

January 7, 2025

Psalm 139:11-12

The devotions this week are written by Lisa Liou. Lisa is the founder and executive director of All Gen Movement, a Christian ministry dedicated to healing the generations and renewing the Church. She previously served over 20 years with InterVarsity, most recently as Regional Director in the Western US. She is married to Jeff, an ordained CRC minister, and together they live in Monrovia, CA with their two teenagers.

*If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

As we begin this devotional on the theme of light, consider lighting a candle.

Psalm 139 is famous for teaching us that God knows everything about us and even knit us in our mother's wombs. The Psalmist goes to great lengths to express that God's presence is with us always. Here in these verses, he highlights this truth even when we feel concealed and swallowed up by darkness. If God is always with us and God is light, then how can we be in the darkness?

The Psalm even takes poetic license to say that with God's presence night will shine and darkness will be like light. Have you ever heard of a shining night? Or a light darkness? Of course not! The existence of the one (light) means the other cannot exist (dark).

This does not mean that we do not go through some truly dark experiences in life. This world has pain, brokenness, and evil and we humans experience all of it. St. John of the Cross, a saint from the 1500s, coined the term, "dark night of the soul," to explain the spiritual experience of a season of prolonged darkness and emptiness. Countless Christians have been helped by his writings validating this experience. Likewise, my friend, Jean Neely, is coming out with a book entitled, Christ in the Abyss. It is an exploration of finding Christ with her in the darkness of her bipolar diagnosis.

It's not that darkness is not real. It is just that Christ is with us in it, even when we are somehow blocked from experiencing Christ's light and love in a "dark night of the soul."

In other words, if darkness feels like the absence of God or hiddenness from God, it is an illusion. God is everywhere with us, bringing God's light. We cannot always feel it, but it is always true.

How do you feel about God's presence with you? Does it feel near or far? Do you relate to experiencing God's light or are you experiencing darkness where you cannot sense the light?

Whatever you are facing, I invite you to picture Jesus in a scene from your current life circumstances. What scenario or concern is occupying your day. Ask Jesus where he is or where he was when that is happening.

As you do, imagine him as the light in the dark places of your life. Bring this picture with you as you go into your day.

We'll conclude once again with our prayer. As you breathe in say, Light of the world, and as you breathe out say, let your light shine.