



Community Group Discussion Guide

December 15, 2024

John 1:6-13 | The True Light with Us

MOTIVATE

- ⇒ ***Starter question: What is the brightest light you have ever experienced? What effect did this bright light have on you?***

DISCUSS

The concept of “light” appears numerous times in both the Old and New Testaments. The contrast between light and darkness is also a recurring theme in John’s Gospel. God is light (1 John 1:5), while Satan is the “power of darkness” (Luke 22:53). People love either the light or the darkness, and this love controls their actions (John 3:16-19). Those who believe in Christ are the “sons of light” (John 12:35-36). Just as the first creation began with “Let there be light!” so the new creation begins with the entrance of light into the heart of the believer (2 Corinthians 4:3-6). The coming of Jesus into the world was the dawning of a new, bright day for sinful humanity (Luke 1:78-79).

In a time of great darkness, God promised to send a Light that would shine on everyone living in the shadow of death (Isaiah 9:2). In John 1:6-13, John explained to his audience that this promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. (See [John Overview](#) for more information.) Jesus is the true Light with us and through Him salvation is available to all people.

- ⇒ ***What are some characteristics of light? Suggestions: It’s bright. It’s obvious—you know what it is. It’s source is known—we know where it comes from. It dispels darkness. It illuminates. It helps us to see.***
- ⇒ ***As the Light of the World, how does Jesus display these same characteristics in our spiritual lives?***
- ⇒ ***Why is light essential to our physical world? Why is God’s true Light essential to our spiritual world?***

John 1:6-8 *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.*

John the Gospel writer jumped from writing about creation to introducing Jesus’ forerunner and herald, John the Baptist. In the Bible are recurring themes of life and light. In John 1:4-5, both themes are used and the entry of the Word into the world is described as light shining in the darkness.

In verses 6-8, John introduced another common theme: witness. The words *witness* and *testify* (usually used as verbs) are essentially the same word and are used over thirty times in John’s Gospel. The words are where we get our word *martyr*. John the Baptist came as a witness to tell the truth about what was happening in the world. As if in a courtroom, he came to give evidence to verify the truth of Jesus’ case and to offer insight into who Jesus is and what He came to do.

- ⇒ ***If you had to give evidence to support the truth of Jesus, what would you use or say?***

God sent John the Baptist as a witness to prepare the way for the Messiah and to share a message with people who needed to hear it (Isaiah 40:3). His main role was to glorify and identify Jesus and to lead people to believe in Him (John 1:35-37). John was the first in a long line of witnesses tasked with pointing people to Jesus.

- ⇒ ***Are we supposed to continue John the Baptist’s commission to be a witness today?***

- ⇒ **Discuss how this passage from John corresponds to this Henderson Hills value: Life-Giving Hope: We reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ with delight by building relationships and environments infused with grace and joy.**

Good witnesses do not attract attention to themselves but to the person or facts which they represent. John the Baptist came to awaken people to their need of God's revelation. Though John the Baptist's message was enlightening, he was not the true Light. John stressed the difference between Jesus and John the Baptist to ensure that believers worship Christ, not the messenger. John was a man; Jesus is God. John was a witness; Jesus is the Word. John was a servant; Jesus is the Son of God. John was sent to reflect the Light of the World.

- ⇒ **Can you share an example of when you witnessed a believer reflect the light of Jesus?**

Like John the Baptist, we are not the source of God's light; we merely reflect His light. Jesus is the true Light. He helps us see our way to God and shows us how to walk along that way. In the same way, Jesus still chooses to reflect His light to an unbelieving world through His followers.

- ⇒ **How would you explain what it means to be a "reflector of Jesus' light?"**
 ⇒ **What do you believe your life reflects about Jesus?**

John 1:9 *The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.*

The true Light invades the darkness, shining on every person and exposing them for who they are. No one is exempt. The true Light names the darkness for what it is and describes sin for what it does. The forces of light and darkness, good and evil, God and Satan, are arrayed against each other to such a degree that there can be no compromise.

