

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

JOHN 1:9-13

DISCUSSION 1: THE BIG PICTURE

1. Read John 1:1-13. What words and themes are repeated through this whole section? What in John 1:1-8 does 1:9-13 build on? Identify at least three ironies John wants the readers to consider in 1:9-13?
2. From this passage, share at least five things it tells us about Jesus. Then, share at least three things this passage tells us we might find or receive in Jesus.
3. Our verses today, and John as a whole, highlights how people responded to Jesus. It's designed to cause the reader to ask how they should and will respond to Jesus. From what we've seen about Jesus the last three weeks, what are some ways you have or think you need to respond to Jesus?

DISCUSSION 2: THE TRUE LIGHT

1. Compare John 1:5-11 to John 3:16-21; 8:12; 12:24-36; 1 John 1:5-9; 2:8-11. What's at the heart of this metaphor comparing Jesus to light? What response is he wanting from us by saying Jesus is light?
2. If Jesus is the true light that shines in a dark world, what are reasons why people do not see him or embrace him as the light, both in John's gospel and today? What are some of the reasons you believe in Jesus—or what led you to believe in Jesus—even while many around you reject him?
3. If Jesus is the light, we will either walk in light or darkness. Discuss how this might apply in evangelism, temptation and sin, community, faith or doubt, and following and abiding with Jesus.

DISCUSSION 3: BELIEVE & RECEIVE

1. In 1:10-12 John uses related words about faith in Jesus: knowing, believing, and receiving. What is similar about these words and what different nuances are conveyed by each?
2. What are some of the many privileges, rights, and benefits of being a child of God? (Use the "For Further Study" section for additional verses on being God's children.) What are some of the responsibilities that come with being God's child?
3. When are you tempted to not relate to God as if you are his beloved child? When are you tempted to believe something about yourself or your identity inconsistent with being God's beloved child? What idols, lies, actions, or wrong desires are present in these temptations? Then, discuss what truths from this text and the Bible you might need to remember as you fight unbelief with truth and God's promises.
4. Share one or two things this week you need to do differently to remember and walk in view of being God's beloved children and living in light rather than darkness.

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What are different kinds of lights (ex: flashlights, stars, house lights, car lights, etc.)? What do these various lights do? This metaphor points us to Jesus who is the true light. What are ways Jesus is a light in our world and for us?
2. How do we become a child of God?
3. What are some of the blessings and benefits of being God's child? If we are God's children, what might be a few responsibilities or ways we reflect God?

APPLICATION

- **Individual:** Part of how we are lights (1:6-9) that point to Jesus is by being a witness for him to others (1:8). Some will receive him and some will reject him. This is in God's hands and not our own, and we're simply called to point others to him as lights. Spend a few moments thinking about relationships in your life with unbelievers or areas you might build these relationships. How can you be more of a light? How might you share the gospel? Pray for God to give you boldness, for open doors, and for those people who are currently in darkness that God would bring them into the light.
- **Individual:** On a sheet of paper, write out a few areas of struggle in your life right now. That could include various temptations, relational conflict, financial or health struggles, idols, unbelief, selfishness, or many other things. Pick a few that immediately come to mind or seem most pressing. Describe that struggle in one sentence. Underneath that sentence, write out: "Because God is my Father and I am his beloved child..." Complete that sentence with a summary of how you might respond to your struggle or what is true for you in this struggle in light of being God's child.
- **Group:** Make a list of as many of the benefits and blessings we receive in Christ as God's children. (Example: God is a loving father who invites us to talk to him and prayer.) Find ways to remind one another of some of these blessings throughout the week in conversation or through a text, email, or some other creative way. As a group, you could also write out cards to a group letting them know you're praying for them and encouraging them with promises and truths from this list. We need reminders of all that we have as God's children because we forget and we're prone to doubt them.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- **The Light:** John 3:19-21; 8:12-20; 12:35-37; Ps. 27:1; Ex. 13:17-22; Is. 42:6.
- **Children of God:** John 11:52; Matt. 6:8-9; Gal. 3:23-4:7; Rom. 8:14-16; Eph. 5:1; 1 Joh 3:1-2, 9-10; 4:7-21.
- Read the article "Four Reasons We Don't Share the Gospel" by Steven Lee at desiringgod.org.
- Read the article "7 Extraordinary Ways the Father Loves Us" by Dustin Crowe at gcdiscipleship.com.