

# WHEN DISCIPLES WALK IN DARKNESS

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It doesn't seem right that disciples should ever have to walk in darkness, yet Job spoke of the thick darkness that covered his face (Job 23:17). Although God himself had said Job was a righteous man, he felt a deep sense of being in overwhelming darkness. Most of us have had periods of time when our fellowship with God seemed to be cut off. I can speak personally concerning that because I have gone through some of those dark

times. During these periods, I really relate to what Job's cries were: **"If only I knew where to find Him. If only I could go to His dwelling, but if I go to the East, He is not there. If I go to the West, I cannot find Him. When He is at work in the North, I cannot see Him. When He turns to the South, I catch no glimpse of Him."** God obviously has His reasons for this darkness. He is the God who dwells in light, but at other times He is the God who covers Himself with thick darkness.

## **We seem to experience two kinds of spiritual darkness.**

Some darkness is the result of sin and we can deal with this kind. Where it not for the cross, this separation from God would be total and eternal. After we take our place in Christ, the darkness of sin can never be more than temporary. The pain of this separation soon drives the Christian to confession. When this happens, we discover again that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The second kind of darkness is not the result of unconfessed sin, but rather of the sovereignty of God. In these times, we again search our hearts, lifting up every motive, act, and thought to the Holy Spirit's examination, but this time, no amount of confession will drive the darkness away. It leaves only when God's purposes are complete.

It is helpful at such times to remember how darkness functions in the physical world. When the lights go out the room we are in does not change, but our ability to perceive reality in the room is greatly reduced. If the room is a familiar one, we can move around fairly well even in total darkness. Its dimensions are imprinted in our memory.

Darkness does not change physical reality, but it does do a few things:

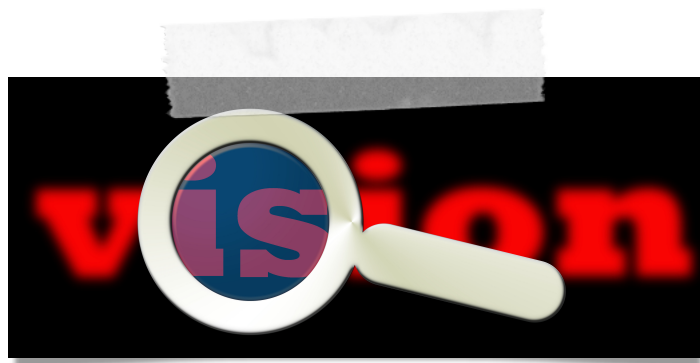
1. It can trigger fear and panic
2. It tends to confuse us, diminishing our sense of control
3. It lessens and distorts our ability to perceive reality.

When Job found himself surrounded by darkness, his disciplined instincts (as we see in Job 23) were the right ones. **Although he did not understand what was happening to him, he first dealt with fear by affirming his faith and confidence in the good intentions of God.** Job says, “he knows the way that I take and when I am tried, I will come forth as pure gold. Secondly, Job avoided confusion while sticking to the familiar. Job said. “my feet have closely followed His steps, I have kept His way without turning aside”. Thirdly, he affirmed the one reality which is God’s Word and he could hold onto that. It is a reality that darkness could not touch.

Young Christians are rarely tested by the kind of situation Job experienced, but **growing disciples MUST eventually learn to walk by faith and not by sight, feelings or even human wisdom. Darkness is a stern discipline, but our walk of faith in the midst of darkness brings glory to God and grows us up!**

This is the last week of our Consecration. When we first started, it seemed like time was standing still like it always does in the beginning. But here we are at the end. We will close this out on Friday with prayer. Please, if you can, come and pray with us on Friday. It would be greatly appreciated.

On Friday night, I asked all of you to seek the mind of God to affirm or reaffirm what your assignment is. Come prepared to share what you have learned about your assignment and purpose on Friday night. For the next five days, we will go without any meat in addition to the other things that we have dedicated to the Lord over the course of the month.



In your prayers this week, ask God to show you any sin which needs to be confessed in your life. I will close this sheet today by saying to you don’t doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.

Praying that those whom we shepherd and teach are growing to be bold disciples of Christ,

*Pastor Earl & Denise Goings*