

**CHILDREN OF LIGHT OR DARKNESS?**  
**Next Steps Devotional Guide — John 12:34-50**  
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**Sermon Series > The Gospel of John**  
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1. Light is something we all need to find our way around in darkness. When we find ourselves in a very dark area or place, it can cause fear, anxiety and worry. Yet, it seems so many people today are like Darth Vader, they prefer the darkness rather than the light. Think back over your life, how have you seen this to be true through your lifetime?
2. Read John 12:34-35 in your sermon notes or Bible. Why do you think the people listening to Jesus did not understand His analogy?
3. We look at four reasons humanity chooses spiritual darkness over the light of Christ. To reject Jesus the Light is to embrace intellectual darkness. Read John 1:4-5 and John 1:9, 11 in your sermon notes or Bible. The word translated as ‘enlightens’ is the the Greek New Testament word [φωτίζω, photizo]. It is where we get our English word photo. So what does a “photo” have to do with spiritual darkness? If you have ever seen some very old faded pictures, it is hard at times to see what is in them. That is what intellectualism can do — fade or dim your ability to see who Jesus is.
  - (a) The captain of the Titanic received 6 warnings about icebergs. Instead of veering south to avoid them, his intellectualism of ships and navigation led him to plow in the darkness. We all know how that ended. Who do you know personally who is choosing intellectual darkness rather than the light of Christ?
  - (b) All of us are prone to trust our mind or our intellect. What is God saying to you to shed His light on your life where you are refusing to obey by trusting your own intellectual darkness?
4. A second reason people reject the light of Christ is they choose to embrace ethical darkness. By this I mean, they make personal moral choices that enslave them to spiritual darkness.
  - (a) Read John 3:19-20 in your sermon notes or Bible. Jesus says there is coming a day when all evil deeds will be “exposed.” The sin and disobedience today they believe is right, God is going to expose just how wrong they were on Judgment Day. Think about how much outrage the world has against animal abuse, but very little against abortion. Homosexual marriage may be legal in American but God says such people, along with a whole list of other kinds of disobedient people, will not enter heaven (1 Cor. 6:9). Jesus, in the Sermon On The Mount, said committing these sins is not limited to the physical, we can commit them in our hearts (Matt. 5:21-47). This is why we cannot sit in judgment and condemnation of the lost who do these. We have to look in our own hearts to see where we have committed these same sins in our own hearts. We may believe we can see this in non-believers, but where are Jesus’ words in these verses true in your own life?
  - (b) Is it any wonder that Bibles are being barred from our public schools but last year 1,150 guns were confiscated on our schools grades K-12? For example, in 1950, only 170 teenagers were arrested for committing a serious crime. Today, and every day, there are at least 1,960 minors in local adult jails. Are we surprised that every day, 634 teenagers contract syphilis. NC ranks #4 in the nation. Are we surprised that, during the next 24 hours, more than 35,000 Americans will contract a sexually transmitted disease - 13 million people this year. If the consequences are so severe, why do you think people still choose to reject the light of Christ and embrace this ethical darkness?
5. A third reason people reject the light of Christ is they choose to embrace judicial darkness. Now, this is the other side of the coin. While God elects us by His grace, the Bible never invalidates human choice.
  - (a) Read John 12:37-40 in your sermon notes or Bible. John quotes from the Old Testament — Isaiah 6:9-10. Isaiah had gone into the Temple to do his duties as he had every day prior. On this day, God showed up. He was terrified and confessed his unworthiness to be in the presence of the Lord. The point of Isaiah 6:9-10 is that you can put up such a resistance to hear the voice of the Lord that you will no longer hear it. You become deaf to it. You become desensitized to it. When has this happened to you? What changed to get you to listen to the voice of the Lord?
  - (b) John uses the word ‘believing.’ It is the Greek New Testament word [πιστεύω, pisteuo]. It is what we call in Greek grammar the imperfect tense. This refers to when the subject is responsible for the continued action. So, John 12:37 emphasizes the continual unbelief, stubbornness of the Jews to believe the light they were being shown. The final result was: God blinded them to it.
  - (c) It says their hearts were hardened. This is the Greek New Testament word [πρωπόω, poroo]. And it refers to the hardening of a skin with a callus; to make dull, to dim. Sometimes God blinds us to our rejection of His light and sometimes we blind ourselves. A light is meant to be seen. Our hearts can

create a spiritual callus that dims His light. Why do you think so many people prefer their spiritual calluses rather than the Light of Christ?

