

Foreword by Madison Prewett Troutt

ALLYSON GOLDEN

ARISE  
AND

SHINE

HOW TO BE THE LIGHT THAT  
IGNITES HOPE IN A DARK WORLD



**SNEAK  
PEEK**

SAMPLE ONLY

# ARISE AND SHINE

How to Be the Light That Ignites Hope in a Dark World

**ALLYSON GOLDEN**

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Nana and Papa, Mom and Dad,  
your light ignited the light within me.

My sweet husband, Michael,  
you've helped keep the light in me aflame when  
the Enemy wanted to put it out.

Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.  
See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the LORD rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.

—ISAIAH 60:1-2

# FOREWORD

**STATISTICS SHOW THAT ALMOST** three in five girls report feeling sad or hopeless almost every day, and nearly 30 percent of teen girls reported in 2021 that they seriously considered suicide.<sup>1</sup> A hopelessness epidemic is happening around us, and for many of us, it's happening inside of us. We're wrestling with thoughts like, *How did I get here? Where are you, God? Do you even care? What's the point of living?*

For me, the lies, the darkness, the hopeless feelings that nothing will ever change have ruled over my mind more times than I can count. A few of those phases include getting cheated on, being taken advantage of sexually, feeling betrayed by a best friend, being stuck in a job I hated, feeling ridiculed on live television, getting bullied and canceled on social media, walking through suffering with someone I love, and losing a loved one. I have had many seasons of doubt, discouragement, and deep darkness.

I know what it's like to feel stuck. I know what it's like to believe the lies. I know what it's like to be bound by the darkness of

shame and fear. I'm guessing you picked up this book because you do too. (Cue "We're All in This Together" from *High School Musical*.) Just like I did, you will feel comforted and encouraged in reading this book, that no matter where you are in your faith journey, no matter what you are battling, you are not alone.

Has anyone ever asked you, "Do you want the bad news or good news first?" Well, I am going to give you the bad news first: *This world is broken and dark*. Okay, now to the good news: *Jesus is light*. I found the Light. And you can too. You can find a glimpse of hope and search for light amid your darkness. You can break free from the lies and walk in the freedom and light that God has for you. And this book can be that first step!

When Allyson and I met at a Christian retreat in December 2020, I immediately knew there was something different about her. She had a fire in her eyes, a big smile packed with joy, and peaceful and composed confidence. I felt, *This girl has probably never had a bad day in her life!* We didn't get to spend a lot of time together at this retreat, but I began following her on social media because I had to know more about her. She shared on social media some of the dark days she was experiencing, low moments she was walking through, and the hope and truth she clung to amid it all. I was so encouraged by her vulnerability and the way she encouraged others with her own pain. It was so evident her heart was surrendered to Jesus and that the light within her was much bigger than her.

When she reached out and asked me to write this foreword, I was honored and excited to play even a small part in this message. As I began reading this book, I was challenged and convicted. I texted her, "This message is full of hope and truth. I needed this!" Not only is this a message I need to be reminded of constantly, but also it is a message for you—and for everyone. In our world today, it's easy to believe the lies of the Enemy, follow

the cravings and passions of our flesh, and fall prey to conforming to the culture around us. In following the lies, ourselves, or even culture, we are left hopeless and confused. This book will point you back to the Light, the Truth, and the only One who can overcome and defeat the lies and darkness we all feel and face.

In this book, Allyson shares her experiences and story with humility, vulnerability, and authenticity. You will feel as if you are sitting across from her having coffee, realizing, *Oh she has had bad days too!* If you desire to break free from hopelessness and confusion and sin, grow in your faith, and walk out your purpose, this book is for you. If you desire to walk in faith and be bold in your beliefs and convictions, this book is for you. Not only will you be challenged in your faith, but you also will be empowered to take what you receive and experience to others.

