the night sky. How bright is the Sky beam? Well, this light is bright enough to be seen by pilots who are nearly 300 miles above the ground in the air. This light is so bright that you could read a book 10 miles into outer space from this light source. The light of the sky beam is equivalent to 130,000 100-watt light bulbs. Not only is this beam of light bright but it’s also pretty hot. The Sky beam puts off temperatures of up to 300 degrees Fahrenheit – hot enough to bake cookies!

### **READ:**

- *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”* **Matthew 5:13-15**
- *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* **2 Corinthians 4:6**

Jesus told us that He Himself is the light of the world- with Him in our life. Jesus said we will be like a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden. Just like the Sky Beam in Las Vegas, those around you should not have to squint to see the light of Jesus in your life, you shouldn’t need to advertise it, you shouldn’t have to try and be bright- your life is meant to shine the life and light of Jesus in an apparent, obvious, and natural way. If your life is not one of inconceivable illumination, then Jesus- the light, is not the problem. Somewhere in your life you are covering and concealing the light of the world.

Do not focus on outward expressions such as clothing, music, church attendance, etc. 2 Corinthians 4:6 tells us that the location of the light is in our heart. Meaning that the attitudes, the actions, the

desires of Jesus should be seen in your life from the inside out. Jesus says that His life in you should be impossible to hide.

**DO YOU LOVE LIKE JESUS?**

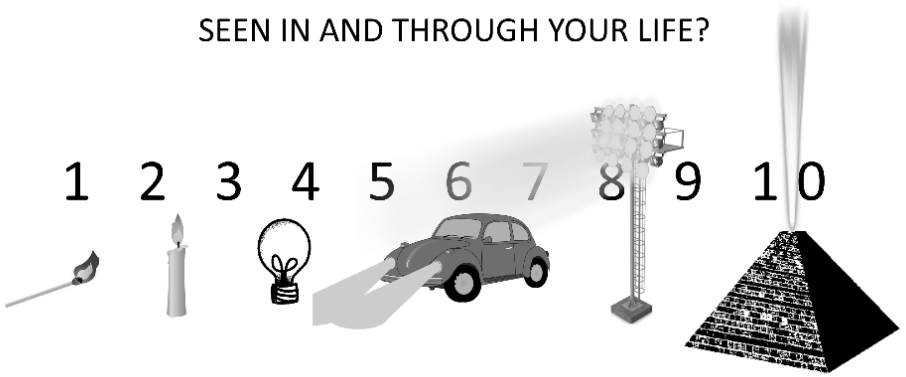
**DO YOU TREAT OTHERS THE WAY THAT HE DID? DO YOU GIVE LIKE JESUS GAVE?**

**DO YOU SERVE LIKE JESUS SERVED?**

His life is the light that should be seen in and through you. Is your light obvious to this world? The truth is, each of us could glow a little brighter. Grade yourself on just how much of the light of the world- can be seen through you based upon the light scale below.

1 being the light of a single match, and 10 being the bright, hot light of the sky beam- how would you rate your inconceivable illumination; the demonstration of the life of Jesus in you?

HOW MUCH OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST CAN BE  
SEEN IN AND THROUGH YOUR LIFE?



**ASK GOD TO SHOW YOU THE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE WHICH ARE DIMMING HIS LIGHT. PRAY THAT HE WOULD LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE SO MUCH THAT IT CANNOT BE MISSED OR IGNORED BY THE ONLOOKING WORLD. ASK GOD TO HELP YOU NOT TO HIDE HIS LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE, AND THAT HIS LIFE WOULD BECOME UN-HIDABLE. WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED, HANG YOUR PAPER ON THE STRING PROVIDED.**

**DRAW NEW YORK CITY SITTING ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN, USE A YELLOW MARKER/ CRAYON TO ILLUSTRATE THE OBNOXIOUS AMOUNT OF LIGHT SHINING FORTH.**

## **CONFORMED CHRISTIANITY**

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HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THOSE HORRIBLE INTERNET BAKING FAILS? WELL MEANING PEOPLE OFTEN TRY THEIR BEST AT MAKING BEAUTIFUL BAKED GOODS- YET THE RESULTS ARE HILARIOUS AND HIDEOUS FAILURES. TAKE A LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING AND SEE IF YOU CAN GUESS WHO'S IMAGE THE BAKER WAS TRYING TO PORTRAY;







Although attempting to reflect the original image, the resemblance has been lost as there is no likeness to be found.

