

Study Guide



WHAT IS IT?

Light; we want it, we need it, and we use it every day.

Simply defined, **light is anything that makes something visible.**

There's natural light such as the sun, the moon, the stars, fireflies and lightning to name a few. And then there's manmade light that we enjoy from lamps, car headlights, flashlights, iPods, and cell phones among others. We don't always appreciate light until it's gone. And when that happens, its counterpart, darkness, takes over and it can create some very interesting situations.

"I'm scared!" – FEAR.

"Ouch! Where'd that wall come from?" – PAIN & CONFUSION.

"I can't see. Which way should I go?" – INDECISION.

"I'll wait until it's dark when no one can see me and then I'll...!" – WRONG ACTIONS/THOUGHTS.

Simply defined, **darkness is the absence of light.** As Ben shared in the DVD, we don't need someone to teach us that darkness can be scary. Remember Ben's experience with his little girl? It's just something we know. I guess you could say that to fully appreciate light you need to fully appreciate what darkness can create.

THINK ABOUT IT

Can you think of a time when the absence of light created in or around you any of the above emotions and experiences? How did you feel? What did you do?

Study Guide



HOW BEN SEES IT

"I learned just how scary and painful and confusing darkness can be during one of the first times my parents left my brothers and me home alone. While mom and dad were enjoying a visit with neighbors for a few hours, Sam, Chris, and I faced the challenge of whether or not we could be trusted with such freedom. During the first hour we raided the food supplies, those that were allowable and those that were off limits. The following hours we experienced the results of our daring raids...with agonizing regrets. As our parent's evening stretched into three hours and then four and rather than being good little boys and going to bed at the prescribed time, we stretched our freedom beyond its boundaries. As we played into the wee hours of the morning, without warning, all of the lights went out in the house. Chris, my youngest brother, began crying and screaming, "Oh no, what are we going to do?" from across the room. I jumped up and attempted to run across the room to him but instead tripped over our dog and hit my head on the wall. Then I began to cry which led Gopher to start howling. All this time unbeknownst to Chris and me, my oldest brother, Sam, had been crawling around the room looking for a flashlight. Suddenly he appeared with the flashlight shining under his chin creating the most frightening face we'd ever seen. This led to louder crying which scared Sam and he started crying which spooked Gopher into running around the room wildly and crashing into our family's prized gumball machine. When the screaming and crying failed to get the lights back on the three of us found each other as well as the sea of gumballs on the floor and then huddled together with Gopher in a corner of the basement cramming our mouths full of the forbidden goodies. And that is how our parents found us later that night. The next morning we awoke with achy bellies and achy butts!"

THINK ABOUT IT

***What did darkness create for Ben and his brothers in the above story?
How did they react?***

Study Guide



EXAMINE IT

Ben told us that Jesus made a bold and jaw dropping announcement that he was “the Light of the world” (John 8:12) and in doing so was claiming to be God. Jesus also contended that his light would give his followers “life” and keep them from “walking in darkness”. That raises some questions that we should examine.

- How do we know Jesus is God and why is that important to know?
- What did Jesus mean by “darkness” and “light”?
- What did Jesus mean by “life”?

1. How do we know Jesus is God and why is that important to know?

- Read **Matthew 1:23**
What name was Jesus called?
What does the name mean?
- Read **John 1:1-3**
In these verses “the Word” is speaking of Jesus. With that being the case, who is Jesus called and what did he do?
- Read **John 14:9-14**
How did Jesus indicate that he was God to some of his followers?
(Verse 9 & 11)
Why was that important for them to know? (Verse 10)
How might it benefit Jesus’ followers? (Verses 12-14)
- Read **Romans 9:5**
Who is Jesus (Christ) called?
- Read **Colossians 1:15-20**
How is Jesus (He) described in verse 15? What is an “image”?
What two words or ideas are repeated throughout verses 16-20? How do they help to knowing Jesus and God are equal?

EXAMINE IT continued...

Study Guide



EXAMINE IT continued...

2. What did Jesus mean by "darkness" and "light"?

Read the following scripture verses and make a list of everything you learn about "the light". In that darkness is the opposite of light, make a list of what is implied or clearly stated about "the darkness".

- **Isaiah 2:5**
- **John 1:1-5**
- **John 8:12**
- **John 12:46**
- **2 Corinthians 4:6**
- **Ephesians 5:8-15**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:5-11**
- **1 John 1:5-7; 2:9**

3. What did Jesus mean by "life"?

- Describe the life that is offered in each one of the following verses.

John 10:10

John 10:27-30

2 Timothy 1:9; 3:12

- What is received in this life?

