

## **GOD'S LIGHT IN DARK NIGHTS**

**“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” - Matthew 5:16**



It is well known to many “locals” in Hawaii, that there is a curse upon those who take one of Pele's lava rocks. It is said that he who takes a lava rock, is taking something from Pele and shall receive bad luck because of it. In the old days people were said to die from the curse, but now you only receive bad luck. Every day, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park receives several rocks from people who took them home from the park and are returning them because of the bad luck they've had since taking the rocks. Many of these people think there is a “causal connection” between their taking the rocks and their perceived “bad luck” because their bad luck came after they took the rocks. Of course, let's keep in mind that their “perceived bad luck” may have happened even if they hadn't taken any rocks from the park or, they may not have paid a lot of attention to the "bad luck" had they not heard there was a curse associated with taking the rocks. The main driving forces behind superstition are ignorance and fear of the unknown or unpredictable.

There are snowstorms. There are hailstorms. There are rainstorms. But, there are also “doubt” storms that are

birthed through “superstition”. Every so often, these storms come into our lives, bringing with it a lot of questions and eventually, fear. Yet, we know that when a storm passes and the clouds begin to scatter, a gentle light shines through. That’s what I want to talk about today. I’d like for you to consider being a “candle” in someone’s life. God's “lights” in our “dark” nights are like the stars in the sky. Millions shine! Though, we can never avoid life’s “storms”, we can still to cling to hope. THAT’S WHERE YOU COME IN! Why? Because every day, people are stuck in hopelessness and headed into a “Christ-less” eternity.

I love watching “animals in the wild” (especially, when it’s on my television in the comfort of my living room). Give me “Animal Planet” and “National Geographic”! I especially, loved watching the late Steve Irwin. He had a great passion for animals and full of courage. He’d jump on a crocodile, wrestle with it, then, he’d test a poisonous and venomous snake. He’d pick it up and say, “Just one drop of his venom could kill you”, then, hold it close to his face. He’d swing it around a bit, then, say, “They may even bite, too”. Just then, the snake snaps at him and Steve would calmly say in his Australian accent, “OHHH! That was a close one!” I looked at that and said to myself, “This guy is crazy!”

One day, we were all shocked when Steve died. It was a strange accident. While in the water, a sting ray cut Steve’s aorta and he died immediately. In the days to follow, people went to his zoo in Australia and left sympathy cards and flowers outside the gate. One day, a reporter picked up one of the cards. It read: “I thought you were immortal. How I wish that was true.”

Do you know that none of us are immortal? I don’t know Steve’s spiritual background, but, I know that those words

need to “echo” in the hearts of many people. That’s why I want to encourage someone reading this devotional to join me in being God’s light in this world. God cares about lost people and He wants us to show others that He loves them with a heart of compassion.

We need to understand that there’s not only LOST PEOPLE, but, there’s BROKEN PEOPLE. There are many who come with “missing pieces”. I’ve met people who are “sick-n-tired” of being “sick-n-tired”. I’ve met people that are ready to give up on life! You may know of a person, right now, who’s crying out, “I wish there was some way that I could be loved; someone that won’t judge me; someone who will accept me, regardless of what I’ve done or where I’ve been”.

I remember taking some leftover pastries to some men that were homeless at a public park. As I brought the food, I saw the smile on their faces as I shared some food with them. Though it wasn’t a lot, they appreciated that someone thought about them. They thanked me and during my many visits, we built a bond together and they could see the unconditional love of God through my giving. You see, people need to know that there are people that love them because God loves them.

Perhaps, this story (because I love basketball) can best be illustrated this way.

When Larry Brown was the coach of the San Antonio Spurs, he once spent an afternoon at a local men's store, signing autographs. He was scheduled to spend two hours, but ended up spending three. “Autograph-seeking” kids filled the place, asking him questions and shaking his hand. When he was finally able to slip out, he climbed into his car, then, saw a touching sight. A late-arriving youngster pedaled up,

jumped off his bike, and ran to the window to see if the coach was still in the store. When he saw the he wasn't there, he turned sadly, walked over to his bike, and began to ride off. Coach Brown turned off the ignition, climbed out of the car, and walked over to the boy. They chatted a few minutes, went next door to a cafe, sat down at a table, and enjoyed a soft drink together. No reporters were near. No cameras were on. As far as these two knew, no one knew. I'm sure Larry Brown had other things to do that afternoon. No doubt he had other appointments to keep. But it's doubtful that anything he might have done that afternoon was more important than what he did. In a world of "high-paid" professionals in sports, it was great to hear of one coach who is still a coach at heart. Hearing what he did was enough to blow away any lingering clouds of doubt and witness the warmth of God's gentle light.

YOU ARE A GENTLE LIGHT and you are God's solution against "doubt storms", "winds of fear" and "dark nights". You're not a thunderbolt! You're not an explosion of light! YOU ARE A GENTLE LIGHT, SO, LET IT SHINE BRIGHT FOR HIM! Someone is waiting.