

LIGHT  
FOR THE  
LIFEGIVING  
PARENT



– A Seven-Day Devotional –

by Clay Clarkson

Author of *The Lifegiving Parent* and  
*The Lifegiving Parent Experience*

## GOD'S LIFE GROWS IN GOD'S LIGHT

I'm a firm believer in night-lights. Without strategically placed floorboard beacons to guide me through the dark of night, I'll end up stumbling, knocking things over, and even breaking my little toe on an open door (yes, I did). Without light shining in the darkness of my house, life can be hazardous. I need light for the sake of my life at home!

Parenting can be like that as well. Too many Christians stumble through the dimly lit hallways of parenting, simply because they need more light for the parenting life. We all need light in order to provide a meaningful life for our children. We need God's light to be good lifegiving parents .

The big biblical analogy is not hard to see. Just as light shines around us, enabling us to live physically, so God's light shines within us, enabling us to live spiritually. The big difference is that we have to choose by faith to see God's light. Or, as Paul says, we need the spiritual eyes of our hearts enlightened to see all that God has done for us (see Ephesians 1:18, NASB).

But there's an even bigger biblical picture. The Bible starts with God declaring "Let there be light" in the midst of darkness (Genesis 1:3), and ends with God's light replacing the darkness forever (Revelation 22:5). In between, Jesus comes to be our "Light of life" (John 8:12, NASB), so we can walk with Him as "children of light" (Ephesians 5:8, NASB). Light is the beginning, the middle, and the end of God's divine narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. The great story arc of life—from Him, in Him, with Him—is illuminated by His light.

But if light and life make up too big a picture to draw in this seven-day devotional, just think of this as a few spiritual night-lights for your parenting life. Each brief devotional will encourage you to "see" the light of Scripture (read and meditate), "receive" the light God is giving (think about it), and then "shine" the light in your life and for your children (apply it). There's also a "My Light" journal section with each day where you can record your own thoughts about living in God's light. Consider this devotional some light for lifegiving parenting. And perhaps it will also keep you from breaking a spiritual toe.



# DAY 1: THE LIGHT OF GOD

## See the Light

*The LORD is my light and my salvation—  
so why should I be afraid?  
The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger,  
so why should I tremble?*

—Psalm 27:1

*This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all.*

—1 John 1:5

## Receive the Light

When you hear the word “light,” what are your first thoughts? What does it make you feel? What image in your mind does it create? How does it compare to your response to the word “darkness”?

What does the phrase “the LORD is my light” mean to you, both theologically and personally? What would life be like if the Lord were not your light?

How do you envision the statement “God is light”? What does thinking about the nature of God as light inspire in you—awe? Fear? Curiosity? Worship? Safety? Courage?

## Shine the Light

**For Yourself:** Make a “The LORD Is My Light” list. Every night for a month, complete the sentence, “Because you are my light, LORD, I . . .” Write down the ways that God’s light helps you as a Christian, a person, a spouse, or a parent. Remember that God’s light can come from many places—His Word, nature, family, friends, church. Also, you don’t always need to write a positive statement. Ask yourself what life would be like living in darkness, and express that personally (“ . . . I know that even when I’m depressed, You are still there”). Keep the list in your Bible to review whenever you need encouragement before going to bed at night.

**For Your Children:** Plan a special night to talk about God’s light. Read the above Scriptures and ask your children to describe what they think God’s light is like. Then light several candles and turn out all other lights. Tell your children a story about a King who created a wonderful realm full of light, but he went away, and the lights began to go out. Start extinguishing candles, asking at each step how your children feel about the light and the darkness. After a few minutes, tell them you have very good news: They don’t have to live in the darkness because the King has sent his Son to bring light back to the realm. Light a candle and talk again about what they think and feel now. With each candle you light, have everyone recite 1 John 1:5 together.

*My Light*

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## DAY 2: THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

### See the Light

*In the beginning the Word already existed.*

*The Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . .*

*The Word gave life to everything that was created,  
and his life brought light to everyone.*

*The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

—John 1:1, 4-5

*Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

—John 8:12

### Receive the Light

John’s words in the first chapter of his Gospel reflect Genesis 1:1-4 (“In the beginning . . . ‘Let there be light’”). How does Jesus, “the Word,” bring light to everyone by His life? Would you have recognized the light of God shining in His life? How?

