

His Shining Face

By Patrice Williams-Gordon

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Num 6:24-26 (*New International Version*)



"Lights, Camera Action!" The tape was rolling as I confidently fired away in glowing tones, passionately expressing my concepts on Positive Thinking. Then my thoughts were disturbed by the cold words of the director, "Cut!! Her face is shining!" The make-up crew rushed onto the set, powdering and wiping my face, so as to rid me of the *shine*. It was then I learnt that a shining face is not a welcoming attribute, when you are on camera.

However, on New Year's Eve, as I sat in church, being inspired by the sermon done by my favorite pastor, the concept of a shining face took on a new and positive flare.

In his closing remarks the pastor proposed for us the same wish that Moses proclaimed for the children of Israel, encouraging us to 'Keep God's face shining':

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

It took just a few moments for the enormity of that challenge to sink in, the realization that God's face was always on me was not very comfortable. To make matters worst it was shining on me, illuminating my being.

It's all right to have God's undivided attention when you are in need of His provisions, protection and assistance, but what of the off times? Repeatedly being on camera, made me acutely aware of how careful one needs to be when the lights are on you. At such times, you must profile your best words, actions and poise for as long as the lights shine on you, then breathe a sigh of relief when they are off and you can be yourself again. However, with God, the lights never stop shining! That can be frightening; there is no off time. So herein lays the challenge, Can I be constantly be on my best behavior? The challenge intensifies when I recalled that not even my thoughts are hidden from him.

Worship and serve him with a clean heart and a willing mind, for the Lord sees every heart and understands and knows every thought.

(1 Chronicles 28:9, The Living Bible)

It is not only what I do that is on display to Him but more so who I am at the core.

I was almost washed away in despair until I pondered the remaining portion of the wish, *"the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."*

Is it really possible to be under God's unswerving scrutiny and be at peace? It is possible, only because He gives you **His** peace.

- His peace reminds us that it is by His power that we can be good. "For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him." (Phil 2:13 NLT)
- His peace reminds us that if we err, he will always forgive; "But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. (1 John 1:9 TLB)
- His peace reminds us that he will direct my every move if we allow him; "...you will hear a Voice behind you say, "No, this is the way; walk here." (Isaiah 30:21-22 TLB)

So I embraced my pastor's closing wish, not with anxiety as often accompanies an impossible challenge but with excitement and anticipation. I am excited that God never turns His face away from me and I anticipate the drama that lies ahead in the power of his enabling peace that perpetually shines on me. So, confidently I say, "Camera, lights, Action, let the show begin!"

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