

Turn Off Your Flashlight

As I tried to determine how to light our way out of the canyon, a thought came into my mind.

BY KEVAN CLAWSON

One summer our ward leaders took two buses full of excited youth down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Our bishopric and a member of the stake presidency were with the group. On the hike down into the Grand Canyon, the weather became unbearably hot, and one of the girls began having trouble breathing. We had plenty of water, and the leaders were well prepared, but this young sister was having problems beyond our ability to help.

Her condition had become critical by the time we arrived at the campground, and a helicopter was called to take her to the nearest hospital. Though she quickly recovered in the hospital, we felt overshadowed the rest of the week by what had happened to her, and we still had to face climbing out of the canyon. With these thoughts and worries, and with the weather becoming even hotter, the bishop decided it would be best to leave in the cool of the night to avoid further problems.

We left around 2:00 a.m. on a moonless, pitch-black night. Some of us had brought flashlights, but there were so few that it was impossible to light the path for everyone. As I tried to think of a way to light the way for the entire group, a thought came into my mind: "Turn off your flashlight."

At first I thought this was crazy. It was so dark that those walking just a few feet from a flashlight were unable to see at all. But I had been taught to listen to the quiet thoughts that came into my mind, so I obeyed. I turned off my flashlight and waited. To my amazement, as my eyes became accustomed to the dark, the trail ahead became visible. I looked into the sky, certain that the moon must have come out. But I was wrong. As I looked at the path ahead, it had become even brighter, as though it were glowing with a soft light.

I immediately told everyone behind me to turn off their flashlights. I could sense the same skepticism I had had moments before. "Please, just try it!" I said. As lights behind me went off, one by one, I heard the excited chatter of my peers as they, too, witnessed what I had seen. We began to move forward in the dark, the trail plain to see beneath our feet.

For many of us who were there, excitement and wonder at this experience became part of an abiding faith to last a lifetime. ■

