

# Alaska: Blacking out windows

July 22, 2016

Alaska is called the final frontier. Those who have seen this gorgeous state know that God's presence sings off the mountains and pours down from the waterfalls. There is so much raw beauty surrounding you at all times in Alaska, especially by the Kenai River.

One of the most special things about this interesting land is that it only gets dark for about an hour during the summer. For an example, it's 10:49 pm right now while I'm writing this, and the sun is still shining brightly outside. Because of this, those of us serving Salmon Frenzy interns had to go to each church where our teams are staying and put trash bags over the windows. It's a time-consuming process that can be a bit of a drag at times, but I have discovered something intriguing about it.

One of our team members, Blake, has this game of picking random objects or activities and comparing it to the gospel. I've had to compare hot tea, the salt and pepper shakers, and many other random things to the gospel, and it's been surprisingly fun and educational. So, as I was taping trash bags to windows, I couldn't help but comparing blacking out windows to God's word. However, I got something a little more than that out of this thought.



The day before, I had some bad anxiety attacks throughout the day that carried over into the next. So, I felt worn down and like God wasn't able to

help me through these struggles. It dawned on me that I will travel all the way from Texas to Alaska, go through a tough time with relationships, or deal with tragedy and I have total faith in God and instantly dive into prayer, but I shut Him out when I think the problem is too big for Him.

In a sense, I put a trash bag over the window. It's amazing because God is that 24/7 light that is so openly available and accessible to all of us, yet we doubt him and put up our own trash bags that block him out. We hide those hard parts of our lives that maybe we are ashamed of or the thorn in our side that we stop believing God can remove in the darkness and dwell in it.

As we've discovered here at Salmon Frenzy, some trash bags are made thicker than others and block out the light better. Maybe some of your trash bags are thin, and you surrender part of the problems to God but not all. I'm definitely a culprit of this! I find myself thinking I've given it all to God, but in reality, there is a thin layer of black covering the windows.

Why don't we tear down our trash bags? I think it's because allowing ourselves to be completely open and vulnerable is frightening. Or maybe we get comfortable in the darkness and don't know how to live in the light. Maybe it's uncomfortable at first and we don't like that. There are many reasons why we keep them up.

That's why I am so glad we have a God who overcomes the darkness and filters through the tiniest of cracks to guide us. John 1:5 says, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Thank goodness that this is true and that God's light can penetrate any of our trash bags. It's up to us whether we want to remove them or not, but God will never give up on us and will keep nudging us forward until we can find that strength.

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