

SESSION TITLE: “Proof of Life: The Light
FOCAL PASSAGE: (John 1:4-9 ; 3:19-21; 11:9-10; 12:35-36)

REVIEW/REACT: In last week’s lesson we discovered Jesus the “I Am”. What were the ways Jesus referred to Himself as “I Am”?

- a. (John 6:35) Bread of Life
- b. (8:12) Light of the World
- c. (8:58) Before Abraham
- d. (10:7-9) The Door
- e. (10:11-15) Good Shepherd
- f. (11:25) Resurrection and The Life
- g. (14:6) The Way, the Truth, and the Life
- h. (15:1, 5) The True vine

Did you experience Jesus as “I Am” this week? How?

Review last week’s memory verse.

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”
John 8:58

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner identify the power of the Light for daily living as he/she lives to overcome darkness.

A. Share the following information:

When President Reagan passed away we lost a great President, a great American, but most of all a great Christian man. Nancy Reagan wrote some memories of her husband for Time magazine, listen to how the one who knew him best described him.

“I think they broke the mold when they made Ronnie. He was a man of strong principles and integrity. He had absolutely no ego, and was very comfortable in his own skin. Ronnie always believed that God has a plan for each of us and that we might not know what it is now, but eventually we will.

I think his faith and his comfort with himself accounts for that optimism. Since he felt that everything happens for a reason, he never saw things darkly. After he was shot and we almost lost him, he lay on his hospital bed staring at the ceiling and praying. He told me that he realized he couldn’t pray just for himself, that it wouldn’t be right, and that he also had to pray for John Hinckley. Hinckley’s parents sent him a note and he wrote a nice one back to them.”

Later, Cardinal Cooke visited Ronnie in the White House and said “God was certainly sitting on your shoulder that day.” Ronnie replied, “Yes, I know, and I made up my mind that all the days I have left belong to Him.”

Time Magazine, June 6, ‘04

State – What a great way to live life. To live in “The Light”. To live optimistically, giving all of your days to God. President Reagan is remembered as an eternal optimist. His optimism came from the Light of Christ.

Today – We are going to discuss Jesus “The Light” and how He can illuminate our lives daily.

B. Optional Method – Object Lesson (Night vision goggles)

If you can put your hands on a pair of night vision goggles you could display them and pass them around the room. If you can’t have actual goggles you can display a picture of night vision goggles.

Ask – How many of you have ever been to Carlsbad Caverns? Do you remember when you were deep into the cave and they turned the light out? How did you feel in complete darkness?

In that huge cavern of darkness what would have happened if even one small candle had been lit? It would have dispelled the darkness.

Ask - Does anyone know how night vision systems work? The objective lens collects light that you cannot see with your naked eye and focuses it on the image intensifier. Inside the image intensifier a photo cathode absorbs this light energy and converts it into electrons. When this highly intensified electron image strikes the phosphor screen, it causes the screen to emit light that you can see.

State – Jesus is our image intensifier. He provides the light to dispel the darkness. He illuminates the right path for us.

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C. Optional Method – Movie Clip “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King”

Start: DVD Chapter 16

Synopsis:

Men flee from dark forces, winged dragons that swoop and maim under the cover of rolling clouds. Gandalf appears, projecting a brilliant light from his staff that drives the evil beasts back. This is an incredible picture of light that pierces the darkness. God promises that light will win the day.

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BOOK Getting Into the Word

Utilize the questions in the *Discussion Guide* to examine the Scripture passage.

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

A. Utilize the handout “Home Improvement” to help members examine each area of their lives to determine how much they are living for the Light and where they need to improve.

TOOK Conclusion

A. Ask - Has anyone ever heard of “seasonal affective disorder”? It is a disorder caused by shorter daylight hours. People tend to lose joy and happiness with less and less daylight. One treatment is to sit under a bright light 20 to 30 minutes a day. If a Christian distances him/herself from the light of Christ he/she will experience SAD because they are not living in the light. The darkness offers temporary fun but eventually it will turn to despair. The challenge this week is to try to begin 5 out of 7 days with a personal quiet time. Try to start the day in the light of Christ. Utilize Thee Word for the Week and see how your life can be transformed by The Light daily.

