

Lead Pastor of New Season and President of the NHCLC

SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ

Foreword by Roma Downey

Shining God's Beauty,
Truth, and Hope
into a Darkened World

BE LIGHT

A black and white portrait of Samuel Rodriguez, a man with dark hair, wearing a suit and tie. He has his hands clasped in a prayer position in front of his chest. The background is plain white.

Praise for
Be Light

“Sammy Rodriguez is *light*. In this darkening hour in the world, God has raised up a godly man who is passionate spiritually, blessed intellectually, and gifted in leading masses of people. Through his book *Be Light*, he calls us to know what we believe, to stand for it courageously, and to change the world! Get this book. Share it with others. Let’s change the world together.”

—DR. RONNIE FLOYD, president, Southern Baptist Convention
and senior pastor, Cross Church

“I believe God’s hand is on Sam Rodriguez as a prophet to our generation, and his message in *Be Light* comes at a time when the world we live in seems dark in so many ways. Delivered in thirty short, easy-to-read chapters, his insights, thoughts, and prophetic words will inspire you to be light.”

—ROBERT MORRIS, founding senior pastor at Gateway Church
and best-selling author of *The Blessed Life*, *The God I Never Knew*,
and *Truly Free*

“As my friend Sammy Rodriguez passionately shares, our mandate as believers in Jesus Christ is to be light in this dark world—together becoming a shining ‘city set on a hill that cannot be hidden.’ His use of Scripture, scientific facts, and profound reflections will challenge you to pierce the darkness and radiate God’s love and grace. Light exposes danger and reveals the best way. As we allow the light of Jesus to shine through us, we will bring glory to Him and hope to a world in great need.”

—JAMES ROBISON, founder and president of LIFE Outreach
International and founder and publisher of *The Stream*

“What a book! Sam Rodriguez is definitely one of those few voices God raises for a generation. His clarity, insight, and passion leave no doubt he has heard

from heaven. Even though we know darkness is increasing, the light of the church will arise far higher and brighter. This book will only cause the ‘great light’ to shine brighter and brighter to those sitting in darkness.”

—PHIL PRINGLE, founder and president of C3 Church International
and senior minister of C3 Church, Sydney, Australia

“Sammy Rodriguez is a dynamic leader. His influence impacts other leaders, both spiritually and politically. Yet his compassion touches the hurting, the marginalized, and the underrepresented. His message is compelling. He does not just articulate problems; he also gives solutions. His book, *Be Light*, is a must-read if you are tired of the darkness. Share it with your friends and help turn on the light.”

—DR. ALTON GARRISON, assistant general superintendent,
Assemblies of God USA

“Sam Rodriguez is a genius and a kind of prophet to our time. When he speaks, the world shakes and I listen. The truth is, you can’t afford to not read this book.”

—JOHNNIE MOORE, president, The KAIROS Company

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*To my two gifts, Liam and Landon Samuel.
You changed my life and soon, in Christ,
you will change the world.*

Contents

Foreword by Roma Downey xi

- 1 Be Light! 1
When light stands next to darkness, light always wins!
- 2 Knowing Light 9
What you know is more important than what you feel.
- 3 Overcoming Darkness 15
When life throws you rocks, build an altar.
- 4 We Emit What We Absorb 21
You are what you tolerate.
- 5 Increasing Our Internal Temperature 27
He who wrote the law with one finger gives us grace with both hands.
- 6 The Law of Reflection 35
God does not look for those who have it all. He looks for those who are willing to surrender it all.
- 7 Refraction: Bending Light and Bending Lives 43
The size of your praise is proportional to the hell God freed you from.
- 8 Why Is the Sky Blue? 49
There is a difference between existing and living.
- 9 Burn Bright 55
What you can't shake off, Jesus washes off!
- 10 LASER-Focused for the Lord 61
God does not call the perfect; He calls the willing.
- 11 We Must Have Oil for Our Lamps 67
Doubt amplifies darkness. Fear attracts darkness. Unforgiveness is darkness.
- 12 Shining Brightly in a World of Brilliance 73
Surround yourself with people who speak into you and not about you.

