

TALK IT OVER

The Light of Jesus for Your Darkest Days

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Open your group in prayer, and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions in the message notes, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions towards the end of the document.

Message Notes

"People should enjoy every day of their lives, no matter how long they live. But they should also remember there will be many dark days." Ecclesiastes 11:8 (GW)

TYPES OF DARK DAYS: Days of: confusion... conflict... disappointment... loss... loneliness... grief... stress... anxiety and fear... heartbreak... depression... despair...

Talk It Over

"People will wander aimlessly, distressed and hungry for what they don't have. In deep frustration, they'll become enraged and shake their fists—at leaders and even at God. Everywhere they look, they'll see trouble and darkness and despair, and they'll have to live in dark days." Isaiah 8:21-22

"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light—a light that will shine on all who have been living in the shadow of death." Isaiah 9:2

Question 1

What does Ecclesiastes 11:8 above say with regard to dark days? In contrast, how does Isaiah 9:2 describe the coming of Jesus to earth at Christmas?

THE ANTIDOTE: TURN TO GOD'S LIGHT

1. God's character is the source of all light in the universe. Without God, there would be no light and no universe!

"God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. This is the message Jesus has given us to announce!"
1 John 1:5 (TLB)

2. God's first act in creation was to create light!

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.... God said, 'Let there be light!' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness." Genesis 1:1-4

3. At the first Christmas 2020 years ago, God came to earth as Jesus to give us more light—about himself... life... death... eternity... love... forgiveness... salvation... and much more!

Jesus: *"I have come as a Light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer wander in darkness."* John 12:46 (TLB)

Question 2

According to John 12:46 above, why did Jesus say he came to earth at Christmas *"as a Light to shine in this dark world"*? According to the verses above, how is Jesus as the Son of God supremely qualified to be the antidote for our dark days?

HOW DOES THE LIGHT OF JESUS HELP ME IN DARK DAYS?

1. Light Can Illuminate

"Light makes all things easy to see." Ephesians 5:13 (NCV)

Jesus: *"I am the light of the world! If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, for living light will flood your path!"* John 8:12 (LB)

• In Dark Days, I Need the Light of Jesus When I Can't See the Way Forward

"For anyone who doesn't know where you're going, anyone groping in the dark, here's what to do: Trust in God. Yes, lean on God!" Isaiah 50:10 (Mes)

"Your words are a flashlight to light the path ahead of me and keep me from stumbling."
Psalm 119:105 (LB)

"God's instructions are always right and they point the way to happiness. His commands shine brightly, and they light up the right way to go." Psalm 19:8

"The peace that Christ gives will guide you in the decisions you make." Colossians 3:15

God: *"I'll take the hand of those who don't know the way, who can't see where they're going. I'll be a personal guide to them, directing them through unknown country. I'll be right there to show them what roads to take, and make sure they don't fall into the ditch. These are the things I'll be doing for them—sticking with them, not leaving them for a minute."* Isaiah 42:16 (Mes)

David: *"Even though I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, Lord, for you are with me."*
Psalm 23:4

Question 3

For clarity and illumination, you want the brightest light you can get! Discuss how God says in Isaiah 42:16, *"I'll take the hand of those who don't know the way."* Talk about what it means to you to have the creator of the universe guide you in your decisions and direct your way forward in dark days. What does Isaiah 50:10 say you should do in order to receive God's light?

2. Light Can Disinfect

"If we claim to have a relationship with God, but we continue living in darkness, we lie and we aren't following the truth. But, if we live in the light, as God is in the light, then we can have real fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without any

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sin, we're only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, God is faithful and just and will forgive us and cleanse us from every wrong." 1 John 1:6-9

- **In Dark Days, I Need the Light of Jesus When I Want a Clean Start**

"You, Lord, are my light; you dispel my darkness!" 2 Samuel 22:29 (GNT)

"In the past, your life was full of darkness, but now you are full of light in the Lord! Now you can live like children of light. And God's light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth." Ephesians 5:8-9 (NCV)

Question 4

How does the light of Jesus give us a clean start according to 2 Samuel and Ephesians 5 above? As 1 John 1:9 says, confess your sins to God—trusting him to be faithful and just to forgive you. As you're comfortable, discuss any past or current regrets or guilt in your relationship with God or with others that need to be "disinfected" by God's light.

3. Light Can Heal

- **In Dark Days, I Need the Light of Jesus When I'm Wounded & In Pain**

"I am wounded and in pain. So rescue me, O God, by your saving power." Psalm 69:29

"He forgives all my sins and he heals me." Psalm 103:3 (TLB)

"Instead of fasting, I want you to break the chains of injustice and stop all the unfairness to those oppressed. I want you to share your food with the hungry and shelter the homeless. When you see anyone who needs clothes, clothe them! And don't refuse to help your own relatives. If you do these things, my light will shine on you like the morning sun, and your own healing will quickly appear!" Isaiah 58:6-8

"The Father has made you able to share in all he's prepared for his people in the Kingdom of Light. For he has freed us from the power of darkness." Colossians 1:12-13

Question 5

How does the light of Jesus heal us according to Psalm 103 and Colossians 1 above? In Isaiah, what six things does God want when he says, *"If you do these things, my light will shine on you like the morning sun, and your own healing will quickly appear!"* Which speaks to you to do today?

4. Light Grows Things

- **In Dark Days, I Need the Light of Jesus to Change Me for the Better**

"I'm asking God... to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called." Ephesians 1:17-18

In the Bible—light and life go together hand-in-hand:

"You Lord, are the giver of life! And your light lets us enjoy life." Psalm 36:9

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Jesus: "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you'll have the light that leads to life!" John 8:12

Jesus: "I came to give life—life in all its fullness." John 10:10 (NCV)

"For the same God who once said, 'Let there be light in the darkness!' has now made his light to shine in our hearts! It is the brightness of God's glory that we see shining in the face of Jesus Christ."

2 Corinthians 4:6

"The darkness in our lives disappears and the new light of life in Christ shines in." 1 John. 2:8 (TLB)

"Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is Himself God. He created everything. Eternal life is in Him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and the darkness can never extinguish it." John 1:1-5 (LB)

Question 6

The same physical effect of light that helps plants grow is true of God's light for our spirits! According to Ephesians 1 above, what is the effect when our hearts are "flooded with light"? What did Jesus come to give us in John 10:10? How will you share God's light of hope, healing, and direction this Christmas? Think about someone you know who may not understand the life Christ brings to the world. Pray for them and make a plan to share God's light with them.

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message!

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

1. Today if you prayed & gave your life to Jesus for the first time,
TEXT NEWSTART (one word) to 83000 or EMAIL NEWSTART@saddleback.com
2. We meet in small groups for support. To join an online small group during Covid-19,
TEXT SMALLGROUP to 83000 or EMAIL SMALLGROUP@saddleback.com
3. We give thanks to God for the past week by giving our tithe & offering.
You can give online at <https://saddleback.com/GIVE> Help us feed tens of thousands.

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