

# Letting Our Lights Shine

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By Justin Morton

This past week has been heartbreaking on so many levels. From the loss of personal possessions to the loss of individual lives, those of us watching the Gatlinburg fires from afar have had our emotions challenged and the chords of our hearts plucked. We watched in horror as devastating information flooded our local news coverage and social media pages of the wildfires in Gatlinburg and surrounding areas. We saw pictures and watched videos of people recounting their escapes from the horrific path of the fire; sadly, a path some did not escape.

Like most of you, as we watched the events unfolding right before our eyes, we wondered what we could do to help the thousands of people who had been evacuated and the many first responders and volunteers who worked tirelessly to fight the wildfires and help rescue those in need.

Since the world learned of the events early last week, donations have flooded in from all over the community, state and country. Many churches, organizations and individuals just like you have made donations to those affected by and working in this great tragedy. Yes, the Volunteer State is living up to its name and for that, I am certainly proud to be a Tennessee Volunteer.

This tragedy has given many people the opportunity to do good to their fellow man during a difficult time. Christians have been given the opportunity to let their lights shine so that the love of Jesus can be seen. Jesus said, "Let your lights shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The devastation in Gatlinburg will lessen over time, but I hope and pray we keep our eyes open and always look for opportunities to do good to others (Gal. 6:10). Just as we are willing to live up to our title of Tennessee Volunteers, let's strive to live up to our perfect example, Jesus Christ, always looking to let our lights shine for Him.