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“Light in a Dark World”

[John 12:35-36, 46](#)

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The Bible uses multiple references to “light” and “darkness”—good and evil—right and wrong. Jesus stepped into our dark world as the Light of the World. He died on a cross to bring us into the light and to rescue us from the dominion of darkness.

1. [John 12:35-36, 46](#) – *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.’ These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. ... ‘I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.’”*
2. Light in the darkness
  - a. In these three verses, Jesus used the word “light” six times, and the word “darkness” three times
  - b. What is light?
    - i. Light is made up of energy
    - ii. Light travels in a straight line but can bend and refract around objects in its path
    - iii. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second
    - iv. There are different types of light; some are visible to the human eye, but most are invisible
      1. Examples of invisible light include gamma rays, ultra-violet rays, x-rays, radio, infrared rays, microwaves, and radar
    - v. Light can cook your food; take pictures inside your body; kill fungi, bacteria, and viruses; treat skin disorders and seasonal depression; and is used in surgery to cut tissue
    - vi. The first reference of light in the Bible is in Genesis chapter 1
      1. [Genesis 1:3](#) – *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light;’ and there was light.”*

- vii. Our physical survival is dependent on light: the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the heat that sustains life all need light

### 3. Literal application

- a. The Bible says that the very essence of God is light
- b. **1 John 1:5b** – *“God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.”*
- c. Albert Einstein said that if you could travel at the speed of light, time would cease to be
  - i. God is outside of time because God is light
- d. **1 Timothy 6:16b** – God dwells *“in unapproachable light...”*
- e. Light became visible, tangible, and audible when Jesus was born; Light wrapped Himself in flesh and came to dwell among us (**John 1:14**)

### 4. Spiritual application

- a. **John 1:1-9** – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”*
- b. John was not saying that the world needed more natural light; he was speaking about spiritual darkness
- c. Light and dark are used as terms of contrast
  - i. Light is often a reference to what is good, and darkness that which is bad, evil, or wrong
- d. He who was holy and perfect stepped into a dark world to save us
- e. **John 8:12** – *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”*
  - i. **John 8:12** is best understood in the context of **John 7**, where the Jews were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles
    - 1. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated how God brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and that during 40 years of wilderness wanderings, God was a pillar of fire to lead them by night and a covering of cloud by day to protect them from the sun
    - 2. The Jews would go to the temple area during the feast and light four menorahs to remind them that God was the pillar of fire that illuminated their way
    - 3. It was in this context that Jesus referred to Himself as “the light of the world”

- f. God is still illuminating dark hearts today
  - i. We can come out of a dark sinful past and come into the light of Jesus Christ and be reconciled to God
  - ii. **1 Peter 2:9** – *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”*

5. Jesus stepped into our world to save and rescue us from four things

a. Dark world

- i. **John 3:19-21** – *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*
- ii. You don’t have to look very far to see how dark our world is: sex trafficking, murder, abortion, cheating, stealing, and the inversion of truth all reveal darkness
- iii. Seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah condemned the inversion of truth
  - 1. **Isaiah 5:20** – *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*
- iv. **John 3:16-19** – *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”*
- v. **John 3:21** – *“But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*
- vi. When you are vulnerable enough to say that you need Jesus in your life, the transformation that happens becomes evidence that God is at work

b. Dark hearts

- i. Dark hearts reflect attitudes and thoughts that are displeasing to God, such as unforgiveness, lust, envy, hatred, or prejudice
- ii. We’re quick to notice the evil and injustice in our world but not so quick to recognize our own heart attitudes and thoughts

- iii. **1 Corinthians 4:5** - *"He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts."* (1984 NIV)
  - c. Dark deeds
    - i. **Ephesians 5:8-11** - *"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."*
    - ii. When you turn from a life of darkness and come into the light, the process may be painful, but exposing secret sins and allowing Jesus to forgive you breaks sin's stronghold
      - 1. Find a trusted friend or spouse to talk with about any secret sins
      - 2. **1 John 1:7 & 9** - *"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
  - d. Dark minds
    - i. **2 Corinthians 4:3-6** - *"But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*
    - ii. Satan is bringing a powerful delusion onto an unbelieving world to prevent people from coming to Jesus; when you remove God, He gives you over to a reprobate mind, and we begin to believe things that aren't true
    - iii. Satan is at work, but God is also at work to bring people into the light
    - iv. **Isaiah 9:2** - *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined."*
- 6. When we come into relationship with Jesus, we become reflections of His light, and people can see Him through our lives
  - a. **Matthew 5:14 & 16** - *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

## Discussion Questions

1. Read [John 12:35-36, 46](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. What is light? How is light vital to our existence? (See #2b above)
3. Read [1 John 1:5b](#) and [1 Timothy 6:16b](#). How is Jesus the “literal” Light of the World? (See #3 above)
4. Read [John 1:1-9](#). What does the contrast of darkness and light represent? (See #4b and #4c above)
5. Read [John 8:12](#). In what context was Jesus stating that He was the Light of the World? What is the significance of this? (See #4e-i above)
6. Read [John 3:19-21](#). How is our world in darkness? How do we come out of that darkness? (See #5a-ii, #5a-iii, #5a-v and #5a-vi above).
7. What do dark hearts reflect? Do you ever struggle with dark attitudes and thoughts? (See #5b-i above)
8. Read [Ephesians 5:8-11](#). What happens when we turn away from lives of darkness? What does it look like when we bring our secret sins into the light? Have you ever experienced the breaking of a stronghold by bringing it to the light? (See #5c above)
9. Read [2 Corinthians 4:3-6](#). What happens when we remove God from our lives? How do we overcome a dark mind? (See #5d above)
10. Read [Matthew 5:14 & 16](#). What does Jesus do in our lives when we turn from darkness to a relationship with Him? How have you experienced this in your own life? (See #6 above)
11. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)