**READ:**

- *“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”*  
**Phil 3:21**
- *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...”* Romans 8:29

The word Christian literally means to be like Christ. Yet often we take this to mean that we have to try our best to look like Him or mimic Him. Like these pitiful parents and their baking fails- the result is a reflection that looks nothing like the image of Christ as our lives totally lack His resemblance.

Romans 8 tells us not to try and be like Jesus but to be conformed to His image. The word conformed means to put into a mold, and to remove any excess which does not fit into the mold. It means to look like, live like, talk like, act like, think like Christ, and anything that does not fit His resemblance has no place in our lives. Christianity means conforming not contorting.

**PRAY THAT GOD WOULD SHOW YOU THE ‘EXCESS’ IN YOUR LIFE,  
THE THINGS WHICH DO NOT REFLECT CHRIST.**

## **REJECTED REFLECTION**

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According to fortunly.com, 15 million people in the US experience identity theft every single year costing \$50 billion in financial losses. This equates to 4.5% of all US residents, with an average loss of \$3,500. It may be somewhat awkward to think of another person wanting to be you- yet as Christians we are called not to identity theft, but to identity sharing.

### **READ:**

- *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”* **Matthew 16:25**

God sent His Son to this earth in order to give up His identity, so that you would give up your identity, to share in His identity. Jesus calls for us to lay down our life; the way we live and the very person that we are, in order to find who He is. We could easily read Matthew 16:25 to say;

*“For whosoever will save his life shall lose [Christ’s life]: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find [Christ’s life].”*  
**Matthew 16:25**

**FIND A MIRROR TO LOOK INTO. THEN, TAKE A PIECE OF PAPER OR CARDBOARD, AND USE IT TO BLOCK YOUR REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR. CONSIDER WHO IT IS THAT YOUR LIFE IS REALLY REFLECTING.**

**ASK GOD TO SHOW YOU THE PLACES IN YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU ARE BEING SEEN AND HE IS NOT BEING SEEN. WHERE YOU HAVE INCREASED, AND HE HAS DECREASED. THE PLACES WHERE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE HAVE COME TO KNOW YOU, BUT CAN’T SEE JESUS. PRAY THAT HE WOULD HELP YOU TO LAY DOWN YOUR IMAGE, YOUR IDENTITY, AND YOUR LIFE- SO THAT HE CAN BE SEEN.**

**READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES. FILL IN EACH BLANK WITH YOUR NAME.**

- *“He must increase, but \_\_\_\_\_ must decrease.”*  
**John 3:30**
- *“For to \_\_\_\_\_ to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”*  
**Phil 1:21**
- *“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And \_\_\_\_\_ [is] complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:”* **Colossians 2:9-10**

# ***SILHOUETTE SALVATION***

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## **WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A SILHOUETTE?**

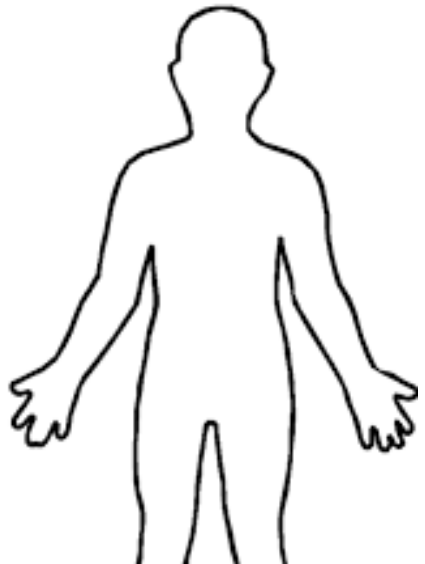
A silhouette is a shape, outline, or shadow that is cast that resembles, but is not the real thing.

A Christian is a person who reflects Christ. However, when we allow our life to stand in the way of His life, we begin to cast a shadow upon who He is. Although His light may be present in your life as a Christian, when your life stands in the way- it causes an eclipse; a shadow or silhouette that resembles the real thing, but is not at all what it appears to be. Just like when a solar eclipse takes place, the only real way to avoid spiritual shadows is to remain fully in the light, and to never get in its way.