Galatians 2:20

2 Peter 1:3, 4

Revelation 2:10

- How can this life be experienced?

1 John 5:11

EXAMINE IT continued...

Study Guide



EXAMINE IT continued...

THINK ABOUT IT

Remember the four biblical characters that Ben mentioned at the beginning of the DVD? Read the scriptures and background of each one below and then take a look at the emotions and experiences that are listed at the beginning of this study.

Which one(s) do you think each individual was able to overcome because of their encounter and trust in "the light"? What do you think they were feeling once the darkness was conquered?

- **Read Psalm 27:1-3.** After defeating a lion, a bear, and a giant, King David faces enemies who want to kill him.
- **Read Isaiah 60:1-2.** One of God's prophets, Isaiah, must find the right words to encourage and confront God's struggling and sinful people.
- **Read Job 29:1-3.** Job experienced great suffering and heartache even though he was a good and honest man.
- **Read John 1:1-4.** One of Jesus' best friends, John, was writing to convince people of his day that Jesus was really who he said he was.

How might have you responded to those situations if you had been in David's or Isaiah's or Job's or John's sandals?

Study Guide



CLAIM IT

Before we move on let's go back to where we started. Light simply makes things visible and darkness simply is the absence of light. Jesus came into a world of darkness to light it up with His perfect unconditional love. As the Light of the world Jesus illuminates our sin (disobeying God) and our separation from God; but that same light reveals His amazing grace to take away our sin and reconnect us to God the Father.

In order to claim this light for your very own you must be a part of God's forever family and God made that process quite simple. There's no big test or obstacle course to go through. Jesus did all of the work when He died on the cross so you could get all of the benefits. The Bible says it this way:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." John 3:16, 17

"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God---children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." John 1:12

To receive Jesus, the Light of the world, you only need to tell Him you believe in Him, that you're sorry for your sins, and that you want Him to forgive your sins. Once you speak those words from your heart God will welcome you with open arms and all the angels in heaven will be celebrating in your honor. You can make up your own prayer, but here is one that Ben and I usually use when we pray with folks that want to make that first-time commitment:

CLAIM IT continued...

Study Guide



CLAIM IT continued...

Dear God,

I know that I'm a sinner and I'm sorry for living a life that does not honor you. I believe that Jesus is your perfect Son who died on the cross for me. I thank you for the free gift of Salvation that you offer me and I believe by faith that Jesus is my Savior. Thank you for my new identity in you as a part of your forever family. Give me the courage to seek you more than I seek the world. Help mold my life and help me to become the person you always intended me to be.

In Jesus' Name I pray these things.

Amen

SPECIAL NOTE: If you prayed this prayer, be sure to share it with one or more of the following people: Your parents, youth leader, pastor, a friend and send Ben and me an email (ldmeagle@att.net). We'd love to celebrate with the angels in heaven your being a child of God and also send you some material that will encourage and help you with your first steps into God's forever family.

Study Guide



APPLY IT

The story is told of a ship's captain looking into the dark night and seeing dim lights in the distance. Immediately, he told his signalman to send a message. "Alter your course 10 degrees south."

Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north."

This angered the captain that his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south—I am the captain!"

Soon another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north—I am seaman third class Jones."

In frustration the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would create: "Alter your course 10 degrees south—I am a battleship."

Then a third reply returned: "Alter your course 10 degrees north—I am a lighthouse!"

Ben reminded us that all kinds of voices are shouting into our night telling us what to do, where to go, how to think, and what to change in our lives. Out of the darkness comes the only voice that matters...it is Jesus, "the Light of the world". Just like a lighthouse He wants to warn us of dangerous words, thoughts, and actions that would keep us in the dark and away from His peace, His provisions, His power, and His purpose for our life. Only the light of His life can provide the illumination that we need to make right decisions in our journey of life.

Are there dark places in your life that could create or are already creating painful emotions and troubled experiences and relationships? What are they? Write them down on piece of paper.

Share them with Jesus and ask Him to take away your fears, to heal your bruised relationships, to forgive your sins/disobedience, and to walk with you in a God-purposed life. Be sure to tell Him thank you for what He is doing and what he will continue to do for you as your guiding light.

APPLY IT continued...

Study Guide



APPLY IT continued...

Throw away the piece of paper.

If you're already experiencing relief and victory by trusting Jesus to be the light of your life write some of those moments down on a piece of paper . Share them with a family member or a friend.

Stick the paper in your Bible as a reminder of what God has done and wants to continue doing in your life.

Thank Jesus for His perfect direction and then keep on looking to Him.

"Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2