- ⇒ **How does Jesus' coming as the true Light relate to the Christmas story?**

John 1:10-11 *He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.*

In these verses, John described the rejection of the message of Jesus. John used the word *world* approximately 77 times in his Gospel. The Greek word is *kosmos* and typically has a negative connotation. *World* or *kosmos* refer to the earth and its inhabitants—the sinful society alien to God's truth that lives in rebellion toward Him. It's where we get the concept of worldliness.

- ⇒ **How does understanding "the world" this way give testimony to the character of God and His love?**

Even though John the Baptist's testimony was clear, Jesus still experienced rejection. In these verses, John explains the rejection of Jesus by Judaism and the world—a rejection that ultimately leads to the cross.

a. Judaism: Among the Israelites, where there should have been readiness and receptivity, there was only rejection. The nation of Israel, in spite of its spiritual advantages, was blind to its own Messiah and neither received nor welcomed Him.

- ⇒ **How were Moses and the Law, the temple, and the sacrificial system "lesser lights" that pointed to the true Light who was the fulfillment and completion of the Old Testament?**

b. The world: The world is a place of darkness and is opposed to the light. One of the great tragedies is that although Christ created the world, the people He created didn't recognize Him. They were blinded and could not see nor understand the Light of the World. Yet God still loves the world and entered into it to save it, but blind sinners did not welcome the light. All the forces of evil tried to prevent life and extinguish the light—but the darkness of the world will never overcome God's light. Darkness means death and hell, while the true Light means life and heaven.

- ⇒ *How can the very One who can cure the human condition be rejected?*
- ⇒ *What comfort is there in knowing the darkness will never overcome God's light?*

John 1:12-13 *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Though the rejection of Jesus was universal, individuals can respond personally. The Greek root word translated *received* is also used in the sense of welcoming and accepting. To receive Jesus is to welcome Him and to acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord. John used the phrase “but to all who did receive Him.” Even though the focus of God’s revelation had been Israel, the natural home for the truth of God, the Word came for the entire world. Everyone has access to the Light. This opens the way for Gentiles to become God’s children.

The true Light shines to force a distinction: some reject, some receive the revelation. Those who receive Jesus and believe in His name become children of God by divine re-creation. There is a powerful transformation of those who embrace the Light of the World.

- ⇒ *What do we say to those who claim that every person is automatically a child of God?*
- ⇒ *What makes a person a true child of God?*
- ⇒ *How does divine birth result in divine transformation?*

The word *right* carries a sense of authority or permission. God grants the right or gives the privilege for new birth. No one can attain this new birth on his or her own power, merit, or ability. Only God can grant it. This new birth comes only to those who believe in Jesus—who He is and what He represents. When we welcome Jesus as Lord of our lives we are reborn spiritually and we become part of God’s family.

- ⇒ *What is it like for you to be part of God's family?*

TRANSFORM

1. Make personal application: The darkness of evil never has and never will overcome God’s light. Jesus is the Creator of life, and His life brings light to humanity. In His light we see ourselves as we really are—sinners in need of a Savior. When we follow Jesus, the true Light, He lights the path ahead of us so we can see how to live. He removes the darkness of sin from our lives. We need never to stumble in darkness again.

- ⇒ *Have you personally received the true Light and become a child of God?*
- ⇒ *Have you allowed the light of Christ to shine into your life?*
- ⇒ *What divine transformation has God brought into your life?*

2. Pray: Praise God for His promise that anyone who receives Christ will be born again and enter into His spiritual family. Thank God for shining the light of His love into your life and showing you your need for a Savior. Ask God to show you one person during this Christmas season who needs to hear the story of Jesus.

STUDY

Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

- *Be Alive: Get to Know the Living Savior*, by Warren W. Wiersbe, pages 22-24.
- *Holman New Testament Commentary, John*, pages 11-13, 22-23.
- *Life Application Bible Commentary, John*, pages 6-10.
- *The NIV Application Commentary, John*, pages 55-59, 61-67.
- *Shepherd's Notes, John*, page 13.