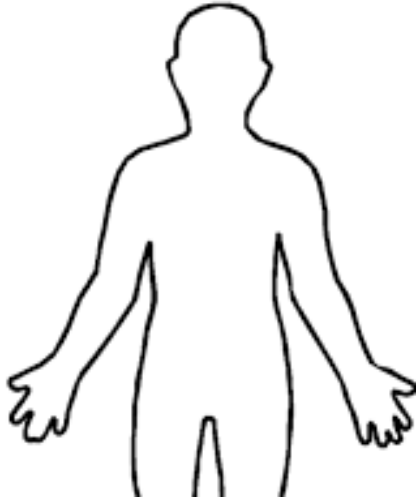
### **READ:**

- *“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:2*

**ACTION:** On the person below, make a list of the things in your life that look like you. It could be a personality trait, a character flaw, a pet peeve, a habit, thought, or attitude that resides in you.



Then, on the second person, write a counter list which resembles Jesus. (e.g. pride- humility, selfishness-selflessness, etc.)



**ASK GOD TO HELP YOU TO LAY DOWN YOUR IDENTITY. PRAY THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK YOU AND SHOW YOU THE WAYS WHICH YOU ECLIPSE HIS LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE.**

**DRAW YOURSELF LOOKING INTO A MIRROR WHERE THE IMAGE OF JESUS IS REFLECTED.**

# THE PRIVATE PALACE

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## WHAT DOES THE INSIDE OF YOUR CHURCH LOOKS LIKE?

For many of us, a typical church will include pews/chairs, an instrument or two, maybe a baptism, and likely; a stage. Ironically, we find that in the New Testament as the church is being birthed- God's people forsook meeting in temples and cathedrals in order to meet; at home.

Imagine for a minute waking up on a Sunday morning, eating your fruity pebbles, and then sitting down on the couch as your pastor stands in front of the tv to give his Sunday sermon. No cameras are present. Likely, 'Sunday attire' is missing. Chances are, there is no PA system- and most definitely the stage is completely gone. In the book of Acts God makes a big bold; serve me publicly like you do privately. Sunday Christianity is a total myth, it does not exist, and it is a fiction of our imagination.

### READ:

- *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I*

*say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."*

**Matthew 6:1-6**

Jesus is not condemning public proclamations - instead, He is pointing out a priority problem. Every single thing that we do outwardly as a Christian should always flow from the inside out. Singing songs publicly should flow from seeking Christ privately. Public prayers should flow from the personal priority of prayer. Weekly worship should result from your daily dependence upon Him. Your Christianity should begin at Your house, and continue at God's house. The reason is that being a believer is not something you do, it's literally who you are. Whether you're sitting in the palace or not, you are faithful, loyal, and belong to His Kingdom. When you're alone, when you're with family, friends, co-workers, your teammates, or in the pew on a Sunday morning- you are a child of The King.

Only you and God know what's unseeable in your heart. He sees just how much you desire Him, seek Him, and adore Him- even when no one else can see. Hold your paper in hand, and consider your worship, praise, adoration, and commitment to Christ.

**DOES YOUR CHRISTIANITY OVERFLOW FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC?**



**ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU AN UNSATISFIABLE DESIRE FOR HIM. PRAY THAT HE WOULD INCREASE YOUR PERSONAL AND PRIVATE DEVOTION TOWARD HIM. ASK GOD TO HELP YOU TO TREASURE HIM DAILY, NOT JUST AT CHURCH, AND THAT ALL THAT YOU ARE AS A BELIEVER WOULD BEGIN FROM THE PRIVACY OF YOUR LIFE, AND OVERFLOW INTO THE PUBLIC VIEW OF THOSE AROUND YOU. WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED, HANG YOUR PAPER ON THE STRING PROVIDED.**

**DRAW A PICTURE WHICH REPRESENTS YOUR PRIVATE WORSHIP OF CHRIST.**

## **CRUMBLLED KINGDOM**

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If you've ever played Legos with a younger brother or sister, then you know that the hardest part is keeping your creation standing. Not because the Legos are not structurally sound, but because you and your playmate have divided desires. Even though your little brother may want to play with you, they also have an undeniable urge to tear down the death star Lego creation that took you 6 years to create.

