

Keep The Light Burning!

Psalm 119:105 (ESV)

**Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.**

I mentioned in a podcast that I wanted to share with you why I sign my personal emails with, “Keep The Light Burning!” Today, I want to give you some background and tell you a story that impressed me many years ago. Then I want to make a brief application.

I have a great fascination with the sea. My father was a career enlisted man of twenty-four years in the Navy and so, we generally lived by the ocean while I was growing up. I can stand by the ocean waves and stare out to sea for hours – I know that because I have.

Along with the allure of the sea, I am also captivated by lighthouses. Over the years, lighthouses have stood vigil by the ocean. They bid farewell to departing vessels and greet those who return. Year in and year out they stand watch, giving direction and safety to the ships. In the bygone eras Lighthouse Keepers were indispensable to the safety of seagoing vessels. They and their families were sometimes the only assistance some seamen would have.

In the mid-19th Century, Abbie Burgess did a remarkable feat as the young daughter of a Lighthouse Keeper named Samuel Burgess. He was given the position of tending the twin lighthouse towers at the Matinicus Rock Lighthouse, Maine.

In January of 1856, Mrs. Burgess, an invalid, was ill, so Mr. Burgess decided to go to shore for medicine and other needed supplies. In order to go, he had to entrust his oldest daughter with the important role of keeping the lighthouses in his absence. As he pushed away in his rowboat he called to his daughter and said, “Keep the lights burning, Abbie”.

Lighthouse keeping was no easy task on good days. The lights had to be maintained. The wicks had to be trimmed. The lenses had to be kept clean of ocean spray. The keeper had to carry heavy buckets of oil up the stairs to burn in the lights. For Abbie, not only was there work in the lighthouse, but she would have to take care of her family and the animals on their island. But it gets even more difficult.

While her father was away, a storm rushed in from the sea. For about four weeks Abbie’s father was unable to return to the island, the lighthouses, and his family. Supplies on the island ran dangerously low. Abbie’s mother drifted in and out of consciousness as the storm raged. Their living quarters flooded and the family had to seek higher ground and moved into one of the lighthouses.

Yet, all through the storm, day and night, the lighthouses’ beams could be seen. If any ship was caught in the storm, they would be warned of dangerous rocks and reefs. The towers’ patterned flashes would identify their location. For those weeks, Abbie kept the lights burning!

I am impressed with the grit of that sixteen year old girl and her commitment to the task before her. That ultimately leads me to Jesus and the task before Him which He passed to us.

Jesus is THE light of the world (John 8:12). He gives safety and direction. His beam is an unmistakable pattern and message of love and acceptance. After his death, burial and resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples their marching orders to finish carrying out His mission. We call this the “Great Commission”. In this commissioning, we are to make disciples throughout the world (Matthew 28:18-20). In so doing, we are to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) and “Keep the Light Burning” in our age to keep His message fresh and new.

I borrowed “Keep The Light Burning!” as my signature for emails and letters. It reminds me of the light of Jesus in our world of darkness. It reminds me that light, even a small amount of light, is more powerful than the darkness. Yet, it is up to us to keep that light burning so darkness can be overcome by light.

John 1:5 (ESV) reads:

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Are you afraid of the dark? Keep The Light Burning!

The Psalmist points out in Psalm 27:1 (ESV):

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Let's keep the light of God burning in our world.

- The Light of God's word
- The Light of Genuine knowledge of America
- The Light of Freedom that comes from God

Keep The Light Burning!

Dr. Perry Greene