Deep Dive Group Discussion Guide

10/25/26 Illumination — Part 2 *Pastor Stewart Farley*

Central Idea: Illumination is when the Holy Spirit takes what God has revealed in His Word and makes it personally understood and applicable in the life of the believer.

Scriptures from the Message Romans 8:14–16 / 1 Corinthians 2:9–10 / 1 Corinthians 2:12 / Hebrews 5:14 / Jeremiah 31:33 / Hebrews 8:10 / Hebrews 10:16 / 1 John 2:27 / John 5:39–40

Opening: What Is Illumination?

- Pastor Stewart distinguished three ideas: **Revelation:** God has spoken. / **Inspiration:** We can read what God has said. / **Illumination:** *"I know what He's saying to me."*
- Illumination is the Holy Spirit taking the truth of God's Word and bringing it deeply and personally into the believer's life.

Opening Question:
Think about a time when you had read or heard a passage many times, but suddenly it became personal and you saw something you had never seen before. **What was different about that moment?**

Illustration One: The Illuminator - Seeing What Was Already There

Pastor Stewart described an experience at Disney where something that was invisible to the natural eye appeared when placed under a special light. The image was already there, but it required the right illumination to see it. He connected that experience to the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Truth Can Be Present Without Us Seeing It - 1 John 2:27 // If the image was already present but needed illumination to become visible, **what might that teach us about reading Scripture? /** What could cause us to read something repeatedly without really *seeing* it?

2. The Holy Spirit Is Our Teacher // Pastor Stewart said believers have the capacity to receive understanding and personal application of God's truth through the Word, and described the Holy Spirit as the Teacher who brings the Word into our lives.

How does expecting the Holy Spirit to teach you change the way you approach Scripture? // Follow-up: What is the difference between asking, *"What does this passage mean?"* and asking, **"Holy Spirit, what are You showing me through this?"**

3. Movement Turns on the Light // Pastor Stewart followed the Illuminator illustration with another picture: a motion detector. **Movement causes the light to come on. No motion, no light.** He connected this to agreeing with and responding to God's revelation.

> **Can we continually ask God for greater illumination without responding to what He has already shown us? //** Where might obedience be the next step in receiving greater understanding?

Illustration Two: The Menu and the Meal - Moving From Information to Relationship

Pastor Stewart compared Scripture to a restaurant menu. We do not go to a restaurant to become experts on the menu. The purpose of the menu is to **introduce us to the meal**. He connected this illustration to John 5:39–40 and Jesus' warning that people could search the Scriptures yet miss Him.

4. Knowing the Menu Without Eating the Meal - John 5:39–40

Someone could memorize the menu, describe every item on it, and still leave the restaurant hungry. // **How can the same thing happen spiritually? //** What is the difference between knowing Scripture and allowing Scripture to bring us into a deeper relationship with Jesus?

5. Don't Just Read a Book, Look for a Person

Pastor Stewart said, **"Don't read a book. Look for a Person as you read the Book."** The goal is relationship, not information alone. // **How would your Bible reading change if your primary goal became encountering Christ rather than simply learning something? // Deeper question:** Have there been times when acquiring more biblical knowledge actually became a substitute for experiencing God?

6. Information Versus Life

Pastor Stewart also used the illustration of a mother being told she is pregnant versus seeing the first ultrasound image of her baby. One communicates information; the other makes that reality come alive personally. // **What truths about God do you intellectually believe but desire to know more deeply in your "knower"?**

Illustration Three: The GPS - From General Direction to Personal Guidance

Pastor Stewart compared Scripture and the Holy Spirit to a GPS. The map provides direction and shows where you are going, while the voice gives personalized details about where and when to turn. He described the Holy Spirit as the voice giving the believer the details needed for direction.

7. The Map Gives Direction, the Voice Makes It Personal - **Romans 8:14–16; / 1 Corinthians 2:9–12**

Why do we need both a solid grounding in God's written Word **and** dependence upon the Holy Spirit? // How can Scripture establish the direction while the Spirit helps us understand its personal application?

8. Hearing About God Versus Hearing From God

Pastor Stewart closed with a courtroom illustration. Secondhand testimony is hearsay. His point was that believers do not have to live only on what someone else says about God. **We can know Him for ourselves.** He described the movement from merely hearing *about* God to hearing *from* God as experiencing illumination. // **Where are you currently depending primarily upon someone else's experience with God rather than seeking to know Him personally? //** What would it look like to move from **secondhand faith to personal encounter** in that area?

Bringing the Three Illustrations Together

Consider all three pictures: **The Illuminator:** *Help me SEE what is already there. //* **The Menu and Meal:** *Help me EXPERIENCE the Person the Word reveals. //* **The GPS:** *Help me UNDERSTAND how Your truth speaks into where I am and where I am going.*

9. Which Illustration Describes Where You Are?

Which of the three illustrations best describes what you need from God right now? **Illuminator:** "Lord, help me see." // **Meal:** "Lord, I don't just want information. I want to know You." // **GPS:** "Lord, I know the truth, but I need Your direction for my situation." // **What makes that particular illustration meaningful for you right now?**

Closing Call to Action - Move From Information to Illumination

Don't settle for knowing what God has said. Seek to recognize what He is saying to you through what He has said. Then turn illumination into obedience. // That moves the group through a very natural progression: **See it → Experience Him → Hear personally → Respond.** It should give you plenty of depth for a full hour without feeling like you're simply moving through a list of unrelated questions.