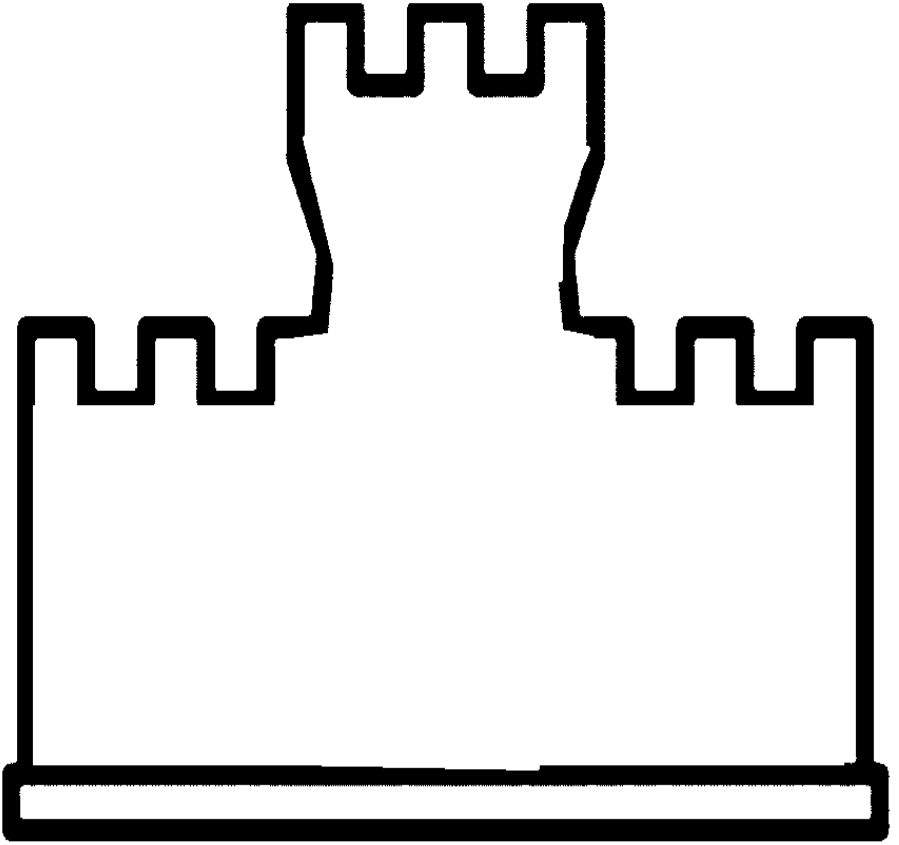
### **READ:**

- *“And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation...how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me...”*

**Matthew 12:25**

When your desires are not the desires of the Kingdom which you belong to, you will fall. Jesus tells us that a Kingdom divided against itself, a Kingdom which says one thing but does another- will be a waste, ruined, and stripped of it's value. However, Jesus also gives us a rather unpopular solution to the problem. In order to align allegiance with your kingdom, you must allow the strong man to be bound, so that the stronger man can have His way. In other words- allow Jesus to remove your desires, and to replace them with His desires. Jesus says if you're not with me, you're against me.

**ON THE KINGDOM BELOW, WRITE A PRAYER ASKING GOD TO BIND YOUR WONDERING HEART TO HIS. ASK HIM TO SHOW YOU HIS DESIRES, HIS WILL, HIS WAY, AND THE WORLDS OF HIS KINGDOM- AND THEN TO PLACE THEM INTO YOUR LIFE. WRITE A PRAYER OF SURRENDER, ADMITTING THAT JESUS IS THE STRONGER MAN, AND IT WILL TAKE HIM BINDING YOUR LIFE IN ORDER FOR HIS KINGDOM TO FLOURISH IN AND THROUGH YOU. WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED, HANG YOUR CASTLE ON THE STRING PROVIDED.**



# **THY KINGDOM COME**

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**IF YOU WERE TO BE MADE THE KING FOR A DAY,  
WHAT WOULD COME WITH THE STARTER PACKAGE?**

King Carl XVI Gustaf currently sits on a throne, wearing his crown, within the kingdom of Sweden. King Vajiralongkor sits on his throne in the kingdom of Thailand. There's King Felipe VI, who reigns in Spain, and King Mohammed VI of Morocco. Each of these kings reign over their kingdom, no doubt with a desire to grow and enlarge their kingdom and rule.

**READ:**

- *“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”* **Matthew 6:9-13**

Just as much as King Carl or Mohammad have a throne, kingdom, and castle to rule from- Jesus too has a kingdom from which He reigns. The difference is that the Kingdom of God is a heavenly, or a spiritual kingdom. Meaning that you will never find it anywhere on a map.