Can darkness ever extinguish light? If darkness is the absence of light, what is the solution to the problem of darkness? If there is darkness in your spirit, what do you need?

John 8:12 contains the second of the seven great “I am” statements by Jesus in John’s Gospel. How do His words here suggest that He is God? What is the light He offers? How will His light lead you to “life”? What kind of life is it?



## DAY 3: THE LIGHT OF LIFE

### See the Light

*You light a lamp for me.*

*The LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.*

—Psalm 18:28

*For with You is the fountain of life;*

*in Your light we see light.*

—Psalm 36:9, NASB

### Receive the Light

How does it make you feel when someone turns on a light for you in the darkness, or shines a flashlight so you can see where you're going? How do you picture in your mind God lighting a lamp for you? How does He light up your darkness?

Other translations say that God lights "my lamp." What is your lamp, how can it go out, and how can God light it for you? In the same way, in some translations it is "my darkness" that is illumined. What is your darkness, and how does God bring light to it?

What is God's light, and what is the light that we're able to see in His light? How is that related to the "fountain of life" that we find in God?

## Shine the Light

**For Yourself:** Symbols in your house can be important reminders of God’s truth, presence, and faithfulness to your family. Find a “lamp,” such as an oil lamp with a glass chimney or a candle in a glass jar, that you can put on a table where it is easily seen. Either by hand or on your computer, create a Scripture card of Psalm 18:28 using your favorite translation. Display the Scripture with the lamp and read it every time you walk by.

**For Your Children:** Create an “I See the Light” game to play. As you all go through your days, your goal is to learn to be aware of ways that God turns on lights in your lives—a Scripture at the right time, the opportunity to assist someone in need, wisdom for a decision, thanksgiving for blessings, encouragement from a friend, a song to lift your spirit. Let your family know at breakfast that it will be an “I See the Light” day, and then that night around the dinner table everyone can share the ways they saw God’s light.

*My Light*

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## DAY 4: THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

### See the Light

*Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. . . . For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.*

—2 Corinthians 4:4, 6

*You are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*

—1 Peter 2:9

### Receive the Light

How is the "Good News," or the gospel, a light? Why can't "those who don't believe" see the light? In what ways does Satan blind the minds of unbelievers?

For those who believe in the gospel, Paul says God "has made this light shine in our hearts." What does divine light shining in your heart do? How do you, as a believer, experience the "light of the Good News"?

Peter reminds believers in the gospel that they can show others "the goodness of God," unlike those who reject Christ. How does being in God's "wonderful light" enable us to show others His goodness? How does being "called . . . out of the darkness" affect that?

## Shine the Light

**For Yourself:** The word “gospel” can become like unnoticed background music to our Christian ears. But the gospel is the very heart of our lives as believers. It is the good news of salvation in Christ, but also of God’s “wonderful light” that changes everything about life—who we are, how we think, what we do, how we see the world. Take time to ponder how the “light of the gospel” has changed your life in the past, is changing it in the present, and will change it in the future. Don’t let the gospel be unheard background music; rather, let it be the daily song in the heart of your Christian life.

**For Your Children:** Gather drawing materials and plenty of paper at a large table. Tell your children you all need to write some stories for the *Good News Gazette*. Give your junior reporters their story assignment: to tell their readers what is good about the good news about Jesus. They can draw pictures, create headlines, and write short stories (or young children can tell you their stories so you can write for them). Give them time to do their reporting, and then let everyone share the good things about the Good News that they came up with.

*My Light*

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## DAY 5: THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

### See the Light

*Your word is a lamp to guide my feet  
and a light for my path. . . .*

*The teaching of your word gives light,  
so even the simple can understand.*

—Psalm 119:105, 130

*[Jesus said,] “All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”*

—John 3:20-21

### Receive the Light

Think about how the Word of God acts as a lamp, providing light to guide your feet along the path of life. How far ahead does it shine? How would it affect you if it shined ten steps further down the path than where you are? How much light is enough light?

According to Jesus, why do people actually “hate” the light of God so much? Do you know people who hate the light? How is what Jesus said true of them?

Why are people who practice the truth (“what is right”) drawn to the light? Does that describe your motivation? Would people who know you say that you are doing what God wants?