- 13 No Lucky Stars, Just God's Heavenly Bodies 81
I am who I AM says I am.
- 14 When the Jar Breaks, Our Lamps Will Shine 87
God does great things with broken pieces!
- 15 No Half-Life 93
There is no such thing as comfortable Christianity.
- 16 The Inefficiency of Incandescence 99
While God does not remember our sins, He never forgets His promises.
- 17 "Light Bringers" for a New Generation 105
When you serve God with what you *have*, He will give you what you *need*.
- 18 The Lightning Flash 111
What you survived last season will determine what you will conquer this season.
- 19 Celestial Light 117
You can't speak like heaven and look like hell, and you can't speak like hell and look like heaven.
- 20 The Brightest Magnetic Objects 123
Whatever you give to God, He will crucify it, resurrect it, deliver it, heal it, or multiply it.
- 21 Light and Our Crown 129
Your testimony is proof that the devil is a liar.
- 22 Let the Wind Blow on Us 137
The will to "hold on" and the power to "be still" are as important as the will to "let go" and the power to "move forward."
- 23 Earthquake Light 143
When God removes it, He always replaces it with something better.
- 24 The Light of Massive Collisions 151
You must learn to "get over" before you "take over."
- 25 Lightships 159
You have to learn to sing in the desert before you dance in the promised land.
- 26 Fire! 165
Our faith stands measured not by what we do when heaven falls upon us but rather by what we do when hell stands next to us.

27 Safelight 173

What you say “no” to will determine what God says “yes” to.

28 The Milky Way 179

You may not receive it when you expect it, but once you get it, it will be bigger than you expected!

29 The Church Is the Light 187

We are not Google, Ford, Microsoft, or even Starbucks.
We are the church of Jesus Christ, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us!

30 To Be Light and Shine Forever 195

Be holy, be filled, be one, Be Light, and change the world!

Acknowledgments 204**Notes 205**

Foreword

Go ahead.
Strike a candle in a pitch black room.

The room can be the size of a baby's nursery or the size of a whole city block; it doesn't matter. In the blink of an eye, you'll be reminded of the power of a single, flickering flame.

No sea of darkness—no matter how intense—is any match for a tiny bit of light.

A midnight fire can be seen from outer space.

A single match can be seen for miles.

In fact, imagine that single match doubled and then doubled again. The light blazes even brighter with every added flame. Soon it's fifty people—then a hundred, all with their candles held high. Before you know it, the darkness is fully overcome by the light.

Jesus must have been thinking of this when He told His followers, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14).

Of a million possible analogies, He chose to call his followers “light.” You might say He called them to be “light workers.”

For my entire adult life, I've made being a “light worker” my personal and professional mission. I've always believed that *it's more powerful to light a candle than to curse the darkness.*

For my husband, Mark Burnett, and myself, we've realized our mission as “light workers” by producing content that families can watch together.

Content that lifts people up and inspires them to press on.

Content that reminds the world of stories that reveal the best in us.

Content that celebrates all that is good about our sometimes dark world.

We've also had the privilege of telling the story of Jesus—the ultimate

“light worker”—on the History Channel through *The Bible*, on NBC through *A.D. The Bible Continues*, and on big screens around the world through *Son of God* and *Ben Hur*.

What a privilege it is to be a “light worker.”

In the life and ministry of our dear friend, the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, we have always found inspiration and a kindred spirit.

He’s a “light worker” too (like few we’ve ever met).

He is a beautiful reminder to us all that when we share the message of Jesus, the candles of others are lit and more and more darkness is driven out of our world.

Our prayer is that this excellent book will inspire millions—including you—to *Be Light*.

—Roma Downey, producer, celebrated actress, president
and chief content officer at *LightWorkers Media*
(a division of MGM Studios)



Be Light!

When light stands next to darkness,
light always wins!

Let there be light!

It is not a coincidence that the first time the universe heard the uttered words of God, the message was not “let there be joy,” “let there be peace,” or even “let there be love.” The voice of the Sovereign, the Divine, the Glorious said, “Let there be light.”

God always begins by turning the lights on.

Life requires light.

Faith requires light.

We cannot deny we live in dark times. Some argue that we live in the blackest hour, darkened by sin, immorality, moral relativism, spiritual apathy, cultural decadence, infanticide, racism, pornography, poverty, false prophets, watered-down preaching, hypocrisy, unbridled consumerism, voyeurism, materialism, secular tyranny, religious extremism, terror, discord, division, strife, hatred, violence, jealousy, intolerance, and unbelief.

