

### ***The Power of Shadow***

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. I John 1:7 (ESV)

As a librarian, I am intrigued by patterns. I'm even more captivated by collections of patterns that repeat. I find that some life lessons acquire that type of echo in my life.

The power of shadow is one of those collected patterns. I was reminded of it recently when I was volunteering at local professional theatre and struggling with a particular bit of set painting. One of the challenges of scenic design is creating three dimensions on a two dimensional surface. My struggle was making a door have dimension. The concept of shadow is really the first lesson in most art classes. Start with a circle and begin shading until it becomes a sphere. Add a shadow and it becomes a globe. A face can be defined with a few lines to indicate shadow. In theatre and photography the concept is called dramatic lighting; part of a face or a set piece is turned toward the light and part is shadowed. This simple action can heighten the mood of a scene or indicate the character of the object. Likewise, fabric has richness and depth when it has folds and texture. On a summer's day in a pine wood or floating on a body of water, the concept is called dappling.

In each case, the beauty of the moment comes from the shadow. It defines the objects, it gives them life, it highlights some features and obscures others, it dazzles,

and it provides depth. Whenever that lesson creeps into my consciousness, I hear the words "walk in the light" whispered in my ear. I'm reminded of the shadows in life—the dark times I would like to forget, the mistakes, the injustices, the sorrows. When I step into the light, I can see how the shadows define the moment. They create character. They bring dimension.

And then there are the times I seem to be swallowed by the darkness. Then I remember that a shadow can only be formed when the light is blocked. If I'm turned away from the light, my shadow is before me, swallowing me. If I turn and look at the light, I can see the shadows for what they are: shapers, definers, highlighters. It is then that I realize the real power is not in the shadow, but in the Light.

Heavenly Father, let us walk in the light and be a light. Help us know the truths that Your light discloses. Let us take joy in the beauty and dimension the shadows define.



—Nate Farley

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