

## ENDORSEMENTS

“Rhonda Rhea lets Scripture enlighten us regarding the real Light and the amazing changes He can make in our lives. Laugh all along the way as you learn to let the changes He makes in you shine for the world to see.”—Thelma Wells, DD (Hon.), MMin, president of A Woman of God Ministries

“Rhonda has the unique ability to make the journey of transformation a delightful experience. You are going to love this book!”—Carole Lewis, First Place 4 Health national director

“Rhonda Rhea is the intersection of humor and reality. Rhonda’s positive, common-sense, biblical, and honest writing might tickle the funny bone, but it is also sure to encourage the heart and build and strengthen a life.”—Pam Farrel, author

“When Rhonda Rhea enters a room, the lights turn on! She exudes energy, joy, encouragement, and hope. Her signature humor and biblical wisdom are perfectly combined in *How Many Lightbulbs Does It Take to Change a Person?* This book will make you laugh out loud while pointing you to a transformed life.”—Carol Kent, speaker and author

“Rhonda Rhea sheds biblical light on how to steer clear of darkness and rev up for a spiritual supercharge. In a lighthearted, laugh-yourself-silly way, she reminds us to look to the God of light as our source for a life that really matters.”—Allison Bottke, author

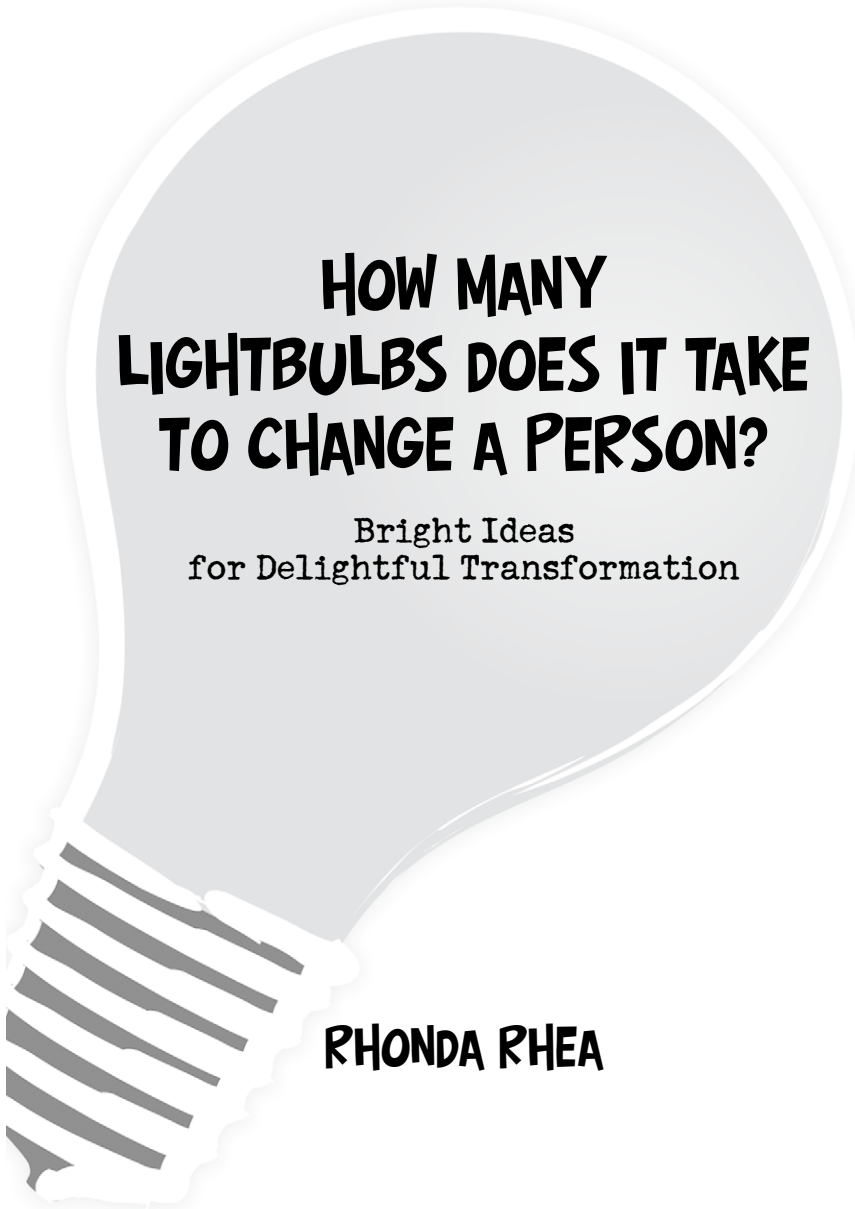
“Rhonda Rhea gives us her high-voltage humor along with a biblical charge to look to the light for the power to change, the power to live, the power to grow. Need a life-zap? It’s here!”—Patsy Clairmont, author