Did I miss anything?

Yet, while we cannot deny the canopy of disillusionment hovering upon our current day and age, there exists an undeniable physical and spiritual reality poised to serve as the impetus igniting hope, exposing love, and reintroducing grace. What might that be?

Simply stated, *when light stands next to darkness, light always wins!*
Jesus, while speaking to His followers, said,

A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.
(Matthew 5:14–16)

Joyce Smith did not just embrace this truth; she lived it out. On January 19, 2015, Joyce ran into a hospital room that was the quintessential corridor of darkness. The horrific reality was that her fourteen-year-old son, John, was dead.

A few hours prior, young John, accompanied by two other friends, had played on top of Lake Sainte Louise in Missouri. Warm temperatures had thawed the ice, providing a precarious circumstance that led to the three boys falling into a frozen lake. While the other boys escaped the freezing water, John did not emerge. His body was discovered fifteen minutes later—no pulse, lifeless . . . and darkness prevailed over the face of the deep.

Immediately, first responders rushed John to the nearest hospital, Saint Joseph West, where the head emergency-room doctor, Kent Sutterer, stood waiting with his team. Approximately one dozen physicians, technicians, nurses, and paramedics worked for another twenty minutes to no avail.

Later Dr. Sutterer wrote in a personal letter recording the event, “The boy had remained pulse-less for forty minutes—plus transportation time—the better part of an hour.” After attempts to raise the boy’s temperature failed, Dr. Sutterer determined the time had arrived to declare John Smith dead. He asked to bring the boy’s mother into the room.

And darkness prevailed over the face of the deep.

Joyce Smith rushed to her son’s bedside. Seeing his gray and motionless body, Joyce refused to embrace the darkened reality, to acknowledge that her son was gone. At a recent Bible study class she had been instructed to believe in

a God who can do what He says He can do. Joyce had walked into an emergency room filled with darkness, but she exposed the light of faith, hope, and love. Without hesitation, Joyce opened her mouth, raised her voice, and said, “Lord, Holy Spirit, just give me back my son!”

In other words, “Let there be light!”

God’s Spirit empowers us to go from existing in the natural to experiencing the supernatural.

Darkness was met with the brightness of faith, hope, and love. Instantly, a technician said, “We’ve got a pulse!” The atmosphere shifted; the room now filled with the light of joy and peace. Dr. Sutterer wrote, “That boy’s heart was jump-started by the Holy Spirit listening to the request of a praying mother. . . . I know that God has given us a gift. . . . I was privileged to witness a miracle.”¹

Since then I’ve met John Smith and had the privilege of speaking to a healthy, healed, holy, happy young man. I asked him, “Do you realize that you died?”

“Yes sir,” he responded.

“Why? Why did God give you back your life?” I asked.

“Because God has a great purpose for me,” John answered.

What’s John’s purpose? Simply stated, I believe it’s like your purpose and mine, to Be Light. We all go through trials, tribulations, and tests. The egregious and extreme canopy of darkness, which is death itself, may not be what we have individually confronted. Nevertheless, we have all, without exception, confronted darkness—be it spiritual, physical, in relation to our finances, in our families, or in our thoughts. To a great degree, we are all survivors of moments and seasons of darkness.

Yet here we still are. Why? For the same reason John Smith breathes today: God has a great purpose for you and me.

This book serves that very purpose: to expose the light that God has deposited, equipping us with the necessary spiritual and intellectual tools, not to fail or just survive, but to thrive. This book will engage, empower, and enrich you

to Be Light, to shine, and to change your world. For we know for certain that “a city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.”

In other words, if you have the light, don't hide it. Let it shine!

Our challenge is to remove the bowl of apathy, complacency, acquiescence, and fear and once again lay claim to the lamp stand of righteousness so that we may shine before all people.

I am compelled to ask, what or who is trying to hide your light? In your life, what is the name of the proverbial bowl? For we cannot deny that there exists a spiritual battle to turn off your light.

Forget Harry Potter and Hogwarts! Based on what the Bible tells us, we know there are real spirits attempting to place a bowl on our light and fill us with darkness. The spirit of Pharaoh is alive, holding people captive in the Egypt of bondage and fear.

