

Heart Shades

Throw open the shades of your heart and let the sunshine of God's love shine in; you will not regret it. Inside, it is cold and dark without His love.

I sleepily rose from my chair and opened the window shades. The sun was still below the horizon, but the light was chasing the shadows away. Then I was struck by the thought of throwing open the shades of my heart to let the sunshine of God's love shine in. What does that mean for me? Does it mean casting off doubts and fears, and walking forward in faith? Is it not becoming vulnerable to God and to others?

Our house sits close to the country road with big windows. When we open the shades at our house, anyone who drives by can see inside, especially if it is dark outside and the lights are on. It is a welcome sight to come home to my house in the dark and see the light shining in the windows like a beacon, inviting me to come in. If there is only darkness in the windows, it makes the house look cold and lifeless. It is the light inside that creates the welcome invitation to come inside and experience the atmosphere of warmth and love. This is similar to having the light and love of God in our hearts. It is the light inside which makes our hearts welcome and inviting to others.

For some reason, I do not care to be home in the dark with the shades open. It feels so vulnerable, like we cannot see who is out there and maybe looking in. Not that it matters so much, but there is uncertainty with darkness that is not present in the light. It may not bother some folks, but I do not feel comforted to see those big, dark windows with the night just on the other side of them. We were not created to see in the dark like some creatures are. God created us to be creatures of light. Darkness cannot stand up to light; light always pushes it away; darkness is always forced to surrender to the light. Darkness brings fear and unrest, but the light and freedom of God, drives them away.

There are times and places to block the darkness of the world. This may involve protecting our families from the darkness of sin in the world. Yet our hearts need to also radiate out the light and love of God into the darkness of the world. People need to be able to see the light of God's love shining from our hearts. When we have the candle of God's love burning in our hearts, no shade can keep it from shining through.

Sometimes, my wife opens the windows to let the outdoor refreshing breezes blow through, purging the house of old, stale air. The windows of our hearts need to be open not only for the sunlight of God but also to experience the refreshing breezes of His blessings. This will take out the stale air of self-preservation and self-doubt, and our spiritual house becomes filled with the fragrance of God.

Sometimes when we go to bed at night, my wife asks me if I can smell the clean sheets which she hung outside to dry. There is something refreshing when she does this; you can tell they are crisp and have that clean outside smell. I believe when we live our lives with our hearts window open and shades up, that same tell-tale sign will be there. A crisp, clean smell, that when our neighbors and friends enter our heart, they can tell we have been in contact with God. Oh, that it was that way always, but alas, how often I keep my window shades down and people out. So often I keep

my shades of petty thoughts and self-protection down. This not only blocks others out, but it also blocks out the blessing and sunshine of God.

This is all about choices; I can choose to keep the shades and windows of my heart closed, or I can open them. Opening them may not be easy, but with God's grace and power, it can be done. That is the way God wants it. He wants to shine his light into your heart and warm you with his love. He would like to show you how much He really loves you.

The Unlikely Writer

Jeff Goertzen 12/12/2024.