

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 2: The Light of the World: A disciple believes Jesus is our light for salvation.

Main Idea: Christ is the source of light and guide for a world lost in darkness. John 8:12-20

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14)

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people and discuss the Observation and Interpretation sections.

Observation Exercise 1: Jesus’s central claim

Read John 8:12. What claim did Jesus make about Himself, and what promise did He attach to following Him?

Suggested Response: Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” He promised that whoever follows Him will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

Observation Exercise 2: The Pharisees’ objection

Read John 8:13-18. What objection did the Pharisees raise, and how did Jesus respond to their concern about testimony?

Suggested Response: The Pharisees objected that Jesus was testifying about Himself, that His testimony was not valid because it was self-testimony. Jesus responded by saying His testimony was true because He knew where He came from and where He was going and that both He and the Father had the same testimony.

Observation Exercise 3: Questions of origin and authority

Read John 8:19-20. What question did the Pharisees ask about Jesus’s father, and what did John note about the setting and outcome of this exchange?

Suggested Response: They asked, “Where is your father?” Jesus said they did

not know Him or the Father. John noted that this took place near the temple treasury and that no one arrested Jesus because His hour had not yet come.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Interpretation Exercise 1: Following the light

Based on John 8:12, what did Jesus mean by describing Himself as “the light of the world?” Why do you think He connected light specifically to following Him rather than simply believing facts about Him?

Suggested Response: By calling Himself the light of the world, Jesus presented Himself as the source of truth and direction in a world marked by darkness. Connecting light to following suggests that this is not only about understanding who Jesus is, but about trusting Him to guide one’s life. Light is experienced through relationship and movement, not distance or observation. He was connecting to the Old Testament; when the Israelites were in the wilderness, they moved when the light moved. The call is to follow the light, not observe the light.

Interpretation Exercise 2: Underneath the Pharisees’ objection

In John 8:13–18, why did the Pharisees focus on the issue of testimony? What does Jesus’s response reveal about the kind of authority He was claiming?

Suggested Response: The Pharisees focused on testimony to undermine Jesus’s authority without addressing His claim directly. Jesus’s response shows that His authority does not rest on human approval or legal procedure alone but on His relationship with the Father. He presented Himself as speaking in unity with God, which reframed the issue from legal validity to divine authority.

Interpretation Exercise 3: Knowing Jesus and knowing the Father

In John 8:19–20, why did Jesus link knowing Him with knowing the Father? What does this reveal about the deeper issue in the conflict?

Suggested Response: Jesus linked knowing Him with knowing the Father because, in John’s Gospel, God is made known through the Son. The deeper issue is not lack of information or evidence, but refusal to recognize who Jesus truly is. Their question about His Father exposes a deeper blindness that prevented them from seeing God’s work through Him.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

Question 1: As you read through John 8:12–20, what stood out to you most? Was there anything specific that felt challenging, unsettling, or clarifying?

Suggested Response: Responses will vary. Encourage participants to name specific words, phrases, or moments in the conversation that caught their attention. Use follow-up questions to invite deeper reflection rather than quick answers.

Question 2: Jesus described Himself as light for those who are walking in darkness. Where in your life do you feel stuck, unsure, or unclear about direction right now? How can you follow Jesus in these areas and fight self-sufficiency?

Suggested Response: Some may name practical decisions or seasons of uncertainty. Others may describe emotional or spiritual confusion. This question helps people identify places where they feel the need for guidance rather than self-sufficiency.

Question 3: The Pharisees responded to Jesus by questioning His authority instead of examining themselves. When you feel challenged or exposed, what is your usual instinctive response?

Suggested Response: You may notice a tendency to become defensive, explain yourself, or shift blame. Others may withdraw, shut down, or avoid the issue altogether. This question helps show how easily self-protection can take over when light presses in and how resistance can appear in subtle, socially acceptable ways rather than open rejection.

Question 4: Jesus linked knowing Him with knowing the Father. Where do you find it tempting to rely on your own judgment, experience, or understanding instead of allowing Jesus to define what is true?

Suggested Response: This may reveal areas where independence feels safer than trust. Some may recognize patterns of selectively listening to Jesus only when it aligns with their preferences or plans. Others may notice discomfort when Jesus challenges long-held assumptions, habits, or sources of control. The goal is to recognize where trust is partial rather than whole.

Question 5: If following Jesus means allowing His light to guide your steps, what is one small, concrete way you could practice that this week? How could our group walk alongside you in that?

Suggested Response: Practices might include slowing down a decision to pray and listen, naming a specific area of confusion or fear to entrust to Jesus, or

choosing patience and humility in a tense relationship. Group support could take the form of praying together, checking in during the week, or revisiting the commitment at the next gathering. The emphasis is on shared encouragement and faithfulness, not performance or pressure.