“A power-packed charge to look to the light of Christ and be changed. Rhonda Rhea has us laughing all along the journey and then uses Scripture as the high beam for our spiritual path. Find yourself laughing in the light!”—Babbie Mason, Dove Award-winning singer/songwriter, author, and TV talk-show host

“Rhonda Rhea makes me laugh. I mean sidesplitting, howling laughter. Then, she makes me think. And she makes me reevaluate. She stirs together a mixture of wit and wisdom that results in life change and real growth.”—Jennifer Kennedy Dean, The Praying Life Foundation

“Ever wished you had a guidebook for changing all those difficult people in your life, and make a few changes in your own life as well? Well, here it is fresh from the able and very funny pen of Rhonda Rhea. You’ll laugh, you’ll cry, you’ll give her plan a try!”—Martha Bolton, Emmy-nominated writer and author of 84 books

“Life-changing wisdom illuminated by Rhea’s wonderful wit found me turning the pages in anticipation of a much-needed giggle glowing with truth. Rhea’s ability to spotlight areas of our lives that need ‘enlightening’ while remaining self-transparent will encourage every reader, as it did me, to find perfect delight in walking in God’s light. This is a perfect reminder for any woman experiencing seasonal transitions . . . change happens but our God remains constant!”—Linda Goldfarb, author, speaker, radio/Web-TV host, founder of Live Powerfully Now Ministries



**HOW MANY  
LIGHTBULBS DOES IT TAKE  
TO CHANGE A PERSON?**

Bright Ideas  
for Delightful Transformation

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## **DEDICATION**

To my hubs and hero, Richie Rhea,  
with love and appreciation.

I can think of no one on this planet  
who has shone the light of Jesus into my life  
more brightly, more consistently, more lovingly.

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## INTRODUCTION



# ENLIGHTENING STRIKES

**Y**ou can fool some of the people all of the time. So mostly I like to hang out with those people.

OK, so I guess that's my way of confessing here at the get-go that I'm not always the brightest bulb in the fixture. The other day I thought I had a stroke of genius. Then I realized it was probably just a stroke.

If I do happen to have a big thought, and if it should strike suddenly, could we call that "en-lightning"? A thundering revelation maybe?

In Ephesians 1:18–19, Paul prays for our enlightening:

"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength."

Wow, how's that for an en-lightning bolt!

The Contemporary English Version describes that enlightening as “light” that will “flood your hearts.” There is only one way to find understanding and to be able to live the Christian life in successful obedience, and that is to let His light flood our hearts. Fruitful, joy-filled, victorious living happens only as we are spiritually enlightened through the truth of the Word of God and by the inner working of the Spirit of God.

I love the fact that God shines so much of His light through Scripture so that we can see—we can have understanding. There are almost 300 references to light in the Bible, the first in Genesis 1:3 and the last in Revelation 22:5.

In Genesis 1:3 we see light’s creation: “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” It was the very first day of creation. Then in Revelation 22:5 we read, “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.” From the first chapter of the Bible to the last chapter of the Bible, beginning to end—light!

All of us search for light. We seek enlightenment, understanding, answers. We seek hope. So many people grope through smothering spiritual darkness reaching for something to bring light into their lives. Some even think they’ve found it in other pursuits. After all, it would be easy for a blind person to think he’s found light if he’s never seen it or experienced it for himself.

What a privilege it is to look at true light. It’s a light that every single person on this planet needs—the real light found in Christ. The real light that *is* Christ. In John 8:12 Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Jesus tells us He is the Light of the world, then tells us we are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). Scripture really is packed with light. We’re told to walk in the light, work in the light, look to the light—light, light, and more light!

Our heavenly Father illustrates many things about Himself and about our relationship with Him using light. Light in the Bible often symbolizes the glory of God, His holiness, His wisdom, His favor, and

His direction in our lives. We see His light shining through a burning bush, a pillar of fire, a guiding star, and so much more. Check out the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9. Glorious!

Are you longing for a change? Are you getting weary in a grisly struggle to change something in particular in your life? Have you fought to change, seen that change occur finally in your life, only to find that it didn't last? Or are there changes you already know you need to make, but you're putting them off, shoving them to the back of your mind?

Then there were those changes that happened whether you were ready or not. Changes that weren't what you had in mind. No minute in life is exactly the same as the one before. Life is in a constant state of flux—a continual newness, every moment changing.