*Arise and Shine* will encourage your heart and challenge your thinking. You will walk away from reading feeling empowered, equipped, and excited to live a life connected to the Light and ready to bring that light to others. You—yes, *you*—now have a purpose and a calling to rise up, know the truth, and share that truth. This book, filled with God’s Word, will remind you that it is the Lord alone that causes your light to shine!

For You cause my lamp to be lighted and to shine; The LORD  
my God illumines my darkness. (Psalm 18:28, AMP)

—MADISON PREWETT TROUTT, bestselling author of  
*Made for This Moment* and *The Love Everybody Wants*



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# **PART I**

# **DIMMED LIGHT**

At one time you lived in darkness. Now you are living in the light that comes from the Lord. Live as children who have the light of the Lord in them.

—EPHESIANS 5:8, NLV

# 1

## WHERE IS THE LIGHT?

### An Introduction

**I WILL NEVER FORGET** that night. Even though I was a trained pediatric nurse, no class or person could have prepared me for what happened.

During my drive to the hospital that evening, I prayed that God would guide me as I worked. I had just hit my year-and-a-half mark, so I was still a relatively new nurse. I prayed for a good patient assignment—meaning no more than the three patients I was already assigned that night—because, let’s be real, no nurse ever wants to have a hard shift.

As I took the elevator to my unit, I continued to ask God to equip me for the night. The first thing I typically do is head to the nurse’s station, sit down at a computer, and look at the whiteboard that has the nurses’ names next to our assigned patients. When I wrote down the room numbers of my patients, I noticed my name next to a patient who had been on the unit for many months. In most hospitals, nurses can request to be assigned to long-term patients since continuity of care is nice for the nurse and the patient. However, I had never requested this patient and

had taken care of him only once before. I looked around the station and noticed there were other nurses on duty who *had* requested this patient but had not been assigned to him, but I didn't say anything.

I jotted down pertinent information from the computer about all my patients onto the piece of paper nurses call our "brain," which I would carry around during my twelve-hour shift. I went into each of my patients' rooms, took their vitals, gave them their meds, reviewed the plan of care with them, and then began to do my charting. The last one on my rounds was the long-term patient. I knew he had gone through some really hard things. He was getting better physically but, unbeknownst to me, was still struggling emotionally. I didn't know him well, so when I was in his room, I didn't sense that anything was off. I gave him his medications at eight o'clock and left to allow him to get a good night's sleep. However, around eleven o'clock, his call light beeped. *He probably just has a headache and wants some Tylenol.*

When I opened the door to his room, an eerie silence greeted me. The lights were off, and as I flipped the switch on, I asked, "Is there anything I can get you? I saw that you called the nurse's station." I pulled the curtain back, and my heart leaped out of my chest as I realized that he had attempted to end his life and must have pushed the call button accidentally (or changed his mind) right before he passed out. I yelled for help and checked to make sure he still had a pulse. A co-worker ran in, realized what was going on, and called for more help. We initiated a code blue to get the ICU team to come quickly and continued to do everything we could to save him. By the grace of God, he lived and was okay.

As everything began to calm down, I walked out of the patient's room and . . . I lost it. I realized that *I* was not okay. I could not believe what had just happened. I was hyperventilating. I

could hardly get words to come out of my mouth, but the tears would not stop flowing. Another nurse took me into our break room so that I could have some space to try to pull myself together. I could tell I wouldn't be able to finish the shift. The charge nurse told me that I could go home, and my amazing co-workers took over my patients. I reached for my phone to call my husband and prayed that he would hear it ring. It was midnight, and I knew that driving home alone was not a good idea. When I heard him answer, I could hardly speak to ask him to come get me.

As I began to process what had happened, I couldn't help but question: *Why would this patient want to end his life? Why is there so much darkness in the world? And why was I assigned as his nurse that night, of all nights? Why me, God? What was the purpose in this?*

Unfortunately, this near disaster was not an isolated situation. Frontline workers and nurses like me see tragedy daily. Left unchecked, emotional stress can wear us down.