Review this week’s memory verse (John 3:19).

B. Optional Method – Share the following excerpt from an article from Reuters May 31, 2004.

Christian lied about faith to survive Saudi siege

By Samia Nakhoul

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia, May 31 (Reuters) - A Christian Arab who was held captive by al Qaeda militants in Saudi Arabia said on Monday he lied to them about his faith and praised their battle against the West, to save his life.

Nizar Hajazeen, a Jordanian software businessmen who was at the Tower hotel in the Oasis compound during the 25-hour drama in Khobar, said the militants lectured him about Islam and their aim to liberate Saudi Arabia from "infidels and crusaders".

The complex where the militants held about 50 foreigners -- including some Westerners -- was their last target in the violence in the eastern Saudi oil city in which they killed at least 22 people.

"I went to the room of a Jordanian colleague. Someone banged violently on the door. We opened and there were two men, one with a machinegun, another with a revolver. They were wearing black track suits," he said, adding that one had a wounded arm.

Both were in their twenties.

"They asked us if we were Arab or Westerners. We told them: 'We're Arab'.

"One then asked if I was a Christian or a Muslim. I told him we were Muslims and showed him my colleague's Koran as proof. I told him we supported them and that we were against America and Europe. I had to say that."

Residents of the compound said the attackers asked everyone they encountered if they were Muslim or Christian, before taking them hostage or killing them.

An Oasis manager said the gunmen shot and killed several Westerners as soon as they entered the complex.

Ask – Do you think Nizar did the right thing denying Christ to save his life? What do you think you would have done in that situation? Why do evil people hate The Light enough to kill innocent people? What can you do to build up your resistance to darkness? (Give members the same challenge from option A)

MEMORY VERSE

And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.

John 3:19

DISCUSSION GUIDE

(Teacher's Copy)

1. Complete the following chart to compare/contrast, light/darkness in the following passages.

| Text | Light | Darkness |
|------------|--|---|
| (1:4-9) | Light for people Light shines in darkness Jesus is the true light and He gives light | Darkness does not overcome light |
| (3:19-21) | Light comes to the world People who do right come to the light Their deeds can be shown before God | People love darkness because they do evil People who do evil hate light They stay out of the light for fear of exposure |
| (11:9-10) | One who walks by day will not stumble because he sees by light | One who walks by night stumbles for he has no light |
| (12:35-36) | Light is here briefly Walk while you have light Become children of the light | One who walks in darkness does not know where he is going |

2. What is the significance that the light cannot be overcome by the darkness? How should this affect your life?

3. When a Christian is living for the light he/she does not mind being in the light. How would you classify your life today seeking the light or hiding in the dark? (3:19-20)

4. How can the Light of Christ illuminate your day on a daily basis?

5. What happens to the person who walks in the night? (11:10)
(He stumbles)

6. What are possible results of people stumbling?

7. (John 12:35-36) emphasizes the urgency of our mission to use The Light while there is still time. How urgent do you feel about spreading The Light?

8. Are you boldly living in the light? What needs to happen to increase your boldness?

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5. What happens to the person who walks in the night? (11:10)
6. What are possible results of people stumbling?
7. (John 12:35-36) emphasizes the urgency of our mission to use The Light while there is still time. How urgent do you feel about spreading The Light?
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Home Improvement

Picture your life like a home with different rooms. What happens when you allow the light of Jesus to come into each room?

Attic

Are there old “pet sins” that you keep stored away and continue to fall back into? Are there past sins that you need to expose to The Light and seek forgiveness?

Entry Way

Does your lifestyle point people to the Light or the darkness? Can they see Jesus in you?

Guest Room

Are you associating with any friends who lead you into darkness?

Kitchen/Dining Room

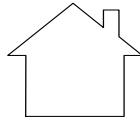
Do you have any bad consumption habits? Are you treating your body like the Temple of Christ?

Media Room

Are you viewing or listening to anything that is not God honoring? How is your thought life?

Master Bedroom

Do you treat your spouse with love and respect? Do you have any secrets that you are keeping from your spouse?



