

Welcome!

- ✓ *Grab a cup of coffee and breakfast.*
- ✓ *Say hello to someone you don't know.*
- ✓ *We'll gather at 10:20am.*

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Preparing our Hearts for Worship

Psalm 112:1-8

Praise the Lord. Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands.

***Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.***

Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever.

***Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate
and righteous.***

*Good will come to those who are generous and
lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.
Surely the righteous will never be shaken; they
will be remembered forever.*

***They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts
are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.***

*Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.*



Light in the Darkness

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light." - Isaiah 9:2

Response to Hillside

“We were pursuing Hillside because that is where we thought God wanted us to be. Ultimately, it’s not about Hillside. It’s about God.

We just want to be wherever He is and wherever He wants us to be. If Hillside is not the plan, now or ever, we will just keep doing what we’re doing in our little outpost of the kingdom of God (known as

Elixir Brew Co.), bringing the love, hope, and grace of God, found in Jesus Christ, and providing gospel rest to weary travelers.

God is forcing us to keep it simple, at least for now, and we're OK with that. The reality is that there are blessings and challenges to both sides of the Hillside coin.

If God is with us, then we're good either way."

How to respond in times of darkness

1. *“If God cares about me, **why** am I going through this?”*
2. *“If God is sovereign, **why** did He let this happen?”*

Remember... Immanuel (God with us)

*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."* - Psalm 139:11-12

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. **Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness**, but will have the light of life."
- John 8:12*

Remember... God creates in the dark

1. In the darkness... **the world** was formed.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light... And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so.” – Genesis 1:1-3, 9

Remember... God creates in the dark

2. In the darkness... **you** were formed.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.” – Psalm 139:13-15



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Remember... God creates in the dark

3. In the darkness... **faith** is formed.

*“Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold,** which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” - 1 Peter 1:6b-7*

Remember... God creates in the dark

4. In the darkness... **Jesus** was born.

Worshipping in the Dark

“To worship in the depth of sorrow —it is indeed an arduous thing. Yes, and therein lies the blessing; it is the test of perfect faith... My goal is God Himself, not joy, nor peace, nor even blessing, but Himself, my God.”

— Mrs. Charles C. Cowman

Relational Intimacy

“Intimacy happens in the dark.”

Darkness into Light

Light into darkness
transforms
darkness into light.

A woman with short, wavy grey hair is shown from the chest up, looking upwards and slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark blue or black turtleneck sweater under a dark jacket. Her right hand is raised, with fingers slightly spread, as if gesturing or reaching towards something. The background is a blurred forest scene with green foliage and tree trunks. A white rectangular border is superimposed over the right side of the image, containing the title and author's name.

SONGS *of* SUFFERING

JONI EARECKSON TADA

Closing Thoughts

Our disappointments in life are a result of God's path being different from our expectations.

The journey of faith is of God blowing up our expectations and making Him our ultimate expectation.

Closing Thoughts

When God is our expectation, and when we know that God rules, reigns, creates, and embraces us intimately in the darkness, we experience His lovingkindness and can do what we never thought possible in the darkest times of life... worship (and even with joy). And as we worship, we experience like no other times in life...

Closing Thoughts

Immanuel, God with us.

- Matthew 1:23

The Blessing

*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel (which
means 'God with us'). – Isaiah 7:14*

*The birth of Christ is living proof that
God is with you, God loves you, and
God is for you.*