

I AM

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

Jesus made seven famous “I AM” statements, as recorded by John, declaring that he is God. Though there are a lot of benefits and blessings that come from a relationship with God, by far the greatest thing that Jesus offers humanity is Himself! He alone can meet our deepest needs and longings. Whatever it is you need right now at a core level, Jesus IS the answer.

I AM Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of Sermon	Topic of Life Group
1	1/5	The Bread of Life	Life Group Socials
2	1/12	The Good Shepherd	The Gate
3	1/19	The Resurrection and the Life	The Light of the World
4	1/26	The Way, the Truth and the Life	The Vine

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

I AM The Light Of The World

The Big Idea

Jesus is the light that shines in a dark world.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: Does anyone have New Year resolutions or goals?

Move #1: In John 8:12, Jesus famously said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Note: Jesus made this statement during the Feast of Tabernacles. This festival was intended to remind the people of God’s provision during the Israelite’s forty years in the wilderness after their deliverance from Egypt. At this festival, they would light a large candelabra to represent how God would light their way at night in a pillar of fire (see Exodus 13:21-22), and to assure them that he would light their way now and in the future. It is likely that Jesus said the words of John 8:12 in response to the lighting of the candelabra.

1. What kind of thoughts and impressions come to mind when you think of light, and how might those relate to Jesus?
2. How do you think Jesus’ claim ties into the context of how Israel looked to God to light their way?
3. How have you experienced Jesus lighting the way in your own life?
4. The people in Jesus’ time were celebrating what God had done for them in the past, yet completely missing what he was doing in the present. How do religious rituals sometimes cause people to do the same thing today?

Move #2: There are many references to light in Scripture. Many times it references a divine characteristic, as mentioned above. Let’s look at another text where Jesus is referred to as the Light of the world.

Read John 1:1-13 (NIV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right

to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

4. What are some things that stick out to you in this passage?
5. In this introduction, John uses two metaphors to describe Jesus--the Word and the Light. What connections do you see between the two?
6. Looking at verse 4, what is the organic connection between light and life?
7. Where are areas of darkness you observe in our world? How does verse 5 speak to the feeling that the darkness is overwhelming?

Note: In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus tells his followers, "You are the light of the world," and then tells them to let their light "shine before others."

8. What are some real ways that we can bring light into these areas of darkness in our society?

Move #3: So Jesus is all about light. Let's think about how we can practically let his light shine in the darkness that still exists in our own hearts and lives.

Read 1 John 1:5-9 (NIV)

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

9. How can we "walk in the light" instead of the darkness even though we still struggle with sin?
10. How does the discipline of confessing our sins relate to being a person who lives in the light? Why is that important?
11. Do you currently have people in your life who you are regularly able to share your sin-struggles with? If so, what has that experience been like for you?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

- Consider joining a Core Group for a regular place of accountability and "walking in the light."
- Continue reading through the Gospel of John.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On John 1:1-13

The first verses of John's Gospel are a triumph of Christian theology. John begins by establishing the preeminence of the Word existing before the creation of the world. The initial allusion to Genesis 1 cannot be missed (John 1:1). This is a Gospel that will record the re-creation of men and women, the giving of life in darkness where there is no hope....

John begins by introducing Jesus as "the Word" (*logos*) and is building here on much contemporary Jewish thought, where the word of God took on personal creative attributes (Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6, 9). In the New Testament period it was personified (Wisd. Sol. 7:24; 18:15–16) and known by some as the immanent power of God creatively at work in the world (Philo). John identifies this Word as Jesus Christ. As such John can attribute to him various divine functions, such as creation (John 1:3, 10) and giving of life (1:4, 14, 16)....

The entry of the *Logos* into the world (his incarnation) is described as light shining in the darkness (v. 5). Even though John the Baptist's testimony was clear (vv. 6–9), still, Jesus experiences rejection (vv. 10–11). But there is more. The darkness is hostile. There is enmity.... John suggests that the darkness cannot defeat or overcome the Word. This theme gives us some hint of the struggle between light and darkness that will sound throughout the Gospel. The opposition to Jesus will be severe. The world that the *Logos* enters and God loves is a place of remarkable unbelief. Those opposed to him will try to defeat this Word. But they will fail. John is thinking of the cross—the place of attempted defeat. But as this Gospel will show, the cross is not a place of defeat, but of glory. Jesus overcomes the world (16:33; cf. 12:31; 14:30)....

But if the world is hostile—and here we anticipate the rejection described in 1:10—how can it enlighten *everyone*? Does the arrival of this true light illumine every heart? Perhaps John is thinking of the accessibility of everyone to this one source of illumination. Or is this the distribution of the knowledge of God (general revelation) that makes all people responsible, as Paul argues in Romans 1? Another option is to think of the primary meaning of the verb *photizo*: to light up, expose, bring to light. What is at stake here is how the objective revelation of the Word works: The light invades the darkness, shining on every person and exposing them for who they are. No one is exempt, and in the course of this Gospel the divine revelation divides the audience: Some flee because their deeds are evil (3:19–20), while some receive the revelation because their deeds are true (3:21). Either way, the light shines on everyone, forcing a distinction (8:12; 9:39–41)....

This is hope: that despite the darkness, One Light shined and this Light worked to illumine others. Despite the darkness, the glory of God radiated in the world (1:14b), displaying the grace and truth of the Father (1:14a). (Gary M. Burge, *NIV Application Commentary: John*)