



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Teaching Title: The Darkness

Key Scripture: John 1:1–5

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: John 1:1–18

Tuesday: Matthew 1:18–25

Wednesday: Matthew 2:1–12

Thursday: Matthew 2:13–23

Friday: Isaiah 9:1–7

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

The Light extinguishes darkness

MEMORY VERSE: John 1:5 NLT

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

Darkness can be scary. Children fear it, and if we're honest, adults do too. It's not only the physical darkness we dread, but the spiritual and emotional darkness caused by the evil in our world and the brokenness in our own hearts. The good news is that God Himself stepped into that darkness in the person of Jesus Christ. At Christmas, we celebrate more than a baby in a manger—we celebrate the eternal Word, the Creator, the Life-giver, the Light who entered our world to push back the darkness. Jesus is the light of the world, shining hope where we need it most. You don't have to clean yourself up for Him; you only need to open your heart to Him. When we turn to Jesus and confess our sins, we step into the light. God sees your darkness, and He sends His Light.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: Are you more of a “turn on every light in the house” person or a “walk confidently in the dark” person?

1. Read John 1:1–5 together as a group. John describes Jesus as the “Word.” Why would he use this term to describe Jesus?
2. In simple terms, what do you think it means that Jesus is the “expression” or “essence” of God? (See Notes and Digging Deeper)
3. According to John 1:3, what role did Jesus play in creation? Why might it matter—especially in a dark or confusing world—that the One who created everything is also the One who came to save?
4. What do you think John means by “light” in 1:4–5? What does light do for people? (See Digging Deeper)
5. What does 1:5 suggest about the power of darkness compared to the power of Jesus?
6. Read Isaiah 9:2. How does Jesus fulfill this promise?

7. Pastor Neal talked about the darkness being all around us, but also within us. Where do you personally feel the most “darkness” right now, and what would it look like to “let the Light in” this week?

NOTES

Question 1—

John 1:1 – The English word “Word” is translated from the Greek word *logos*, which in this context means “the expression of” or “the essence of.” Jesus is the expression of God, the very essence of who God is.

DIGGING DEEPER

Question 1—

“This verse clearly implies that the expression of God had creative power and called the universe into being [“In the beginning is a clear reference to Genesis 1:1]. To the Hebrew “the Word of God” was the self-assertion of the divine personality; to the Greek the formula denoted the rational mind that ruled the universe. John is asserting that the “Word” is the source of all that is visible and antedates the totality of the material world. The use of *logos* implies that John was endeavoring to bring out the full significance of the incarnation to the Gentile world as well as to the Jewish people.”

—Tenney, *John: The Expositors Bible Commentary*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids: 1981.

“In short, God’s ‘Word’ in the Old Testament is His powerful self-expression in creation, revelation, and salvation, and the personification of that ‘Word’ makes it suitable for John to apply it as a title to God’s ultimate self-disclosure, the person of his own Son.

—DA Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1991.

Question 4—

Theme of Light in John’s Gospel

“[Light] teaches us about God’s revelation. The image of *light* itself is only used in the first twelve chapters, as Jesus proclaims himself to be the light of the world and demonstrates what that means by revealing the divine glory through His life and teaching. In this revelation He depends on what He *hears* and sees from the Father (8:38) ... He is himself the locus of the divine presence (1:51). Thus, He enables people to have a vision of God, for to see Him is to see God...He claims the Scriptures actually speak of Him (5:39) ... Jesus does not come to condemn, but condemnation occurs as people reject Him – they stand self-condemned. As the light shines, one either hates the light or approaches it (3:19-21). The stories in this Gospel illustrate both reactions.”

—Whitacre, Rodney A. *John: The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. IVP: Downers Grove, 1999.