Devotionals for Next Week

Proof of Life: Living Water

(John 4:7-15; 7:37-39)

Monday – Read Jeremiah 2:13 and Jeremiah 17:13

- Ø In these passages who is the living water?
- Ø How would you define living water?
- Ø In your mind what is the difference between living water and cistern or well water?
- Ø Is your life a fountain of living water?
- Ø What action can you do today to assure that your life is a fountain of living water?

Tuesday – Read John 4:7-9

- Ø What brought Jesus to Jacob's well? (John 4:1-6)
- Ø Did Jesus initiate conversation with the Samaritan woman for his physical need or for her Spiritual need?
- Ø Do you see each encounter with people as an opportunity to share the living water of your life? Do you find it difficult to move beyond your comfort zone?
- Ø Pray today for boldness to tell others about this living water called Jesus Christ.

Wednesday – Read John 4:10-12

- Ø When was your last encounter with Jesus? Meditate upon it and remember the refreshing feeling of the time.
- Ø In this passage do you see Jesus tired, thirsty, weary, and seeking to fill his own need, or do you see Jesus as a fountain of living water, full of life, powerful, clean, and pure. God, himself, not made by human hands, but the gift of God to give life to anyone who will receive Him.
- Ø Prayer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his gift of Jesus Christ freely given to us as a fountain of living water springing up in our life.
- Ø Today, allow the stream of living water that Jesus has placed in your life as His child to flow freely through you to help meet the needs of spiritual thirst of others.

Thursday – Read John 4:13-15

- Ø Have you ever been thirsty, I mean really thirsty? How did you quench the thirst? Have you ever been thirsty again?
- Ø Jesus contrasts physical water and spiritual water. Both satisfy, however with physical water you will become thirsty again and again, but with the living water given freely by Jesus your spiritual thirst is quenched forever, as you are given a well of water springing up to eternal life.
- Ø Praise God today for Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the living water in my life.

Friday – Read John 7:37-38

- Ø What need is Jesus promising to meet?
- Ø What must we do to have rivers of living water flowing in our innermost being?
- Ø Take a moment to reflect on your study this week about The Living Water. Jesus has many names, but in these passages we see Him as The Living Water.
- Ø What changes do you need to make in order to allow The Living Water to have preeminence in your every day life?

EXEGETICAL What it meant to Theophilus back THEN

Proof of Life: The Light (John 1:4-9 ; 3:19-21; 11:9-10; 12:35-36)

A SUMMARY OF THE PROMINENT “LIGHT”/“DARKNESS” PASSAGES IN JOHN

| TEXT | LIGHT | DARKNESS | FUNCTION |
|-----------------------|--|---|------------|
| 1:4–9 | Light for people. Light shines in darkness. John witnesses to light, but is not the light. True light comes and gives light. | Darkness does not overcome light. | ENLIGHTENS |
| 3:19–21 | Light comes to the world. People who do what is right come to the light. Their deeds can be shown to be done in God. | People love darkness > light because they do evil. People who do evil hate light. They do not come to light for fear of exposure. | ENDORSES |
| 8:12 9:4–5 11:9–10 | Jesus is the light of the world. Those who follow Him will have the light of life. While it is day, we must do the work of God. One who walks by day will not stumble because he sees by light. | Those who follow Jesus will not walk in darkness. In the night, no man can work. One who walks by night stumbles for he has no light. | ENABLES |
| 12:35–36, 46 | Light is with you briefly. Walk while you have light so darkness does not overtake. While you have light, believe in Him, so you may be children of the light. Jesus came into the world as light. | One who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. Nobody who believes in Him will remain in darkness. | ENGENDERS |

EXEGETICAL: WHAT IT MEANT TO THE WORLD ... THEN

The consequence of believing in the darkness-dispelling Light of the world, Jesus—the true Light that is revelatory (enlightening all about the glory of God) and, consequentially, judging (endorsing the deeds of truth-doers and condemning those of evil-doers)—thus possessing the Light and becoming sons of that Light (“engendered” by it), is that one is able to walk in the day without stumbling, unconquered by darkness, as one is enabled to do the works of the Father (to seek God’s glory self-sacrificially).