**FIND A BALLOON TO BLOW AIR INTO. (IF YOU'RE UNABLE TO FIND A BALLOON, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND ENVISION DOING THE FOLLOWING) AS YOU BLOW UP THE BALLOON, YOU ARE GIVING MORE AND MORE OF YOURSELF TO THIS BALLOON, AND AS A RESULT, THE BALLOON GROWS AND GETS LARGER AND LARGER. IN THE SAME WAY- BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS GIVING MORE OF YOURSELF EACH DAY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD- THAT HIS RULE AND REIGN MAY CONTINUALLY INCREASE.**

Jesus tells us that whenever we pray- we should reverence God as our hallowed King. We should pray for His Kingdom and for His will to be done here on earth, where we live- just like it is perfectly completed in heaven. Jesus tells us that as believers our desire should be that the Kingdom of God would increase, flourish, and prosper more and more- not some day in heaven, but here and now on earth. We should devote our lives to increasing His territory, to grow and enlarge His rule and reign. How? By giving Him more and more territory in our own lives to rule over. By praying each day for His Kingdom and will to be done in our lives, just as it is perfectly 100% of the time in heaven. To give Jesus your heart, means to allow Him to sit on the throne of your life- where He now rules as your King. As His loyal subject, my answer is yes to whatever my King asks for. It's for this reason that we end our prays with the word 'amen,' which means *'I agree, let it be so.'*

**WITH YOUR INFLATED BALLOON IN HAND, PRAY THE FOLLOWING PERSONALIZED LORD'S PRAYER. 'MY KING IN HEAVEN, THERE IS NO ONE LIKE YOU. I DESIRE FOR YOUR KINGDOM TO COME, AND YOUR WILL TO BE DONE, IN MY LIFE- JUST AS IT PERFECTLY IS IN HEAVEN. FOR YOURS LORD IS THE KINGDOM, AND GLORY AND POWER FOREVER- LET IT BE SO.'**

**WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, DRAW A CROWN ON YOUR BALLOON, AND WRITE THE FOLLOWING WORDS 'THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE.' HANG YOUR BALLOON ON THE STRING PROVIDED WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED.**

**DRAW JESUS SITTING UPON A HEART SHAPED THRONE. DRAW YOURSELF AT HIS FEET BOWING IN REVERENCE TO HIM.**

# **THE SUPPORTIVE SERVANT**

---

CAN YOU GUESS WHAT THE FOLLOWING NAMES HAVE IN COMMON?

- Reginald Jeeves
- Alfred Pennyworth
- Edwin Jarvis
- Wadsworth
- Charles Carson

Each of these men hold the title of a butler or servant. The dictionary defines a servant as a devoted and helpful follower or supporter. In other words a servant is someone who does, gets, and brings the desires of the one he serves. A servant who does not serve or who neglects the wishes of his master, is no servant at all. A servant does not ask questions, give input without being asked, or offer suggestions. A servant only serves the kingdom's cause.

The word servant is found in the bible 885 times. That's over twice as many times as the word love, 2 ½ times more than the word faith, and 6 ½ times more than the word hope. As servants of the Kingdom of God- our role is not to wear the crown, to sit on the throne, or to direct the chariot- as servants of God we are to support and bring to pass the will of our King at all costs- without any expectation of result or reward. As believers, we are to loyally belong to Christ's Kingdom- ready to devote our lives in support as His servant. Our life mantra should be *'whatever my King wants, my King gets.'*

**READ:**

- *"And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord." 2 Samuel 23:15-16*

**ASK A PARENT TO FILL A PLASTIC CUP WITH WATER. THEN, HOLD YOUR ARM, FULLY EXTENDED AND STRAIGHT OUT IN FRONT OF YOUR CHEST WITH A SINGLE HAND.**

**WHY WOULD KING DAVID POUR OUT THAT WHICH HE HAD ASKED FOR, AND THAT WHICH HIS SERVANTS HAD SERVED TO HIM?**

Even though these mighty men risked their lives in service to their king, and although their king pour out that which they had sacrificed to obtain- these men did not leave empty handed. At the end of the day, these men left with more devotion to the Kingdom cause than they started with. Often we lack understanding in our lives, and we look for silver linings and explanation. However- as servants, every obstacle, every difficulty, and everything that we endure faithfully- provides our lives with more devotion to our King and His Kingdom than we had before.

