

True North
I am the Light of the World
Clay Weed

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

Matthew 5:14–16 (NLT)

14 *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.*
15 *No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.* 16 *In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

John 8:12 (NLT)

12 *Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."*

John 3:16–21 (NLT):

16 *"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.* 17 *God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.* 18 *"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.* 19 *And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.* 20 *All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.* 21 *But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."*

Psalms 119:105 (NLT)

1 John 1:5-7 (NLT)

John 1:1-9 (NLT)

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Jesus said "I am the Light of the world" at the Feast of Tabernacles. What was the significance of His statement during that specific time?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- What was the meaning of the Four menorahs which were lit during the Feast of Tabernacles? Explain how you've seen God's faithfulness in the past. What does His faithfulness in the past mean for your present and your future?
- Why does most sin take place in darkness? What does this tell you about the nature of sin and its effects on the world?
- **Read John 8:12.** What did Jesus mean when He said, "You won't have to walk in darkness"? How can we live in a dark world yet not walk in darkness?
- Jesus said, "You will have the light that leads to life." Clay mentioned that this light exposes darkness in 2 different areas: around us and within us. Discuss with your group what this might look like.
- **Read Matthew 5:14-16.** In verse 14, Jesus spoke to the crowds on the mountainside and told them, "You are the light of the world." Give some examples of how you can be the light to those around you. What are some things that might hinder you from being the light to others?
- **Read John 3:16–21.** Clay said, "Christ not only brings light; He also brings deliverance from the darkness." How have you experienced this in your own life?
- "It is Jesus or darkness; there is no third alternative." How does this reality impact you? What do you believe is your call to action based on this truth?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- This week, seek to shed light on dark sins by confessing them to God (1 John 1:8-10) for forgiveness and discerningly confessing them to one another (James 5:16) for healing and prayer.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Thank Jesus for bringing us out of the darkness. Ask Him to help us to not hide, but to shine His light into this world. Confess your sins to Him and ask for His forgiveness and help in repentance.

Question: "What does it mean that Jesus is the true light (John 1:9)?"

Answer: The apostle John opens his Gospel with a systematic, 18-verse introduction to the Lord Jesus Christ. A key aspect of Christ's nature that John highlights is that He is the bearer of light. Jesus brings the revelation of God's life and light into a dark world (verses 4–5). In John 1:6–9, the apostle explains that John the Baptist was merely a witness to the light, but Jesus is the true light: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John [the Baptist]. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world."

John the Baptist's message was illuminating, but he was not the true light. Jesus is the true light, the real thing, the genuine article—God in the flesh. He alone reveals God's glory in the world because He is God incarnate who "became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14; see also 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 1:1–2; 4:2).

By stating that Jesus is the true light coming into the world, John directly connects Him to Israel's Messiah as the prophets foretold: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2; see also Isaiah 49:6; 60:1–2; Malachi 4:2).

Jesus is "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Hebrews 1:3). He beams forth the light, truth, and life of God to the world and into the hearts of men and women. Jesus Himself declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12; see also John 9:5). At Christ's transfiguration, Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of the true light as Jesus' "face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). In the book of Revelation, John describes Jesus' face "like the sun shining in all its brilliance" (Revelation 1:16). He is the "bright Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

Jesus is the true light of God for those who partake of His salvation. When we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He makes God's "light shine in our hearts" so we can "know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). Those who trust in Jesus and "believe in the light" become "children of light" (John 12:35–36, 46). As children of the light, we are called to bring His "salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Several elements are necessary to sustain human life: light, air, water, and food are among the most critical. *Jesus is the true light* means He is our essential source of life. Without light, it is impossible to sustain life of any kind on earth. If the sun ceases to shine, everything will die. Not only is Jesus our light, but He is also the spiritual air we breathe. By His Holy Spirit, He breathes on us the "breath of life" (John 3:8; 20:22). Jesus is also the "living water" who, by His Holy Spirit, becomes in us "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:10–14; 7:37–39).

Jesus declared Himself to be "the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32). He is the genuine "bread of life" (John 6:35). He is our life-giving, life-sustaining source. He fully meets all our needs and perfectly satisfies our souls. In John 15:1–17, Jesus revealed that He is "the true vine," and His Father owns the garden. Christ's followers are described as fruit-bearing branches. They are the true believers who "abide in the vine." Jesus is everything we need for life because He is God, "the fountain of life" (Psalm 36:9).

Jesus is the true light is John's unequivocal way of stating that Jesus Christ is the ultimate, one and only, genuine self-disclosure of God to man. The Word of God became flesh and blood, and Jesus Christ is "the light of the world." In Him, there is "no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). His light is our "light and our salvation" (Psalm 27:1). Jesus Christ is the true light of God sent into the world to pierce through the darkness. Through His life, ministry, and message, Jesus brought the light and life of God to bear on everyone He encountered. That light continues to shine on earth through His Church (Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15).