

## GETTING STARTED

Welcome to our series The Stories Jesus Told! Over the next five weeks, we'll be immersing ourselves in the parables (stories) Jesus shared during his ministry on earth to learn the essence of what it means to be a Jesus Follower.

Along the way, we'll be utilizing the **COMA Bible study method** to help dig into these stories (and help teach us how to study Scripture in general). Each week, we'll read the Scripture of each story from the weekend and work through:

C

### Context - the "surroundings" or background of the passage and the circumstances in which it was written

Who wrote the passage? Why was it written and to whom?

What is the literary "genre" of the passage?

What happens in the chapter or section immediately before and after the passage you're reading?

Are there any themes or ideas that connect the passage you're reading to the rest of the book?

O

### Observation - carefully examine the passage you're reading

Is there any structure or arrangement to the passage?

Is there any repetition or comparison/contrast?

Are there key words or phrases in the text?

Does anything surprise you or stick out somehow?

Are there characters, and what do they do or say?

What theological terms are used, and what do they mean?

M

### Meaning - the main point or idea the original human author wanted his original audience to understand in a particular text

How does the passage describe, point to, or refer back to Jesus?

What is the reader supposed to learn about God from the passage?

If you could sum up the writer's main point in a sentence, what would you say?

A

### Application - how the reader is supposed to respond to the text

Does this passage challenge or confirm my beliefs?

Is there an attitude or assumption I must change?

Are there any changes to my actions or the way I live being urged by the passage?

Is there a promise I should believe or an attribute of God's nature I should trust?

By the end of this series, we hope the COMA method not only helps draw out a deeper and clearer understanding of the parables for you and your group but a greater sense of confidence in navigating Scripture on your own. Turn the page (or keep scrolling), and we'll jump into our first parable: The Lamp.





# READ



AS A GROUP, READ MATTHEW 5:14-16.

One person could read the whole passage, or you could take turns reading verse by verse. Note any initial thoughts or questions that come to mind. It's okay if you aren't super confident or clear; the Context and Message sections below will help clarify your journey through the text.

## CONTEXT

After noting your initial observations, read through the context of the passage provided below. Note how these insights challenge or clarify your understanding of the story.

The Jewish people listening to the parable of the lamp would know God had always intended them to be the "light of the world" (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6) specifically to non-Jews (known as Gentiles). God's people were to live in such a way that all people would be drawn to God through them. Jesus uses the images of a city on a hill and a lamp on a stand to pass this legacy and task to his disciples. The people of this time used small wicker oil lamps to light their homes which were most effective in providing light to a larger area when placed on a stand.

Similarly, the torches of a city on a hill could be seen from greater distances at night. When Jesus used these metaphors, he emphasizes the idea that following him isn't just a personal or private journey. Jesus wants his followers to live so others who don't yet believe in God are drawn to him through them.

## OBSERVATION

**With the text's context in mind, reread the passage together. When you're finished, pause for a few minutes to silently note your own observations and questions. Utilize the Observation questions (listed on the first page) to guide you. Remember, we believe every word is inspired by God and included for a reason.**

**When your group is ready, share both your initial observations and how those were impacted by the context of the story. Share anything particularly interesting, curious, confusing, or convicting. Notice if there are any themes for you and your group.**



# MEANING

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TOGETHER AS A GROUP TO HELP DRAW OUT THE MEANING OF THE AUTHOR'S TEXT.

1. Who is Jesus calling to be the light and why? (Matthew 5:1-2)
2. What does this say about God's view and approach to his followers?
3. Who are they told to be the light to? (Isaiah 42:6)
4. What does this communicate about God's view of those who don't know him yet?

*Note:* UTILIZE THE MEANING QUESTIONS ON THE FIRST PAGE FOR ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION, IF DESIRED.

# APPLICATION

1. How have you witnessed and been impacted by the "light" of someone in your life? Share how you saw their faith displayed and how it impacted you.
2. What are some tangible ways you can begin to elevate or communicate God's light in your life so others can see it?

# PRAYER

Share a few places where you know people on a first-name basis. Pray with your group asking God to show you how to display your faith more visibly in these settings.

## KEEP GOING

Each week, we're providing additional resources to help you continue to learn how to read, navigate, and study Scripture beyond the stories Jesus told. We hope these additional "tools in your toolbox" will help you engage in Scripture more clearly and consistently.

[COMA Bible Study Overview](#)

[COMA Bible Study Worksheet](#)

Download or bookmark the COMA PDFs to help you navigate your group time throughout the series and use during your own personal time reading the Bible.

[Bible Savvy](#) by James L Nicodem

[How to Interpret Biblical Genres](#)  
from Christ Community Church