**ON THE SCROLL PROVIDED BELOW, WRITE A PLEDGE OF DEVOTION AND DEDICATION TO YOUR KING. CONFESS ANY DISLOYALTY IN YOUR LIFE AND ADMIT THE AREAS WHERE YOU LACK SERVICE. LASTLY, PLEDGE YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM, AND HIS KINGDOM CAUSE, ENDING WITH *'WHATEVER MY KING WANTS, MY KING GETS.'***



**PRAY FOR LOYALTY, ALLEGIANCE, AND DEDICATION TO YOUR KING. ASK HIM TO GIVE YOU STRENGTH TO SERVE HIM IN THE AREAS WHERE YOU ARE WEAK. PRAY THAT HE WOULD REQUEST YOUR SERVICE MORE AND MORE, AND THAT YOU WOULD RISE TO THE OCCASION AND OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HIM.**

**READ THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE TO SERVICE**

- 1 Samuel 12:24
- Colossians 3:23-24
- 1 Corinthians 15:58
- Romans 12:1
- Matthew 6:24
- Mark 10:45
- Malachi 3:18
- John 12:26
- 1 Peter 4:10
- Romans 12:11





# ABOUT THE *noyc*

The Northern Ohio Youth Camp has proudly provided a week of life-changing summer camp to the youth of Ohio and surrounding states for over a decade. Beginning in 2010, the NOYC! was formed out of a desire to involve the youth of local churches throughout the state in actively serving the Lord. Now located in the beautiful rolling hills of Warsaw, Ohio, at the Warsaw Retreat Center, the NOYC! hosts around 450+ during our annual week of summer camp.

In addition to an amazing week of camp, the NOYC also provides additional events such as youth conferences and sporting events throughout the year. Since 2016, the NOYC has also ministered by offering Christian content and resources such as custom curriculum book/ video series & The NOYC GODcast that specifically challenges young people to live the victorious Christian life In Christ.

Though many things have changed in the past decade of ministry, one constant has remained and that is the striving desire to see lives transformed and pressed further into Christ. In the past 12 years we have watched as the youth who first attended our camp, many years ago, are still faithfully serving the Lord and even bringing their own families, now as adults, back to camp. Many of our first youth attendees can be found still working in the camp as counselors, worship leaders, game directors and more.

Although the NOYC is geared directly for youth, the NOYC is so much more than your typical youth camp. At the NOYC youth and adults alike set their differences aside and come together in childlike faith to pursue a more genuine and authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. Over the years we have seen countless lives changed by attending camp through salvation, personal commitments of faith, and even the answering of the call to ministry.

A typical day at the NOYC will include 3 home cooked meals per day (*plus snack!*), 3 Bible lessons, 3 sport activities, wacky games, 4 prayer stations, crafts, music class, the Amazing NOYC Race, an out-of-this-world camp church service, and much, MUCH more! Every day we make it a priority to saturate the campers and counselors in as much Bible teaching and spiritual activity, on a personal level, as possible. Strong preaching, God-glorifying singing, and great fun are all in store for you at the NOYC!

Even though our top priority is closeness with Christ, at the NOYC we fully believe that life, especially for the believer, is meant to be a blast! For this reason, every moment at the NOYC is intentionally planned and prepared for the utmost fun- down to the detail. Beyond the exciting daily activities, the NOYC also offers several special events during our week of camp which attendees can look forward to including the world's largest ice cream sundae, the Mestival (*over 300+ lbs of slime*), kiddo pool kick ball, the Nerf War Arena, and the NOYC one-of-a-kind Escape Room, and more!

Above all, our desire at the NOYC is to reach a generation for Christ and to Biblically equip them to endure life from a faith that actually works. Through God's provision we have witnessed a miracle take place each year at camp- as young people are turning their attention to the things of the Lord. Many churches have scratched their head at the up and coming generation, as they seem so unreachable and out of touch. Yet, through this ministry we have discovered that *truth and authentic Christianity still works*, even for this generation. Young people everywhere are looking for the pure truth to be both taught and lived out in reality.

The NOYC is far more than a youth camp, it is a joining together of like minds, seeking God, His Word, and His will for each of our lives. This is why you will find people of different denominations, belief systems, backgrounds, walks of life, and even generations linking arms at the NOYC. We greatly encourage individuals, groups, families, youth leaders, pastors, and more to join our NOYC family and witness what God can do.

