

# Life Group Discussion Guide

The Arrival: Looking at Jesus, Seeing God  
Week 2: True Light • John 1:6–13

Last week, we began our Advent series by unpacking the Apostle John’s claim that the coming of Jesus was the coming of *true life*. This week, we are taking a new perspective: **The arrival of Jesus is the arrival of true light**. As we do, remember that life and light are different aspects of the same reality. There is no life in darkness. There is no light in death.

Let’s explore this true light from three points of view: its witness, its rejection, and its reception.

## 1. The Witness to The Light

A key part of the record of Jesus’ coming is that before He came, another person came ahead of Him to clear the way. John’s Gospel records it this way:

“There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 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 1:6–9

Here, the Apostle John is not speaking of himself, but of the man we know as John the Baptist. John was sent by God to prepare the people’s hearts for Jesus.

*“When John the Baptist came as a witness to the light, many people followed him. He gave testimony to the truthfulness of Jesus—and part of that testimony was to clarify for the people, ‘I am not the Messiah’ (1:20). Yet when Jesus arrived and started to have an even bigger following than John, John’s disciples took offense and grumbled, ‘Everyone is going to him.’”*

Here, the response of John’s followers reveals something we don’t want to miss: The distinction between a witness to the light and the light itself is not always apparent to us. This can happen in any sphere of life—food, fitness, love, knowledge, work—when we take a *good* thing and make it the *ultimate* thing.

- What have you looked to as a source of light apart from Jesus Christ? How has this affected you?
- If needed, take time now to pray together in repentance for losing sight of the true light. Recognize the good things of this world not as the Light itself, but as witnesses to that Light.

## 2. The Rejection of The Light

Once John establishes that Jesus—the true light—had come into the world, he tells us what happened next: “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.” (1:10)

You must grasp the sad irony. Jesus arrived in the world that was made through Him to save it, but the world hated Him. Instead of receiving Him, we questioned Him. Instead of believing Him, we tortured Him. Instead of bowing to Him, we killed Him.

Why?

Later in John's Gospel, we find the answer: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed." (3:19-20)

Pastor Jon summed it up this way:

*"The arrival of Jesus is the arrival of light. But we love darkness. Why? Because our deeds are evil. Our culture loves divorce. If the marriage is not working, end it. We love sex outside of marriage, between men, between women. We love money. We love comfort. We love ourselves more than our neighbor. So we hate the light. We hate Jesus because coming to Jesus means our loves are going to be exposed. So we run from Him. We reject the light."*

- In what ways have you run from Jesus for fear of your sinful desires or deeds being exposed?
- What happens when we reject the only light that can truly free us from darkness? How have you experienced this, personally?

Gratefully, that's not the end of the passage.

### **3. The Reception of The Light**

The situation, we learn, is not all dire. Something else happened when the light arrived:

"Yet to all who did receive 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 1:12-13

Yes, the world does not recognize him. Yes, his own people do not receive him. But then we read, "Yet to all who did receive him," which shows us there's another group—those who do believe. The apostle describes this group in three ways:

a. Those who belong to Jesus receive Him

People often ask, "How do I become a Christian?" The answer John gives is simple. Receive Jesus.

*"You receive Jesus very much the way you receive a present. We're all getting ready to receive presents in a couple of weeks. But many of us are also preparing gifts to give away, and it can take a lot of work to prepare these gifts. When it comes to Jesus, you're only on the receiving end. The Father and the Son did the preparing. The Father sent His Son. The Son came and completed the*

*work of God. And He says to you, 'I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world.' You have a choice. Do you open your arms and receive Him? Or do you say, 'No, I don't want your life. I don't want your light'? If you do, then you're still in darkness, still in death. But if you receive Him, He makes you a child of God."*

- Describe in your own words how a person can become a Christian.
- Have you ever tried to earn the gift of salvation in Jesus? How does today's message reveal the true and better way?

b. Those who belong to Jesus believe in His name

At this point in John's record, he has not even given us Jesus' name. The name of Jesus is mentioned for the first time in this Gospel in John 1:17. John takes his time to get to His name. In the meantime, he's building our understanding of His stature.

*"He's the Word, who was there before time, who was there with God, who is God. He's the Creator of all things. He's the life and light of mankind. These are the things we know about this person before we're told that He became flesh, before we're told that His name is Jesus Christ. So, when you believe in His name, you're believing that He's all these things!"*

To believe these things about Jesus is to step out of the darkness, into His marvelous light.

- Describe what you believe about Jesus. Who is He?

c. Those who belong to Jesus are born of God

The birth John writes of is distinct from your natural birth. Your natural birth included the three things he mentions: natural descent, human decision, and even a husband's will. But none of this matters when it comes to your birth from God.

*"Your being born of God is not any human's decision, including you. You didn't give yourself birth when you came into this world, and you don't give yourself birth when God chooses you out of this world. Your spiritual birth comes from God."*

- If you have already been born of God, take time now to praise Him. Your new birth is nothing short of miraculous!
- If, today, you are ready to receive Jesus, believe in His name, and be born of God, pray now and receive the true light of Jesus Christ!