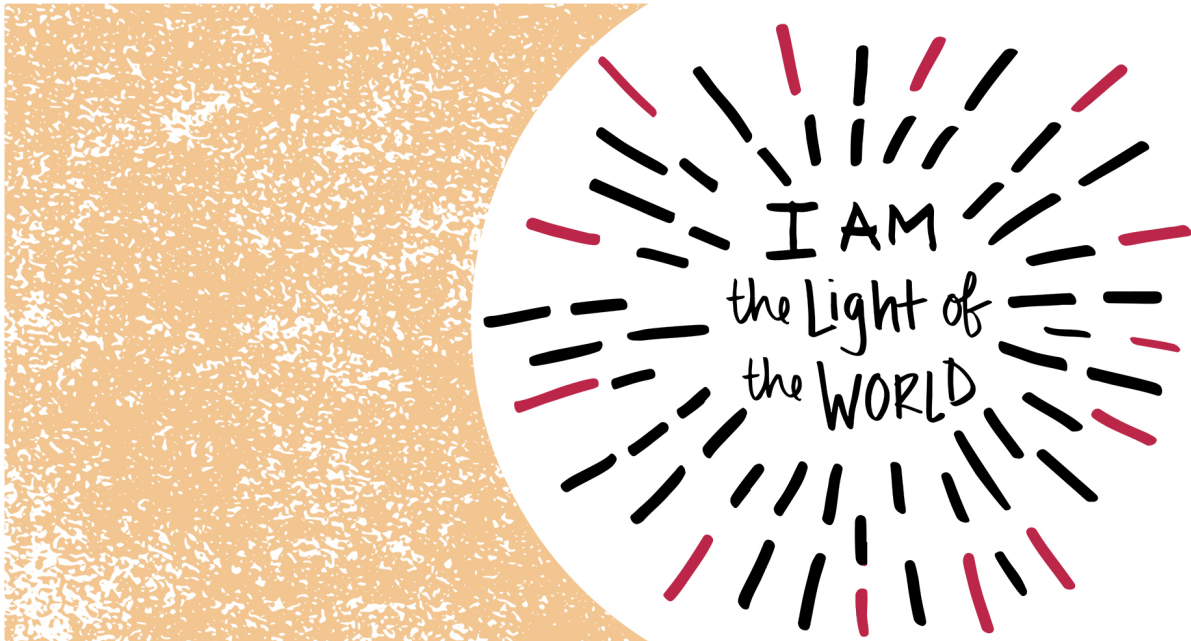




# Groups



**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

**NEW this year:** These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

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**LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE**  
for the Sermon given on March 5, 2023  
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson  
**"I AM the Light of the World" John 8:12; 9:1-7**

Question: Who was Jesus?

Bottom Line: If Jesus is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, my world is better when he's in it.

We are in week 3 of our series exploring the I AM statements of Jesus. Seven times in the gospel of John, Jesus very intentionally declares himself; assigning a NAME to his identity and mission. The premise of our series is that the better we understand who Jesus is, and why he came, and what his life was all about, the better we understand who we are, why we're here, and what our lives are all about.

Today we will look into the meaning of Jesus' words, "I AM the Light of the World."

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

### **Main Scripture Reading:**

#### **John 8:12**

When Jesus spoke again to the people he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

#### **John 9:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

<sup>3</sup> "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

<sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. <sup>7</sup> "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

### **Group Discussion Questions**

Q – This message is about Jesus announcing that he is the Light of the World. As Pastor Bryan explained, Jesus proclaimed this as he was attending the Feast of Tabernacles, which was a time to celebrate the harvest. Furthermore, it took place around the autumn equinox, where nights would become longer than the days. During the first night of the Feast, it was custom to have a ceremony in the Temple Courtyard where priests would light giant lamps after sundown. People would sing and dance to acknowledge God's presence in the Temple. They were looking forward to the day God's light would shine on the whole world.

Take a moment to imagine yourself in the celebration at the Temple Courtyard. The sun has set. The priests are setting the ladders against the 75-foot towers and are climbing up. There are vats of oil on top of the towers. The priests simultaneously light these giant lamps. Every courtyard in Jerusalem is illuminated!

Now picture Jesus, at the height of the celebration, standing in the courtyard and announcing, "I am the Light of the World." Imagine how the religious leaders would have reacted. Imagine how others would have responded.

How are you responding now? What do you find encouraging about Jesus' words? Is there anything that causes you to pause with question or even hesitation?

Q – Pastor Bryan shared three functions of light that seem relevant to the conversation.

1. Light reveals things
2. Light produces life
3. Light conquers darkness

Can you describe a time when Jesus was like the Light that performed one of these functions in your life? Or are you in a season where you need Jesus to be the Light in specific ways?

Q – There is a lot of Darkness in the world today: violence, injustice, poverty, oppression. Darkness can also come through sadness, loss, depression, and despair.

Think about a time you have been overwhelmed by these various forms of darkness.

How did you handle those moments?

How did/does the light of Christ provide comfort, perspective, hope?

What are some practices you engaged in to draw close to the Light?

Q – Read John 9:1-7 about Jesus and the blind man. Note the irony of the story.

The blind man chose to believe, chose to do what Jesus told him, and his eyes were opened to a brighter world. The religious leaders, on the other hand, chose NOT to believe, chose darkness than light, shutting themselves to Jesus.

As commentator Fred Craddock puts it, "with the availability of light, darkness is now a choice." Light reveals things, produces life, and conquers, but only if you let it.

Take a moment to honestly ask yourselves,

"What are you seeing these days?

What are you choosing to see?

How open are you to the presence and power of Christ in your life?"

Q – Take a moment to thank Jesus for the ways He brightened your world. One way we can express gratitude is by letting that light shine. In what ways is God spurring your heart to be a light for the good of the world, whether it is in your school, workplace, or neighborhood?

**Homework Until Next Time:**

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

**How to Use These Study Guides:**

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.