

# THE POWER OF ONE LIGHT

## What I found when I held my light high

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**Self care articles  
for the bereaved**

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### I begged for my old life back

Two days ago when we went to Christmas Eve service, I knew it would be magical. It always is. The merry greetings, powerful music, gorgeous décor, and the best part—singing Silent Night in a darkened auditorium lit by hundreds of candles.

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**As Pastor Grant spoke, he reminded us that even one candle shines in the dark.**

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He led us through a demonstration to prove a point. He instructed us to lower our candles. The shadows grew as the auditorium dimmed. When he asked us to raise our candles high enough to be seen by others, the auditorium glowed and the shadows lessened.

He also spoke about how some are called to walk in the valley of the shadow of death—a place of despair, sadness and darkness. A place where candles bearing one small flame can make a big difference.

The lesson of his story was that no matter where we are, shine our light for others to see. Don't keep it to ourselves.

As a good pastor does, I felt like Pastor Grant was talking directly to me. Of course he wasn't, but I couldn't help but apply his story to my journey.

Eight years ago as I sat next to the lifeless body of our daughter, God handed me a new script that called me to walk in the valley of the shadow of death.

I handed the script back.

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**I wanted my old life,  
not a new one.**

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I wanted my daughter to open her eyes and say "Hi, mom."

But that didn't happen.

God again handed me the new script. I tore it up and handed it back. "I don't want your new script!" I yelled.

I had a wonderful life as a mother of one college graduate, one college student, and two teenagers. My husband and I were even blessed with our first grandchild. Life was wonderful! No need for God to change it.

I ignored God's script for years. I picked it up once or twice but with my heart broken in so many places, the lines blurred together, the words indistinguishable. Besides, with my own inner light extinguished, it was too dark to read.

And then another tragedy befell us. My dear sweet hubby's grief over losing our daughter consumed him, and he suffered a disabling stroke at age 46.

Here I was facing a new kind of grief, and I had hardly begun to process the first.

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**I was empty inside.  
Exhausted. Done.**

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One day out of anger I picked up God's script. The first line said "When you help others, you help your own heart to heal."

Seriously, God?

I was walking in the shadow of death and could hardly put one foot in front of the other. How was I supposed to help someone else? I wasn't amused.

But I needed God. Desperately. The valley is very dark and so full of sadness and despair. It was hell on earth. I wanted to be any place other than living hell, so I continued reading.

The second line of the script said, "Every light shines in darkness."

As I continued my own journey through the valley of shadows, God was now asking me to shine my light.

Defiant, I challenged his instructions. How could one small light make a difference in such a

hellish place? He didn't reply.

My wounded, angry, and hurting self wanted to prove him wrong. I lit my light and held it high.

And a wondrous thing happened.

I found others like myself.

Together we formed a village of light right there in the shadows of death. I was no longer alone.

In that moment, a little bit of healing took place in my heart.

Over the years I've thought about that night when God handed me a new script. How I found myself walking through the valley of the shadow of death, begging for my old life back. How I fought, pleaded, and bargained for something else—not this script, God. Anything but this.

Pastor Grant reminded me that when God gives us a script and asks us to do something, we have a choice. My choice was either to stay in the shadows of hell or to shine my light—the light we're all born with.

When I finally held my light high, I discovered a need—and others like myself. God never told me I wouldn't be alone; I just assumed I was. I had to shine my light to learn otherwise.

Today I walk with one foot in the valley and one in the sun. When I'm in the valley, our village travels in search of wounded souls lost in the shadows. When we find one, we offer to share our light until they can ignite their own.

The moral of the story is to hold your light high. Don't keep it to yourself. Because when you help others, it helps your own heart to heal.

Thank you, God. Script accepted.