- (d) The Apostle Paul writes about this in 2 Corinthians 6:1-2. Please read this in your sermon notes or Bible. How does someone know it is too late to repent to the light of Christ?
  - (e) Read Hebrews 3:15 in your sermon notes or Bible. Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. So, it is possible for even Christians to harden their hearts to the light of Christ. One of the best strategies the devil and his demons use for this is, "There is no need to hurry and respond to the light of Christ today. You have plenty of time." What is the real danger in believing this for you personally and for others?
  - (f) Read John 12:42-43 in your sermon notes or Bible. How would you answer these question: Who are you living to please? Who or what is silencing you? Are you one way at church and then an opposite dark way away from here
6. A fourth reason people reject the light of Christ is they choose to embrace eternal darkness.
- (a) Read John 12:46 in your sermon notes or Bible. What is your initial gut reaction to Jesus' words? There is a present darkness in this world and there is an eternal darkness after death. Jesus is the personal representative, the embodiment of all truth, especially divine truth. Truth is not a set of principles to believe, but a Person to believe in for salvation. How can we make this more understandable in today's world to the skeptic?
  - (b) Jesus' words here are a reminder of Genesis 7:16. Please read this in your sermon notes or Bible. For 120 years Noah had preached of the coming flood. God had him build an ark as proof. Yet, people refused. Then God closed the door — meaning all opportunity to be saved was gone. We can imagine that as the flood waters rose people began banging on the door but Noah could not open it. Why? God had closed it. The opportunity was forever gone to be saved. Up to this point, Jesus and John's message has not been about judgement, but salvation though it seems just to be the opposite. Take your Bible and read 2 Peter 3:9. God does not want anyone to perish, but so many will. Who will you pray for to see the light of Christ and come to Christ?
  - (c) Read Jesus' words in John 12:47-48. If you reject Jesus' first message of light that leads to salvation, the last message you will hear from Him will be judging sentencing you to hell. This is why we all must heed Jesus' words in John 12:36. Notice what Jesus DID NOT say. Jesus did not say, *"While you have the light, work for the light, join a church and do good things to become a child of the light; be baptized for the light."* Why does this not work?
  - (d) Believing on Jesus means more than just saying, *"Jesus Christ is God. He is Lord and Savior."* Even the demons believe this (See James 2:19, Mark 5:1-7). You must obediently commit your life to Him as Your Lord and Savior by saying, *"Jesus, You are the Christ. You are my God. I give my life to You with no strings attached."* Believing means more than saying, *"I believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for sin."* It means saying, *"Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sin."* It means more than saying, *"Jesus Christ came to save people."* It means saying, *"Jesus Christ came to save me; and I have asked Him to do just that!"* How do you know you have done this?
  - (e) Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as well as the explanation for the word translated as "inspired." Jesus is the Word, but His Word that shine light to us is primarily revealed through Scripture. Over the last 50 years, we have seen the Bible removed from schools, courts, and etc. all under the umbrella of "political correctness." Why do you think people and even some "saved" people, do not accept God's truth through the light of Scripture?
  - (f) Read John 1:1-3, 14 in your sermon notes or Bible. John knows a pagan theology is trying to inch its way into the church. It was called Gnosticism. John takes Gnostic terms to refute it. One Gnostic term is the "logos" — word. Gnostics believed that salvation was through the acquisition of knowledge and expanding one's intellect. Sometimes we may see this in the church from those who have a vast knowledge of the Bible. They pridefully look down on others. We all need to grow in our knowledge of Scripture, but more importantly, grow in our relationship with our Savior. Which would you say you personify more?
  - (g) Read 2 Timothy 3:2-5 in your sermon notes or Bible. When it comes to spiritual light, what does "holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power" warn all of us about?
7. So what is the future? Eternal darkness for those who do not believe. God gave the world a taste of this in Luke 23:44-45a. Read this in your sermon notes or Bible. Eternal light for those who do believe. Read Revelation 21:5-8 and Revelation 21:22-25 in your sermon notes or Bible. Would the Lord say your life is one of being a child of light or being a child of darkness? Why?
- (a) Read Luke 12:19-21 in your sermon notes or Bible. What is the warning here?
  - (b) Read John 12:35 & John 12:46-50 in your sermon notes or Bible. The light of Christ is here for a while and then it will be gone. What impact does this have on your life and why?