[John 1:4–9; 3:19–21; 8:12; 9:4–5; 11:9–10; 12:35–36, 46].

I. The nature of the darkness-dispelling Light of men sourced in the life of the Creator–Word (Jesus)—the true Light testified to by the divinely sent man (John the Baptizer)—so that all might come to faith (in Jesus)—was that it was revelatory, enlightening all (about the glory of God) [John 1:4–9].

- A. The source of the light of men was the life of the Creator–Word Jesus (1:4).
- B. The effect of the shining of that light in darkness was the dispelling of that darkness (1:5).
- C. The function of the divinely sent John (the Baptizer) was to testify to the light so that all might come to faith (in Jesus) (1:6–7).
- D. The nature of the true light that comes into the world (the Creator’s invasion of His rebellious creation) was revelatory, enlightening all (about the glory of God) (1:8–9).

II. The result of the exposure of the deeds of men by the Light (by the standard of the glory of God) was condemnation (of unbelievers by God, 3:17–18) on the basis of their love of darkness and hatred of the Light that came into the world and exposed their evil deeds, and endorsement of the deeds of those who practiced the truth—and who come to that

Light—as being sourced in God (thus glorifying God) [John 3:19–21].

- A. The basis of the condemnation (of unbelievers by God, 3:17–18) was their (unbelievers') love of darkness (and their corresponding hatred and avoidance of the Light that came into the world) that enabled the unexposed practice of their evil deeds (3:19–20).
 - B. The complement to the condemnation (of unbelievers) was the endorsement of the deeds of those who practiced the truth—and who came to that Light—as being sourced in God (thus glorifying God) (3:20).
- III. The consequence of following Jesus, the Light of the world, thereby possessing the Light of life (walking in the day, seeing the Light and having that Light in oneself) and avoiding walking in darkness, is that one is (divinely) enabled to walk without stumbling and to do the works of the Father (to seek God's glory self-sacrificially) [John 8:12; 9:4–5; 11:9–10].
- A. The consequence of following Jesus, the Light of the world, thereby possessing the Light of life, is that one is (divinely) enabled to avoid walking in darkness (8:12).
 - B. The injunction of Jesus—the Light of the world—to work while it is day, before the night comes when no one can work, involves doing the work of the Father (9:4–5).
 - C. The consequence of walking in the day (seeing the Light and having the Light in oneself) is that one is enabled to walk without stumbling (to seek God's glory self-sacrificially) (11:9–10).[]
- IV. The purpose for which Jesus urged the multitude to believe in Him, the Light that would be with them only briefly (by beholding Whom one also beholds the Father, 12:45), is so that they would become sons of Light—unconquered by darkness, and knowing where they were going [John 12:35–36, 46].
- A. The purpose for which Jesus urged the multitude to walk while they had the Light—for only a little while longer—is so that they would become sons of Light—unconquered by darkness, and knowing where they were going (12:35–36).
 - B. The purpose for the incarnation of Jesus the Light (by beholding Whom one also beholds the Father, 12:45) is so that all who believe in Him may not remain in darkness (12:46).

THEOLOGICAL: WHAT IT MEANS FOR BELIEVERS ... ALWAYS

Believers in Jesus, the Light of the World, as they are accorded divine sonship, are enabled to glorify God self-sacrificially.

- I. The revelatory nature of the true Light, Jesus, enlightens all about the glory of God (John 1:4–9).
- II. The judgmental nature of the Light of the world exposes the God-glorifying deeds of those who come to the Light (believers) (John 3:19–21).
- III. Divine enablement to glorify the Father by doing His works self-sacrificially comes as one follows Jesus, the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9:4–5; 11:9–10).
- IV. Divine sonship (“engendering” by Light to live by God's will so as to glorify Him) is made possible for all who believe in the true Light, Jesus (John 12:35–36, 46).

PEDAGOGICAL: WHAT IT MEANS FOR US ... NOW

BOLDLY WALK IN THE LIGHT!

- I. The blindness of humans requires divine enlightenment to behold God and His glory (John 1:4–9)
- II. The sinfulness of humans is judged by the standard of God's Light (John 3:19–20).
- III. The faith of humans in the true Light, Jesus, makes them children of