Those kinds of changes are inevitable. Sometimes there's even a choice as to whether the change of the moment will be a good one or a negative one. Do you see yourself making good choices for positive changes? I've heard it said that if you always do what you've always done, then you'll always get what you've always gotten. Progress requires change.

God-given enlightenment brings real change in every way. Lasting change. Reference books call light "luminous, radiant energy." As we look into His light and reflect on His Word, we can't help but get energized!

The God who is powerful enough to create light, then create the sun—the God who keeps the sun blazing and the stars and moon reflecting—that same God is powerful enough, caring enough, and detail-minded enough to light your way. He wants to show you the path of change, to empower that change, and He longs to light the way for you in His magnificent plan for your life.

Thank you, my friends, for stepping into this light journey with me. Let's let Scripture enlighten us regarding real light, and then we can look closely at changes we may need to make to be able to find perfect delight in walking in that light. By His grace and through His working, our lives can be changed—radically changed. We're talking about a stifling-darkness to brilliant-light difference. Then we can

look at how to shine that difference so the world can see. And I'm convinced that enlightening can strike even more than twice in the same place.

*Heavenly Father, I pray for my reader-friend, asking that You will use this book to turn on the light, revealing Yourself in some new and rich way. Father, if there is a need for saving light, I ask that You would grant the faith that's needed and let it shine through Your power and to Your glory. If one is struggling in a dark place, I ask that You would grant enlightenment and new joy. For the one struggling against change, I ask that You would grant comfort, wisdom, trust, peace. Lord, I ask that by the last chapter, each of us will know You better, love You more, and be ever ready to allow You to change us. Like a young plant, I ask that You would cause each of us to grow toward the light. Toward You, You, You! In the powerful name of Your Son, Jesus, our Light, amen.*

**PART 1**

**LIGHTBULB-OVER-THE-HEAD  
ENLIGHTENMENT**

**—UNDERSTANDING  
THE REAL LIGHT OF THE WORLD**



# GOD IS LIGHT



*“His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory” (Psalm 97:4, 6 KJV).*

I have a terrible memory. So whenever it's time to get a gift for someone, I have a hard time remembering what I've already given them. One friend told me I bought her the same birthday card two years in a row. The exact same card. So embarrassing. And remembering which gifts go where is getting trickier all the time with more people to buy for—and older brain cells to do the buying with.

That's why I was pretty excited when I got an email the other day suggesting a gift that I'm oh so very sure I've never given anyone. It was an advertisement for—are you ready for this?—a gift *defibrillator*. Yeah, nothing says love like a thousand volts to the cardiac muscle! Besides, how fun would it be to get to call in an order for a defibrillator and then tell the person you'd like to “charge it”?

## **PUT IT ON MY CHARGE**

All myocardial infarctions aside, anytime our heart is a little sluggish spiritually, it's unquestionably time to recharge. Clear! And anytime we need a recharge, there's no question who we can run to for that charge. The God of all power. The God who is Light.

Our God is the light of creation, the light that generated salvation, the light who illuminates the way we're to walk, the light that is wisdom, the light that provides, protects, defends, the light that reveals darkness and chases away that darkness, the light that changes us from the inside out. He is the light we are to reflect, the light that indwells us, works through us, loves others through us, forgives others through us, dissipates our fears, grants strength for every challenge. He is the light that shines joy in every circumstance, the light that infuses life with hope. He is the light, the object of our worship, the light that powers us up for enlightened living, the light that teaches us how to deal with darkness and even reveals our own darkness to us. He is the light who changes us and the light who keeps on changing us. Talk about a gift that keeps on giving!

## **TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE LIGHT**

How great is our God of light! He is the great I Am. He is the God who was in the beginning, is in the present, and always will be in the future. He is the God who created life and the one who sustains it. Is there anyone else we could look to for enlightenment? Is there anyone else who could rightly show us the way? Anyone else who could charge us up to live the life He created us to live?

First John 1:5–7 gives us the light message at full strength:

*“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 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, purifies us from all sin.”*

## **LIGHTBULB OVER THE HEAD**

Ready for some lightbulb-over-the-head enlightenment? Not necessarily the kind that will ensure you never double up on gifts, but the kind that will provide answers for living. True enlightenment comes as we know the God of light better and better, more and more.

Gifts come and go—whether you’re giving a gift defibrillator or a do-it-yourself IV kit (another great gift idea—after all, who wouldn’t want to be able to start his own saline drip?). We can’t begin to imagine the difference the Father makes in our lives as we better understand who He is.