Several months after the episode with the patient who tried to take his own life, I was feeling worn down. As five o'clock hit one night and it was time to get up for work, I could barely get myself out of bed. It had been another rough shift the night before—this time with a different patient—and I had a hard time motivating myself to get up and do it all over again. I managed to brush my teeth, put on my scrubs, and throw my hair up in a bun. I headed downstairs to the kitchen where my husband had dinner on the table, along with my lunch packed and ready to go. I struggled to thank him because I was stuck in a negative mindset and didn't want to go back to the place where darkness loomed and negativity brewed.

I left the house with my backpack on, lunch in one hand and coffee in the other, anticipating the eight-minute drive to turn

into at least fifteen minutes with the good ole Southern California traffic. As I got in my car, I took a deep breath and pressed the button on my steering wheel to call my mom. I often called her on my way to work, especially when I needed to vent.

“Hi, Mom. Whatcha doin?”

She answered, “Oh, your dad and I just sat down to eat some salmon. Are you on your way to work?”

“Yes, and it is the last place I want to be right now,” I responded.

“I’m sorry, Allyson. How did you sleep, and how was your shift last night?” my mom asked.

“I slept well, but the shift was really rough.”

Always keeping the confidentiality of my patients in mind, I shared that I had taken care of a new patient who seemed to be losing hope. This girl was feeling lonely, lost, and frustrated because so much was now out of her control due to her paralysis.

I said, “On top of all the things I have to do for my other patients, I feel like I need to support this girl because she has no family or friends at her bedside. I’m trying to encourage her, but it’s hard when I’m feeling so discouraged myself.”

My mom responded, “I am so sorry. I’m sure you were exactly what your patient needed.”

“Thanks, Mom. Not only did I have that patient to take care of, but we had admissions come in from the emergency department that were non-accidental traumas. It’s so hard to see those, especially knowing that so many doctors, nurses, and families of these patients don’t know Jesus. I feel like I’m doing my best to keep myself together. But again, last night, I had to step outside to get some fresh air. It all just feels too heavy. And the hospital is short-staffed right now, so nobody has a good attitude.”

“That’s hard. I’ll be praying for your shift that the Lord will strengthen you to do what He has called you to do. Go and be a

light tonight.”

*What? Be a light? Has she been listening? That is the last thing I feel like doing right now. How in the world can there be any light in this situation? How can I be a light to others when I feel overwhelmed by the darkness?* It was too much. I had enough going on in my life. I had so many things to focus on while I was at work, and the negativity was constant. It felt impossible to be a light. However, instead of voicing my thoughts, I just said, “Okay, I’ll try. Thanks, Mom. Love you. Talk to you later.”

What about you? Does it ever feel impossible to be a light when your own life and circumstances are consumed with darkness and hardship? It seems like every day we are exposed to heart-shattering, life-altering, hard-to-process grief and suffering. Whether it is actively happening in our own lives or the lives of people we know, pain digs its way deep down into our hearts and lingers, producing an overwhelming, inescapable feeling of darkness. It’s like walking down a road on a cold night with no streetlights, no front porch lights, and clouds covering the light of the stars. We can’t see what’s in front of us, yet we know we have to keep going.

At this point in my life, the brokenness of the world weighed heavily on my shoulders. I felt like I had to carry everything I was experiencing at work, the weight of my own pain, and the pain of loved ones all on my own. I found it hard to release my burdens to God; I didn’t know how to hand over what I was feeling to Him. People often say, “Give God your burdens,” but all I could think was, *How do I do that? How can I stop feeling this way?* I felt that if one more burden was placed upon my shoulders, I would collapse and shatter into a million pieces. I questioned, *How do I keep going? How do I push through?* My mind and heart felt so overwhelmed.