The spirit of Goliath still lives, mocking and intimidating the children of God.

The spirit of Jezebel still makes men and women hide in caves because of sexual perversion and manipulation.

The spirit of Absalom is dividing homes, churches, and relationships.

The spirit of Herod is killing the young through abortion, violence, infanticide, poverty, and sex trafficking—murdering dreams and vision.

Yet I have news for you. There is a Spirit more powerful than all these spirits combined! To Be Light requires acknowledgement that the most powerful Spirit alive today is not the spirit of Pharaoh, Goliath, Jezebel, Absalom, or Herod. The most powerful Spirit on our planet is the Holy Spirit of Almighty God, the Spirit of the Word that became flesh, the eternal Light that pushed back darkness with grace and love:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1–5, NIV 2011)

So to every narrative and spirit that exists for the purpose of obstructing our God-given purpose and hiding His grace-filled light in each and every one of us, I say the following:

- For every Pharaoh there must be a Moses.
- For every Goliath there must be a David.
- For every Nebuchadnezzar there must be a Daniel.
- For every Jezebel there must be an Elijah.
- For every Herod there must be a Jesus. And . . .
- For every devil that rises up against you, there is a mightier God who rises up for you!

It is time to remove the bowl.

It is time to throw off whatever life or hell has placed upon your light.

It is time to join me on a thirty-day journey of information and inspiration. This journey will not just inspire you, but it will also equip you to Be Light. For at the end of the day it takes

- conviction to repent,
- courage to speak truth,
- holiness to see God,
- faith to move mountains,
- love to change the world, and
- light to push back darkness.

For when light stands next to darkness, *light always wins*.



This book is centered on two powerful declarations: “Let there be light” and “You are the light of the world.” The first pronouncement releases the power of

light into the void. The second proclaims that we are creatures who are generative and reflective of an everlasting light.

We know that light fills our universe and that darkness always threatens. Yet we have a truth that has already been declared about us and that helps us solve the riddle of existence as it gives us definition and purpose: you are the light of the world. This sentence is a life metaphor that affirms a deep truth about every one of us: there is an inextinguishable light within each of us, a light that can penetrate and even eliminate the darkest places.

How do we embody light? If we are to Be Light, we must first understand its remarkable complexities. This book challenges you to take thirty days to begin living, even thriving, as you discover your destiny to Be Light. We are embarking on a journey together to understand the nature of light—a mysterious, powerful force—its laws, its attributes, and its power. Along the way you will undoubtedly be surprised by the parallels we can draw between the light around us and the light that is in us. We can be certain that in the discovery that comes with the study of this eternal substance, we will find something eternal and true within ourselves.



This is a book about the light of the world and how those who name the name of Jesus get to represent Him—even to be the light. And this is also a book about light, that constant in our lives that flows from the sun and other heavenly bodies but also comes from man-made sources we control by flipping switches. Light makes our lives so pleasant—where would we be without it? Light chases darkness away. It makes our sight possible. Without light we are lost in a cold world.

In examining the properties of light, I have found many intriguing insights that help me understand what it means, spiritually, to Be Light. Like all facets of creation, light reveals clues about God and His characteristics, so understanding more about light helps us know more about Him. In the next twenty-

nine chapters, we will discover some of the remarkable laws that govern light, and we'll consider the striking parallels we can draw to our own lives as we attempt to be lights in this world. We will also consider darkness, which is light's enemy that threatens to extinguish our power to bring the hope and life inherent to light.

Together as we journey through this book, we will look at the intriguing qualities of light. And we will assemble these qualities meaningfully into a spiritual matrix that guides us to become light in our world.

Reflection

Rise Up and Be Light!

No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.

—Luke 11:33, NIV, 2011

Be Light and Walk like Enoch

Be Light and Believe like Abraham

Be Light and Dress like Joseph

Be Light and Stretch like Moses

Be Light and Shout like Joshua

Be Light and Dance like David

Be Light and Fight like Gideon

Be Light and Pray like Daniel

Be Light and Build like Nehemiah

And Be Light and Live like Jesus!



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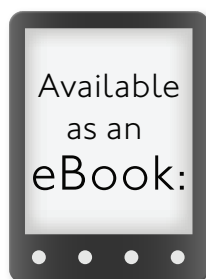
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