## **IMAGINE THAT**

Did you ever have an imaginary friend when you were little? Since remembering is not my best skill, I can’t recall ever having one. I don’t think I ever thought of it. If I had, though, since I tend to like an audience entirely too much, I think I probably would’ve preferred an imaginary *entourage*.

Either way, I’m wondering now if I might’ve missed some of the magic of childhood. I can definitely see some advantages to an imaginary bud or two. Imaginary friends don’t get mad when you forget their birthdays. They don’t even have birthdays unless you want them to. They never interrupt. They don’t squish you if they sit on your lap. They never argue about which movie to watch. They never argue about anything. And by the way, when you go to the water park, your imaginary friend gets in totally free.

I can see a few limitations, however. Imaginary friends are pretty quiet—definitely not the greatest conversationalists. They’re unbelievably slow in taking their turn in checkers. Don’t even try double Dutch with your imaginary friends because rope turning is one of their undeniable weaknesses. They can’t even single Dutch.

## **I CAN ONLY IMAGINE**

Isn’t it sad that a lot of people think of God as sort of an imaginary friend? They think of Him when it suits them and how it suits them. But that’s no real concept of our God. He could not be more real. He is the standard for real. He is the one who makes real *real*. He created everything we see and the things we don’t see. He created us. And He’s not the quiet conversationalist an imaginary friend is. He speaks to us clearly and convincingly through His Word.

In Jeremiah 23:23–24 He says, “‘Am I only a God nearby,’ declares the LORD, ‘and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places

so that I cannot see him?’ declares the LORD. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth?’ declares the LORD.”

*The Message* phrases the last question this way: “Am I not present everywhere, whether seen or unseen?”

No, He is no imaginary friend. Whether we recognize His presence and power or not, He is still present and all-powerful—and He is still all we need. Closing our eyes to the light doesn’t mean it’s not there, gloriously shining.

## **POWERING UP OUR THOUGHT LIFE**

Why not spend time meditating on who He is, basking in His greatness? We’re instructed to ponder, even though we’re also told we can never truly grasp His greatness. Psalm 145:3 says, “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.” Even though no one can fathom how truly amazing He is, verse 5 (NLT) says, “I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles.”

There’s enlightening power in meditating on Him and on His goodness. It’s in His presence that we find faith, strength, courage, reassurance—and every ounce of power we need for living. Contemplating His presence is like a spiritual defibrillator for every heart!

Pondering the omnipresence of God that He declares to us in Jeremiah 23 is heavy thinking. But it’s heavy thinking that causes us to praise God all the more that His omnipresence comes with omnipower. And if we can just imagine a few new words, His omnimercy, omniprovision, omnilove, omni-*all!*

Let’s put that in our hearts—and charge it!



### **A LITTLE EXTRA LIGHT FOR THE PATH:**

*“And this is the message [the message of promise] which we have heard from Him and now are reporting to you: God is Light, and there is no darkness in Him at all [no, not in any way]. [So] if we say we are partakers together and enjoy fellowship with Him when we live and move and are walking about in darkness, we are [both] speaking falsely and do not live and practice the Truth [which the Gospel presents]. But if we [really] are living and walking in the Light, as He [Himself] is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses (removes) us from all sin and guilt [keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations].”*  
—1 John 1:5–7 (AMP)



# JESUS. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD



*“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).*

I’m not usually a late sleeper. If I climb out of bed too late in a day, I get up feeling like I’ve missed something. The other morning, though, after not sleeping all that well through the night, I slept in until well after eight o’clock. Right, probably not so criminal in the grand scheme of things. I have teenagers who would be extremely unimpressed. In a sleep-off they could outsleep me up one side and down the other. But I still got up feeling instantly behind schedule and a little miffed at myself because of it.

By noon I realized that staying aggravated at myself was making me a little aggravated at everybody else too—magnifying the “annoyance factor”—and frustrating my overwhelming schedule all the more. Is there an opposite for a party attitude?

I did find myself dwelling on skills I wanted to cultivate. But that’s not as redeemable as it might sound since the skill I most wanted to develop was that Vulcan nerve-grip-shoulder-squeezy thing. Maybe I get more innovative when I’m annoyed. Not very spiritual, I know. To be perfectly honest, though, I still think the nerve grip could come in pretty handy some days.

## GET A GRIP

Anyway, I decided I'd best get a grip (not the Vulcan kind), get over it all, and stop beating myself and everyone else up over not being an early bird. After all, no matter how early that bird gets up, he still ends up eating worms.

