



Small Group Discussion Questions

“Light of the World”

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Pray for your time together .

Read John 8:12-20

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.”*¹³ The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”¹⁴ Jesus answered, *“Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.”*¹⁵ *You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.*¹⁶ *But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.*¹⁷ *In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true.*¹⁸ *I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”*¹⁹ Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “*You do not know me or my Father,*” Jesus replied. *“If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”*²⁰ He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

In this passage, Jesus claims that he is the “light of the world.” This is an extraordinary claim. Martin Luther suggests, “with this message, Christ abolished all other doctrines.”

Read John 8:12-20 again.

Warm it up

1. What do you notice first in this passage?
2. What do you think that light and darkness signify in verse 12?
3. Theologian Rudolf Bultmann once said, “Without the revelation of Christ the world is in darkness.” Do you agree with this statement? Without Christ, would your life be in darkness?

Talk it over

4. What do you think it means that Jesus proclaimed “I *am* the light of the world” instead of “I *came to give* the light of the world”? What is the difference between Jesus *being* the light and *giving* the light?

5. Is Jesus really a light to the *whole* world?

6. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” What insight does this verse add to the idea of Jesus as the light of the world?

7. Jesus says in verse 19 that if people know him they also know his Father. What is he trying to teach us here?

8. Imagine if someone told you that they spoke with the full authority of God and with God as a full corroborating witness. Would you believe them? What proof would you seek to verify the claim? Imagine living at this time (pre-death and resurrection of Jesus) – what would have convinced you that what Jesus said was true? What kept the scribes and Pharisees from believing the truth about Jesus? What keeps people today from believing?

Work it out

9. If we do believe that what Jesus said is true, then why do we still experience darkness in our lives? What can you do about it?

10. How do you feel knowing that God is in the business of bringing light and life to the dark places in our lives and world? Is that intimidating or inviting?

Pray it through

The church is called to be the visible body of Christ in the world. The light of Christ is to shine through us in the world. Just the fact that you are meeting in a small group to gather as community, to pray, to study, to share your lives with one another—that itself is an act of choosing of the light of Christ over the darkness of isolation, which many are inclined to do.

May God shine the light of Christ upon you this week. Close in praying for one another.