

Rejoicing in the Darkness

When our children were small, a severe ice storm struck Kansas City. Ice-laden branches fell across electric lines, killing power in much of the city. For three days we were without all electricity. Then it came on for a few hours, only to go out again for four more days. That was one full week in the dead of winter with no light, no heating, no cooking, no appliances - no anything.

Preparing meals was tricky. Keeping warm and entertained was difficult. But without question, darkness was the toughest part. I can't adequately describe how oppressive were those long winter nights. They dragged on like months, and our whole frame of mind was affected. Even though we knew we'd eventually have power again, it didn't feel that way.

Then, without warning, the lights came on. I'll never forget our daughter, Kindra's, reaction. Like someone had set her on fire, she spontaneously dashed through the house, waving her arms, laughing and yelling with hysterical joy. The rest of us felt the same but weren't so uninhibited.

Darkness is the toughest part of many of our difficulties. We find a way to deal with the specific hardships and keep going, but the cloud of depression is the hardest to take. We go through long periods when all seems dead or dying, when we sense no encouragement and no hope of any kind. God seems the most distant in the areas that matter most.

Caught in such darkness, faced with an unknown future, our fears create their own version of reality. They imagine a world without God's power and love. There we are forced to fend for ourselves against overwhelming troubles attacking us from every side. As we succumb to our fears, we live in that false reality, reacting to its imaginary circumstances.

During such times, I've discovered why the New Testament so strenuously and repeatedly urges us to rejoice in the Lord.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!... The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything. (Philippians 4:4-6, NIV)

When pressures knock us out of focus and threaten our peace of mind, nothing helps like stopping to remember God. Look away from the imaginary world of your fears and from the grip of the temporary present. Look to Him. Recall out loud the unchanging truth about Him. Use your mind and your voice to rejoice in who He is and all He has done down through the ages. Recite in detail His many acts of love and faithfulness to you. Start, "Lord, I remember when . . ."

Say again, "Lord, I know You are with me. I know You are with me right now and always. And I will trust You."

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases power to the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31, NIV)

Hymn: [A Life of Thanksgiving](#)

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