

W3 | D3

GOD OF LIGHT AND LIFE

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The summer before my freshman year of high school, I traveled on my first mission trip to New York City to assist several church plants, pray for people on the streets, and share the gospel with people in the park. It was a challenging but fruitful week. I fondly remember getting on my knees and “giving my life to the work of ministry” during our last evening of worship at the Marriott World Trade Center, nestled between the Twin Towers.

It should not surprise us that the Evil One, personal sin, and the world’s pleasures increase their temptation after a spiritual high like I experienced that summer. Indeed, after I entered high school, those moments of service and surrender faded as I was enveloped in my new surroundings. From that point, the lure of a life untethered to a Christian family and the local church led me to move four hours away to attend university. There, unrestrained and intoxicated living brought me to a place of nihilism and hopelessness. Looking back, I realize I spent most of my high school and college years fumbling in the darkness, spiritually empty and aimless.

Then came the morning of September 11, 2001. All of us who experienced it remember where we were on that day of darkness in our country. The unprecedented events surrounding that fateful day brought our nation to its knees. Yet God used that national tragedy to wake me from personal darkness. You see, I was brought to my knees as well.

As I sat alone in my dorm room watching the second plane crash into the South Tower, I could not help but think about that summer before high school. While I watched the towers fall, by God's grace I could not help but question my trajectory and the inevitable end of my future. Just five years earlier, I had been in those very buildings. On a mission trip. Surrendering my life to gospel ministry.

Not knowing what else to do, I opened a drawer and found a Bible I had reluctantly accepted from a campus ministry in the university courtyard a few months earlier. I began to read the Word of Life prayerfully for the first time in years, and light started to break forth. In the following weeks and months, God began to work in my heart. That Christmas, I returned home, and God set me on a new path.

Post tenebras lux—"after darkness, light." In moments of darkness, people are drawn to the light. Against the backdrop of darkness, light shines even brighter. As each Christmas approaches, I am reminded of my journey back to Christ, "the light of the world" (John 9:5). Perhaps you or a loved one is walking in a season of darkness. In moments of difficulty, disease, and even death, it's vital to remember that the God of light is always at work. In him, the darkness cannot overcome, because it does not have the last word (John 1:5). While we may not know what the future holds, we know who holds our futures. And there is no shadow of change in him (James 1:17). ✨

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