**COME EXPERIENCE A LIFE CHANGING, SOUL SAVING,  
RIDICULOUSLY FUN WEEK AT THE NOYC!**



**WE WOULD LOVE  
TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

CONTACT OUR HELPFUL STAFF MEMBERS WITH ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING  
THIS BOOK, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, SUMMER CAMP, AND MORE.

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# TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT

*People are saying about the NOYC!*

"There's no place I'd rather spend an entire week...Lives have been changed. I'm looking forward to see what God has in store for us all throughout the year, so that we could grow closer to God." - *Molly F.*

"In all ways I feel like I am so much closer to God. The whole day is just amazing. Everything is so well organized!" - *McKayla T.*

"Although this is a 'Youth Camp' it challenges us adults spiritually." - *Chris F.*

"Best week of the year for my family. I really enjoyed it all." - *Mike S.*

"Wow, this week has really been an eye opener for me. Seeing our church kids coming together, supporting each other, loving each other, and worshipping God." - *Kim B.*

"This week is a great way to 'disconnect' and grow closer to God. The NOYC finds many ways to challenge you spiritually, to get inside yourself and closer to God." - *Patty M.*

DAILY SPORTS,  
GAMES, PRIZES,  
COMPETITIONS, AND  
RIDICULOUS FUN!

*fun*

2 DAILY  
DEVOTIONS, PRAYER  
STATIONS, AND  
WOW WORSHIP  
SERVICES

*faith*

MEET AND MAKE  
NEW FRIENDS  
FROM ALL OVER  
THE STATE

*fellowship*

LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT GOD IS DOING AT THE NOYC! [WWW.THENOYC.COM](http://WWW.THENOYC.COM)



# IMPACTFUL YOUTH RESOURCES

The NOYC is fully dedicated to building up youth and those who minister to youth for spiritual success. Over the past decade the NOYC has provided various impactful resources to countless youth ministries. It is the conviction of this ministry that all resources are Bible-based and Savior Centered. The NOYC also continues to provide new resources through out the year, for this reason we encourage you to check out our website ([www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)) for updates and additional resources. Know that this ministry is lifting you up in prayer and desires to serve you and your youth in any capacity that we may be capable.

## weekly PODCAST & BLOG

Each week the NOYC staff provide a *one-of-a-kind* podcast and blog that will be sure to encourage, challenge, and make you laugh. This resource is beneficial for both youth and adults alike and will definitely keep you on your spiritual toes. Each episode features a powerful mini lesson, a considerable quote, featured content, and a charge up challenge- along with memorable moments testimonies, interviews and much more. **The NOYC GODcast** is available each week on all major podcast platforms as well as Facebook & YouTube. You can also receive **The NOYC GODcast** each week in your inbox by signing up at [www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)



## Book & Video DEVOTION SERIES

It's no secret that entertainment has become the ultimate goal for many youth ministries. However, this goal often comes at the expense of God's Word, and it's intended impact within youth ministry. Many curriculums, small groups, and bible studies are nothing more than irrelevant or dry, boring content which youth are given no choice but to endure in order to get to the real fun. However, over the past nearly 15 years the NOYC has witnessed the impact that the Word Of God- presented in a powerful, pure and well-done manner- can have on the lives of young people. The NOYC provides challenging Christian content in both book and video formats that are perfect for youth groups, home/personal studies, Sunday school classes, small groups, and more. Each series is completely one-of-a-kind and feature lively lessons, introspective questions, hands-on application, bonus content and more. You can order The NOYC devotion book series, receive a FREE digital download of the book, and enjoy the video sessions by visiting our website at [www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)



ONLY AVAILABLE AT THE

## Speakers & TRAINING



Summer church camps are infamous for providing a '*spiritual high*' which dissipates not long after returning home. The NOYC has worked diligently to not only ignite a passion in the lives of young people, but to continually stoke this passion year-round. On a regular basis the NOYC receives questions from those in youth ministry asking how to connect, challenge, and interest their youth. Over the past nearly 15 years in ever-changing youth ministry, the NOYC has been given a unique perspective into what does and what does not work in leading an impactful youth ministry. From this perspective and out of a desire to build up youth ministries for success, the NOYC offers a one-of-a-kind training at the **Youth Ministry Summit**. This event will directly benefit youth leaders, pastors, Sunday school teachers, parents, and anyone in direct contact with the spiritual growth of young people. For more information or to register for the **Youth Ministry Summit**, visit our website at [www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)

In addition, the pastoral staff of the NOYC are always eager and willing to help in any way possible. Whether by preaching to your youth/congregation, or by personally working with your youth ministers—The NOYC desires to serve you and your youth. Feel free to reach out to our camp office at the contact info below with any questions you may have.



