



STUDY GUIDE – March 8, 2020

Message Title: The Light
Teaching Pastor: Brian C. Hughes

This study guide has been designed for Small Groups in mind, and can be used by individuals as well.

Warm-up/Icebreaker:

After everyone is seated, turn the lights out or have everyone close their eyes. Now ask them, without looking (or using phones as lights), to describe what others are wearing to illustrate how hard it is when we have no light. This is supposed to be a fun exercise, so let it go on until it's run its course (you'll know) and then have everyone open their eyes to see if what they described was accurate.

Leader should emphasize something like: "When we can't see, we may get some things right, remember some details accurately, but many things are off course. Being able to see and having light to illuminate reality is part of how we find our way."

Pray:

Lord, please reveal to us more deeply the identity of your son, Jesus. Help us to understand what it means that He is the light of the world and that we can live in that light.

Get Started:

Read Psalm 119:105

- Discuss what you think it means that God's word is a 'lamp for my feet and a light for my path?'
- Share about a time when God shone a light in the darkness to help you find your way back on the path.

Watch and Discuss video:

Light has many inherent properties. Which one of the following qualities of light statements impacts you the most today?

- Light travels fast.
- Light reveals secrets.
- Light shows danger.
- Light points the way.

What other characteristics about light do you think also apply to the metaphor of Jesus being "the light of the world"? (in other words, what would you add to the list above?)

Read John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14-16 out loud.

- If someone asked you, “what does it mean that Jesus is the ‘light of the world’”, what would you say?

Out of seven I AM statements that Jesus made, this was the only one also used to describe followers of Jesus, which is why John 8 and Matthew 5 operate together.

- So, lets say that someone asks you the previous question and you answer it. **Then** they ask this one: “What does it mean that **you**, as a follower of Jesus, are the ‘light of the world’?” How would you answer that question?
- Are you making it harder or easier for people to see Jesus?
- What is one change you could make or one step you could take to improve your ‘light of the world’ effectiveness?

Reflect and Commit:

Pastor Brian’s message on Sunday began with God creating, separating light from darkness, and saying that the light was good. We know that God is light, there is no darkness in Him. The message ends with Jesus in the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles, at an Illumination ceremony. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees who believed that interaction with God is confined to the innermost dark room where the lampstand resides, where only the high priest is allowed. The lampstand with the flame, kept in the innermost room of the Temple, is now brought outermost through the manifestation of Jesus as human. Jesus tells them that the light of the world is now there, that He will illuminate their pathways forever if they choose to walk in the light, that darkness and artificial light are no longer the way. Jesus is the light they have been seeking in the dark, and He could now openly illuminate those that choose to follow him.

- They had a choice to make and we do too. Have you made that choice to follow Him? Read 1 John 1:5-10 and commit to letting God reveal and remove sin and to walk in the light of forgiveness. Allow for a few minutes for people to individually pray.

Additionally, what God says to the churches in the book of Revelation seems very direct: *“Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”* God warns the churches that they have the potential to drift away from their original purpose. At times churches illuminate other things besides Christ which is why they become ineffective.

- How, as a church, can we keep the lampstand in its place?

Pray:

God, you said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” You made your light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of your glory displayed in the face of Christ. Help us to firmly choose to trust in Jesus so that His light will shine on us and we will in turn become the light of the world. (adapted from 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Matthew 5:14)