## Shine the Light

**For Yourself:** Create your own “pocket lamp” to light your path as you walk with God. Find a compact bound journal that you can keep in a pocket or purse (a small Moleskine Pocket Cahier Journal works well). As you read the Bible, listen for the Spirit to point out Scripture passages that speak to your life. Write each such verse on one page of your journal (including the subject, reference, verse, and date). As you walk along your path of life with God, pull out your pocket lamp and read some truth to light your way that day.

**For Your Children:** Give your children a real “pocket lamp.” Find an inexpensive keychain flashlight (one dollar in small quantities on Amazon), and give one to each child, with different colors if possible. In the morning, choose a Scripture verse that your children like, or that you would like them to memorize. At random times throughout the day, take your flashlight and shine it on the ground in front of you. This will be their cue to do the same and then to recite their verse, the light that they are learning for their path—a fun and “enlightened” way to memorize Scripture.

*My Light*

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## DAY 6: THE LIGHT OF FAITH

### See the Light

*The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,  
which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.  
But the way of the wicked is like total darkness.  
They have no idea what they are stumbling over.*

—Proverbs 4:18-19

*Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

—Romans 13:11-12, NASB

### Receive the Light

In Proverbs 4:18-19, Solomon contrasts the way of the righteous with the way of the wicked. The light of dawn comes gradually until it is full. How is that like the life of faith? In what ways does that describe your own life of faith?

In Romans 13: 11-12, Paul says that night is passing and “the day” of Christ’s return is near, so we should “put on the armor of light.” What does “armor of light” protect us from? Are you wearing any armor?

According to Paul, even believers need to choose to “lay aside the deeds of darkness.” What kinds of deeds would those be for Christians? What deeds do you need to lay aside?

## Shine the Light

**For Yourself:** When you harbor private sins, even little ones, the light of faith in your life will be dimmed and weakened. You're holding onto darkness, which is a form of unbelief. Make confession a regular habit. Ask God to convict you of any corners of darkness in your heart, no matter how small. Write down those sins as a confession (agree with God), write "1 John 1:9" across it ("But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins"), and thank God for His forgiveness. Let the armor of light—God's Word, the Spirit, and prayer—protect you from the devil and the darkness. (Also read Ephesians 6:10-17.)

**For Your Children:** You'll have to plan ahead for this object lesson. Look for a time when you will be camping, or out in the country. Get the children up for a predawn walk eastward along a path or unused road. As you begin to see the approaching dawn, read Proverbs 4:18-19. Talk about what it is like to walk in darkness, and compare that to walking in the growing light of dawn. Discuss how that is like walking with Jesus by faith, and how faith grows the more you walk. Then walk back and have a wonderful breakfast together.

*My Light*

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## DAY 7: THE LIGHT OF LOVE

### See the Light

*The judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.*

—John 3:19

*Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.*

—1 John 2:10-11

### Receive the Light

Throughout his Gospel, John says that to love God's light is to love God. In what ways do you know you are loving God's light, rather than the darkness? How do your actions show that you love His light?

Later, in his first epistle, John says that loving fellow believers shows that we are living in the light of God. In what ways do you know you are living in God's light because of your love for others? How are you loving others?

The Great Commandment of Jesus is that we fulfill all the law of God when we love God and love people (Matthew 22:36-40). How do you make sure you're living fully in the light of love?

## Shine the Light

**For Yourself:** “God is love.” “For God so loved the world.” “The greatest of these is love.” You cannot read the New Testament seriously and miss the role of love in the Christian life. All the commands and teachings of Jesus can be subsumed in that one word: love. If we truly live in the light of love, we will be living in the light of God, Jesus, life, the gospel, truth, and faith. Make it a goal to memorize the great love passages: Matthew 5:43-47; 1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 John 4:7-21. Let the light of love shine in your heart.

**For Your Children:** Tell your children that you will be watching for the light of love in their lives—the ways they love God, their siblings, their friends, others, and their parents. Be sure they know that love is not something to be bragged about or announced, but that it creates its own light and will be seen. At night around the dinner table, make a special point to acknowledge the ways you’ve seen each child living in the light of love that day. Occasionally, you might even recognize a particularly sacrificial expression of love with a special reward or time with a parent. And, of course, be sure to show your children the light of love from you as a parent that you want them to learn. Love is catching. Love is catching, and the light will draw others in your family to God.

*My Light*

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