

From the Heart September 26th
Pastor John Hicks First United Methodist Church

I've heard many "Navy" stories, but this one by Frank Koch is one of my favorites.

Two battleships assigned to the training squadron had been at sea on maneuvers in heavy weather for several days. I was serving on the lead battleship and was on watch on the bridge as night fell. The visibility was poor with patchy fog, so the captain remained on the bridge keeping an eye on all activities.

*Shortly after dark, the lookout on the wing reported, "Light, bearing on the starboard bow."
"Is it steady or moving astern?" the captain called out.*

The lookout replied, "Steady, Captain," which meant we were on a dangerous collision course with that ship. The captain then called to the signalman, "Signal that ship: We are on a collision course, advise you change course twenty degrees."

Back came the signal, "Advisable for you to change course twenty degrees."

The captain said, "Send: I'm a captain, change course twenty degrees."

"I'm a seaman second class," came the reply, "You had better change course twenty degrees."

By that time the captain was furious. He spat out, "Send: I'm a battleship. Change course twenty degrees."

Back came the flashing light, "I'm a lighthouse."

We changed course.

Good move! The smart captain shifts the direction of his ship according to the signal of the lighthouse. The smart person does the same. Lighthouse signals help guide our paths. They keep us from danger. They help us plot our course and they keep us from running aground. They help bring us safely home.

I wanted to share with you some of life's lighthouse signals that have helped me plot my course over the years. They might help you as well. Take a look. Keep the ones you like. Forgive the ones you don't. Share them when you can.

- Never let the important be the victim of the trivial.
- It is better to err on the side of grace.
- Let go and let God.
- Listen twice as much as you speak.
- Don't give up. Remember that Moses was once a basket case.
- Don't feel guilty for God's goodness.
- The best vitamin for a Christian is B1.
- Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary.
- Remember that it's hard to stumble when you're down on your knees.
- A clear conscience makes a soft pillow.
- Never give the devil a ride. He will always want to drive.
- Don't spend tomorrow's money today.
- Don't let the littleness in others bring out the littleness in you.
- As soon as you can, pay your debts. As long as you can, give the benefit of the doubt. As often as you can, give thanks.
- Let God love you.
- When you can't trace God's hand, trust His heart.

Remember, the smart captain shifts the direction of his or her ship according to the signal of the lighthouse. The smart person does the same. Be smart! And, above all, follow the most important lighthouse signal that always shines for us – we call Him "The Light of the World".