A worm breakfast didn't sound good anyway. Me? I'll take coffee, please. And on those kinds of mornings, lots of it. As a matter of fact, I was a bit surprised that particular day that the sun had still come up even though I hadn't made the coffee yet. Who knew?

It also seemed the sun had come up a little on the bright side. As I squinted out the kitchen window, I found I sort of wanted to turn it down a couple of clicks. Eventually I decided instead of turning down the sun, I might do better to turn up the caffeine instead. A two-pot morning for sure. I made a related observation. Sixteen waking hours in a day. Sixteen cups in two pots of coffee. Coincidence? I think not.

## ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE

Some days I find myself squinting into the glorious face of God in a little the same way. Not with annoyance or frustration, but with complete awe. It's utterly overwhelming to think that the God of the universe, in the most grace-filled act in all of history, chose to reveal Himself in the light of Jesus Christ, our Savior. His glory, right here on earth as Jesus, the Light of the world! John 1:14 (CEV) tells us:

“The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us.”

Jesus speaks it plainly in John 8:12. Look at it again. He says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” In the chapter just before, John tells us that “the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand” (John 7:2 NKJV). The Feast of Tabernacles was a weeklong celebration of God's provision for the people of Israel when they were wandering in the wilderness. It

was a celebration of His deliverance. Jesus gives us another glimpse of Himself as the Messiah who fulfilled all that the feast celebrated.

## **FEAST ON THIS**

During the Feast of the Tabernacles, four huge lamps on poles about 75 feet high were lit in the Court of the Women in the temple every evening. Each pole had four branches and on top of each branch sat an immense bowl. Ten gallons of oil was poured into each bowl. It was said that the light of the giant lamps filled every courtyard in the entire city. What a picture! The light could be seen for miles around. If that wasn't enough light, the people carried torches while they sang, worshipped, praised, and celebrated God the Deliverer with an enthusiastic party-tude—all in the most magnificent light. The light ceremonies of the festival were to remind them of God's Shekinah glory that led them through the wilderness and a reminder of the glory to come. "Shekinah" is the Hebrew expression for the light presence of God.

Jesus declared that He was the Light of the world when this party of light "was at hand." He was, in essence, shining a spotlight on His role as our Messiah/Deliverer. The glory to come. Malachi 4:2 points to Jesus, our Light. "The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." He shines as the Son-rise to beat all sunrises!

In the Old Testament we read about the coming Messiah who would be a light for His people. Isaiah 60:19 (NKJV) says, "The sun shall no longer be your light by day, Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; But the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, And your God your glory."

## **LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF LIFE**

What does this mean for us? How does it change how we think, how we respond, how we live? How does it change how we behave every morning as we get out of bed—whatever time that may be?

Let's zero in on what Jesus says in John 8:12. Those of us who follow Him "will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." He delivers a promise with an even wider scope than God's promise of deliverance to the nation of Israel. It's a salvation not just from

surrounding enemy nations, but salvation from the darkness of our sin. It's not just a little peek into the light, but an infusion of the righteousness of Christ, our Light. The light of life is a permanent life-fix for those who follow Christ. It's a continuous deliverance for us from the old darkness. And that changes everything. As we surrender our lives to Jesus, we're ushered into this life of great light. New life!

Jesus came to redeem and He changed my life. He changed my destiny from hell to heaven. He changed how I see people and how I behave toward them. He changed how I handle my failures and shortcomings. He changed my world. He changed how I live and Who I live for. And would you believe it, the changes He's made in my life cause me to long for Him to change me all the more. It's true! It all makes me long to know Him better all the time.

## **NO COMPARE-I-SUN**

With every new little thing I learn about Him I'm amazed again. I wonder if God created light to give us the tiniest hint of what He's like. Words can't accurately describe the wonder of Jesus. Words can't even accurately describe light. While we're living in these human bodies, the light of the sun is a bit much to gaze on. These earthly eyes can't handle it.

How much brighter is my Jesus, the high and holy Savior, the Light of the world! In comparison, the sun's got nothin'.

Let's keep on gazing into His light, living in it, focusing on His brightness. Squint or no squint, look up to the Son!



### **A LITTLE EXTRA LIGHT FOR THE PATH:**

*“He was with God in the beginning. All things were made by him, and nothing was made without him. In him there was life, and that life was the light of all people. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it. There was a man named John who was sent by God. He came to tell people the truth about the Light so that through him all people could hear about the Light and believe. John was not the Light, but he came to tell people the truth about the Light. The true Light that gives light to all was coming into the world! The Word was in the world, and the world was made by him, but the world did not know him. He came to the world that was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to all who did accept him and believe in him he gave the right to become children of God.”*

—John 1:2–12 (NCV)