

TOUCHED BY HIS

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grace

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## HIS LIGHT IN OUR DARKNESS

Seven hundred years before Christ's birth, the prophet Isaiah said, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (Is.9:2). After Christ's death and resurrection, the apostle, John, wrote:

"Through him (Christ) all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in darkness, but the darkness has not understood it" (John 1:3-4).

We don't often speak of darkness during the holiday season. We prefer to focus on the light: the lights of the Hanukkah Menorah and the lights of Christmas trees. And yet, the Light came into the world because of our darkness, and may we never forget it.

As the director of OneByOne, I hear from many people who are in darkness. I hear from those who struggle with unwanted same-sex attraction, addiction to pornography, the inability to commit to marriage, illicit sexual encounters with strangers, adultery, gender identity confusion, a past filled with sexual abuse, alienation from parents and from children, hopelessness, pain, and fear.

The only way to walk out of the darkness is to admit that we are in darkness, but many refuse to do this. I am continually amazed at the capacity we have to remain in denial. Christians are no exception. In fact, Christians (even sincere Christians) are more prone to live double lives because of our desperation to receive affirmation from both God and men.

We hope that God will overlook our entertaining demons in the dark as long as we say and do the "right" things in the light. Yet God says that our deeds of righteousness are as "filthy rags" if we are not rightly related to Him in our hearts.

### **Hiding in the Dark: Sexual Sin and the Men of God**

Many of the great men in Scripture struggled with sexual brokenness, men like Abraham, Judah, Samson, Solomon, and David. Abraham jeopardized his own marriage bed by handing his wife over to Pharaoh (not once but twice), and he had sexual relations with another woman other than his wife in order to obtain a son by her.

Judah (of which Jesus is referred to as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah") slept with prostitutes, one of which turned out to be his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Samson was also a sexual addict, frequenting prostitutes and eventually



worshipping his lover, Delilah, so much so that he was willing to give up his faith and identity for her.

Solomon's demise was his sexual addiction to no less than 700 women and 300 concubines. It says in I Kings 11 that Solomon "held fast to them [his wives] in love" and "his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God." And Solomon's father, David, committed adultery with an honorable man's wife and had this man killed in order to cover up his sin. Subsequently, these men of God found themselves in the darkness, and they had a choice to make. They could stay in the darkness or step into the light.

### **Standing in the Light: The Power of Confession**

The pro-gay community applauds those who "come out of the closet" or who "come out of the dark" to celebrate their homosexuality. It is a perverse form of repentance, for Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more" not "Go and celebrate your life of sin." While the pro-gay community is coming into the

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“light” by “confessing” their “sin” without apology, Christian men (and women) stay in the dark by denying their struggle and committing sin in secret.

We hear of prominent conservative pastors and senators being “exposed” for engaging in secret homosexual encounters. In addition to homosexual activity, sexual addiction via internet pornography is just as much an epidemic among Christian evangelicals as it is among non-religious people, and we see it becoming more of a problem for Christian women as well.

It is time to get serious about our hypocrisy. We Christians who live double lives are not only committing sin, we are lying about it to ourselves, to the people who trust us, and most grievously, we are lying to God. David confessed to God, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight”, and Jo-

seph when approached by Potipher’s wife to have sexual relations with her said, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

This is a good question: “How then can we do this?” I remember the tension, the spiritual and emotional battle that waged within me as I struggled to reconcile my love for Christ and my ungodly sexual desires and activity. God made it clear that I couldn’t continue to do both and remain in His will.



The Scripture talks about God “giving us over” to the “lusts of our hearts” to “dishonorable passions” and to “a debased mind” (Romans 1:26). “For although we knew God, we did not honor him...” (Romans 1:21) To be comfortable with our sin is a frightening place to be. Rationalizing our sin by saying, “But I have provided for my family,” or “I’m not hurting anyone” is not only a delusion, it is grossly inaccurate.

However, for those who have the courage to face reality, repent, and ask for help, Jesus says that these people are blessed. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matt.5:4). If we grieve our actions and the consequences of our sin, and we are willing stand in the light, God will cause our “night to become like the noonday” (Is. 58:10).

### “And the Darkness Has Not Overcome It”

There is no darkness that God’s light cannot penetrate save the darkness of our unbelief. In the beginning, God separated the darkness from the light (Gen.1:4), and he promises to do this in our own lives if we let him. King David confessed his sin and said to his Savior, “For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness.” (Ps. 18:28). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

The apostle Paul asks, “What fellowship does light have with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14), and James, the brother of Jesus, said, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners,

and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:7). I have to admit, personally, that there are times when I truly wonder if God can change the human heart. All of us, believers and unbelievers alike, are stiff-necked people. We have perfected our defense mechanisms to an art form. Year after year, we harden the shell of our hearts, contenting ourselves with creature comforts while refusing to do what it takes to have the “abundant life” Jesus promises to give us.

For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few (Matt. 7:13-14).

We must remember, however, that Jesus said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). God accomplished our salvation, and if he can do that, he can do anything. Yet, it is up to us to receive our salvation by faith, and not everyone will humble themselves to receive it. (Gen.15:6). A.B Simpson in *Streams in the Desert* writes:

God is looking for men on whom He can put the weight of all His love and power and faithful promises. God’s engines are strong enough to draw the weight we attach to them. Unfortunately, the cable which we fasten to the engine is often too weak to hold the weight of our prayer.

*Lord, strengthen the cable of our faith so we may approach you with boldness. Our time on this earth is limited. Give us the faith and courage to live in the Light, believing that Christ can and will do the impossible in our own hearts, in the hearts of those we love, and in the hearts of those in darkness.*

## LIVING IN THE LIGHT THE TWELVE PRAYERS OF CHRISTMAS

***(Day 1)***

***Lord, I trust in your goodness, even when you allow pain in my life.***

***(Day 2)***

***Lord, I confess my specific sins to you. I will confess them to others.***

***(Day 3)***

***Lord, help me to forgive those who have sinned against me.***

***(Day 4)***

***Lord, help me to openly share my struggles with the people I trust.***

***(Day 5)***

***Lord, help me understand the Bible and apply it to my life.***

***(Day 6)***

***Lord, help me resist people, places, & influences that dishonor you.***

***(Day 7)***

***Lord, I commit my will to your will, no matter the personal cost.***

***(Day 8)***

***Lord, help me find healthy friendships, and become a healthy friend.***

***(Day 9)***

***Lord, help me get involved in my church and serve others there, too.***

***(Day 10)***

***Lord, no person can fill my deep need for love; only you can do this.***

***(Day 11)***

***Lord, help me let go of the expectations of the world.***

***(Day 12)***

***Lord, fill me this day (and every day) with your love, joy.***

*OneByOne wishes you a joyful and blessed Christmas!*

*In this season of joy, we ask you to prayerfully consider supporting OneByOne through a financial gift. Our ministry reaches, touches, and changes the lives of those struggling to achieve sexual wholeness in a broken world. Please join us in making a difference. Gifts may be sent to*

*OneByOne  
Post Office Box 648  
Pittsford, New York 14534*