Asking these questions scared me. I immediately thought that



I wasn't a strong enough Christian and that people would judge me for questioning. I feared others would look at me and think I was a phony. But these feelings were real. These were true questions that I asked myself and God. I realize now that I allowed myself to believe the lie that I shouldn't verbalize these thoughts and feelings. I questioned, *Why am I choosing to hide? Why are we not talking about these hard questions and how to live life amid the crises that surround us?*

Maybe this is where you are too. You feel weighed down by the shattering brokenness of the world or the temptations of the Enemy. Are you unsure how to give God your burdens? Are you questioning God's purpose for where He has you or what has happened to you? Do you feel alone in your questioning? You may desire to shine the light of Jesus but wonder how to do that when you struggle to see the light yourself, just like I did. How can we be lights for Jesus in a world that is consumed with darkness and led astray by the Enemy? How can we be lights while yearning desperately for the hope that Jesus's light brings for ourselves?

Well, my friend, I promise you that you're absolutely not alone. As I write this, I am thinking of you. I am so sorry. If I could sit across from you at coffee, I would reach out and give you a big hug. You've got a sister right here who sees and feels the pain you're dealing with. We could talk and share stories and tears, but I wouldn't let you leave our coffee date feeling like you are trapped in the darkness. Because, in fact, that is a complete lie from Satan. He comes to steal, kill, and destroy our hope, and he does everything he can to make us feel like light doesn't exist. And truly, it is so easy to believe the lies of the Enemy. His voice can seem louder than our own voice and even God's voice. But, my friend, no amount of darkness, absolutely no plans of the Enemy, can overcome the light that is within Jesus. Wherever God has you

right now, He is with you. His light is within you. And He is so eager to shine through you like only He can. And we're going to be talking a lot more about that in the pages to come!

I would be doing a disservice to the calling God has placed on my life if I were to let you walk away feeling like you were trapped in that darkness. So, since we cannot have an in-person coffee date, grab your favorite drink (I have mine!), and let's go over some truths together as you read this book. We are going to wrestle with the questions above. We will find answers to some and realize that for others, we will have to hold on to our faith tightly because we won't know the answers on this side of heaven. What I can tell you is that this book is going to equip you for moments when you feel unable to shine God's light. Your eyes will be opened to new ways of looking for light. By the end, you will be shining brighter than ever, and His light will be undeniably radiant everywhere you go, within you and around you.

This book is sectioned into three parts. In these first few chapters, we are going to hit on the real and raw feelings we experience as humans here on earth. I believe in the power of validating and sitting with our feelings. Feelings were created by the Lord for a reason. Don't let this scare you away. My friend, I know you have some things you need to let yourself feel. I certainly do. But as we move from the first part of this book into the second, you will not be left alone in your feelings. The second part is where the equipping will happen. While feelings are important, they aren't facts, and we can't let our feelings get in the way of the fullness the Lord has for us. The second part is where we will dive deep into God's Word, learn what the Bible says about light, and discover how we can tangibly apply His Word to our lives. As we move from the second part into the third, my hope and prayer is that you will feel inspired and ignited to go and do what you have learned. And not only that but also share it and ignite the light

of Christ within others.

At the end of each chapter, there will be a call to action titled “Arise and Shine.” These sections will provide you with tangible ways to apply what you have just read. They are filled with to-dos that will hopefully feel exciting for you to complete. After all, my heart in writing this book is for these words to not only take root in your heart but also to spring you forward into action. This world needs hope to be ignited, and you, my friend, will walk away being a light igniter!

So, what do you say? If it seems impossible to be a light for Christ at times, know that I have been there and still have hard moments where light feels hidden. But we are going to take this one step at a time and acknowledge along the way how difficult this journey can be. It isn’t something that changes in a moment. It is a lifelong learning process that will ebb and flow with new experiences. Get ready to stomp on the lies of the Enemy together as we discover and become confident in the truth that the Lord has spoken over us. Hang with me, friend. I care about you too deeply for you to stay in a place of darkness. Keep reading to discover what it means to fully live your calling to be a light for Christ.

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