

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

SMALL GROUP NOTES - 04/03/18

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SCRIPTURE

John 8: 12-30

SCRIPTURE CONTEXT

The theme of Jesus as the light is one that John returns to a number of times in his gospel. Jesus makes another bold declaration in John 8 as he teaches in the temple, saying 'I am the light of the world.' The Pharisees take issue with Jesus' statement because they believe he is bearing witness about himself. This opens up another discussion about Jesus' identity and his relationship with the Father. Jesus contends that his testimony is true and that the Father bears witness about him. 'Where is your Father?' (v19) and 'Who are you?' (v25) are hugely significant questions. They are the right questions to ask but the Pharisees are unable and unprepared to accept the answer they receive.

Jesus turns the conversation to one that foreshadows the cross, with reference to them dying 'in their sins' (v24) and the Son of Man being 'lifted up' (v28). The section finishes with a revelation that Jesus' confidence in his ministry was based on the Father's authority (v28), teaching (v28), presence (v29), faithfulness (v29) and his obedience (v29).

DID YOU KNOW?

This conversation takes place in the context of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. Part of that celebration was the lighting of huge candelabras in temple courts as a reminder of the pillar of fire that Israel followed in the wilderness. It is possible that Jesus was standing right by these (or where they had been) when he makes this statement.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think the Pharisees were so quick to dispute Jesus' statement in verse 13? Why did what Jesus was saying bother them?
2. What is Jesus saying through his statement, 'I am the light of the world'? What does this picture tell us about Jesus?
3. The implication of Jesus being the light of the world is that the world is in darkness without him. Why do you think Jesus's hearers found this hard to take and why do people today?
4. Just as Jesus is the 'light of the world', so the church is called to be 'the light of the world' (Matt.5:14). How are we doing at letting our light shine before others? What things can dull our light?

DIGGING DEEPER

Do a word study around 'light' in the New Testament and discuss what impacts you about it.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY / DEVOTION

Who is this man? John Ortberg

The Jesus I never knew, Philip Yancey