## youth & adults SPECIAL EVENTS

Although we have a great passion for providing resources to youth, the NOYC of course also provides a week of '*life changing, soul saving, ridiculous fun,*' each summer at the Northern Ohio Youth Camp. During the week of camp attendees of all ages will daily enjoy; 3 devotion classes, 4 prayer stations, 2 sports, 3 meals (*plus snack!*), wacky games, crafts, and of course the remarkable camp worship service. In addition attendees can look forward to several NOYC specialties such as; the Mestvial featuring over 300+ gallons of slime, The NOYC Escape room, the Nerf war arena, kiddo pool kick ball, a pizza party, the world's largest banana split, and so much more! Summer camp is open for all ages with a daycare available for those under the age of 6 (*must be accompanied by an adult*), pre-teen teams for those ages 7-12, and teen teams for ages 13 and up. Adults are always welcomed at the NOYC as well, with opportunities to serve as a camp counselor or to volunteer as a part of the NOYC staff. For more information or to register for

this year's NOYC, visit our website at [www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)

Beyond a week of summer fun for everyone, the NOYC also provides specialty events such as youth rallies, conferences, revivals, and sporting events through out the year. Make sure to check our website/social media for the latest, or sign up to receive updates to your inbox at [www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)

# NOYC

## Resources

If you have been involved in youth ministry for any time at all you recognize that there is a great void when it comes to high quality, Christ centered, spiritually challenging, and yet life applicable materials. It is for this reason that the NOYC is proud to offer several one of a kind curriculum series in both DVD and Book formats. Each of our resources are written, directed, and produced by the NOYC! A preview trailer as well as the full video series can be found at our website & YouTube channel. Whether for personal use, small groups, Sunday school classes, or youth groups- NOYC productions are sure to bless and challenge your youth and adults alike. Each resources features a lesson, hands on activity, memory verse, and more!



Just like the “#” connects so many people on social media- “Struggles” connect all people from different walks of life. We all have them, let’s talk about *#Struggles*.

All things work together for good- but at times the “good” is hard to find in our lives. When the road we’re on takes a sharp turn or an inconvenient detour- sometimes it’s hard to find the meaning of *Life’s Highway*.



What if Jesus actually meant what He said when He asked for anyone willing to follow- to take up their cross and follow Him? What if we can only keep our life by first laying it down? Learn how to live a surrendered life of victory with the viral series; *White Flag Faith*.

It happens to the best of us. Unexpected, devastating, and in an instant your life now lies in pieces on the floor. Shattered reminds us that God never breaks anything for nothing. Every single broken piece is intentional by God. Find out how to see beauty from brokenness with the timely series: *Shattered*.



The NOYC is now excited to offer a weekly Podcast/ Blog for youth! Check out the NOYC GODcast or the NOYC Blog for challenging and Christ centered Christian content as well as considerable quotes, featured music, camp memories and much more! You can find the NOYC GODcast on all major podcast platforms or sign up to receive the NOYC weekly Blog to your inbox by visiting [www.thenoyc.com](http://www.thenoyc.com)







Send a text to  
**81010**

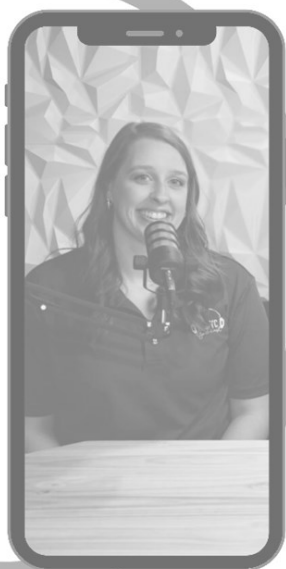
Text this message  
**@thenoyc**



SIGN UP TODAY VIA TXT OR EMAIL



**STAY IN THE KNOW  
ABOUT THE NOYC**



SCAN ME

CHALLENGING  
ENCOURAGING  
ENTERTAINING



A WEEKLY WORD  
FOR EVERYONE

