

Thanks for downloading this sample of *The Darkness and The Light Follow Up Journal* from YM360's *Event Resources* line of Bible Studies.

This Follow Up Journal transforms your event from a one-time experience to a four-week journey of deeper discovery.

Every YM360 Event Resource study is equipped with a Follow Up Journal featuring:

- 4 weeks of awesome content
- Biblically solid yet written in a voice students can relate to
- A variety of different active Bible studies, devotions, experiential activities, thought provoking quotes, and more

If you have any questions about any of our Follow Up Journals, don't hesitate to call us. We're here to help!
1-888-969-6360



THE DARKNESS AND THE
LIGHT

REFLECTING JESUS IN A DARK WORLD

FOLLOW UP JOURNAL

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: _____

DATE STARTED: _____

PUBLISHED BY YM360

The Darkness and The Light: Reflecting Jesus in a Dark World
© 2021 by youthministry360. All rights reserved.

Published by youthministry360 in the United States of America.

ISBN: 9781954429031

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of youthministry360 is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by youthministry360; neither does youthministry360 vouch for their content.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The light
shines

in the
darkness

& the darkness has not
overcome it.

John 1:5



Getting Started 6

WEEK 1

Week 1 Intro 8
Day 1 10
Day 2 12
Day 3 14
Day 4 16
Day 5 18
Week 1 Recap 20

WEEK 2

Week 2 Intro 22
Day 1 24
Day 2 26
Day 3 28
Day 4 30
Day 5 32
Week 2 Recap 34



table of CONTENTS

WEEK 3

Week 3 Intro	36
Day 1	38
Day 2	40
Day 3	42
Day 4	44
Day 5	46
Week 3 Recap	48

WEEK 4

Week 4 Intro	50
Day 1	52
Day 2	54
Day 3	56
Day 4	58
Day 5	60
Week 4 Recap	62
About the Author	65



GETTING STARTED

If you're holding this book, you (probably) recently spent a few days going through *The Darkness and the Light* study with your youth group. Maybe you did this during a *Disciple Now*, or a retreat, or at camp. However, you came to start your journey with *The Darkness and the Light*, this book will help you continue it.

Have you ever been in a really dark place? A place with absolutely zero sources of light? If we're honest, sometimes we get scared. There is another kind of darkness that surrounds us. It's the darkness of a world without good—a world without God.

There is darkness in the world. But there is a light, too. And not just any light. It's a light that is overwhelming, all-consuming, and perfectly pure . . . a light that refuses to be ignored. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). God's light drives away the darkness. His light drives out fear. God's light saves. "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

You're going to take a deeper look at each one of these concepts. Look at the next page to see how this Book works.



HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

Here are a few things you need to know to put this book to good use.

Start With This Advice

Whether you're super-committed and read your Bible each day or struggle to read a few verses a couple of times a week, the key to sticking with this through four weeks is commitment. Your routine may change, but your commitment to meet God each day has to be there. Tell yourself that whether or not you read this journal at the same time each day, or if you read it whenever you get a few extra minutes, you'll make it a priority in your daily life.

Have Your Bible Open

Resist the urge to ignore the spots where this Book will tell you to read a passage of Scripture. This Book is only a guide for the Book. The close relationship with God that you want only happens by reading and doing what's in the Bible. Have it open as you go through this Book.

Each Week Is Structured the Same, But Is Different

Each week's content works in similar ways. But each day is different. And there are a lot of different kinds of activities. Some will take 3-5 minutes, some 10-15. Some will ask you to look at two or three passages of Scripture; some will ask you to think about a concept. The variety will make it easier to stick with and help you learn in different ways that are suited to you.

What If I Miss A Day of Reading? Or Three?

Don't give up! Take this at your pace! The goal is for you to grow closer to God. If you miss a day or two (or four), don't throw in the towel. Pick this Book back up and start where you left off. You can do this! And by doing it, you'll show the world that God makes an incredible difference in the lives of His followers. So, hang in there! You've got this!

**Well, that's what you need to know to get started!
Turn the page to read the introduction to Week 1.**

WEEK ONE

INTRO

Before you start Week 1, read this short intro.

God is light.

The world is dark.

You've probably heard this a lot recently. And you'll hear similar stuff said throughout this book. So let's pause for a second and explain what that means.

When the Bible says God is light, it doesn't mean that God is ACTUALLY light. While there were times in the Bible where God chose to show Himself in ways that were associated with literal light, the Bible doesn't mean to say that God, the Father, or Jesus, the Son, is literal, actual light.

Similarly, when the Bible talks about the world being dark, with the exception of the Creation story in Genesis 1, it doesn't mean that there is a lack of actual light. It doesn't mean that someone has turned out the lights.

What the Bible means when it says that God is light is that God is good. And loving. And merciful. And holy. And that His goodness, and love, and mercy, and holiness (and all of His other characteristics) shine as if they were actual light. We can feel God's goodness. We can know His love. And they light up creation like a spotlight cutting through the night sky.

What about the world? According to how the Bible uses this concept, the world is against God. Where God's light is the light of His goodness, the sin and evil at work in the world are like darkness. Spiritual darkness. The darkness of the world is in opposition to the light of God.

But do you want to know the awesome thing? The darkness of the world cannot overpower the light of God. Not by a longshot. Over the next few weeks, you're going to learn all about the light of God and how it impacts your life and the world around you. This week will lay the foundation for all that you will learn.

Are you ready to jump in? Turn the page, and let's get started.

WEEK | DAY ONE | ONE

Begin this day's devotion by reading Genesis 1:1-5. It's printed below, but if you have a Bible handy, consider reading it there.

Genesis 1:1-5

[1] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

[3] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Know this: God exists. He is real. He makes Himself known to us through the Bible. And in the very first words of this holy book, we see God creating the Universe. At the beginning of all things, God already was. He existed. He alone was able to create the world because He alone was before the world. That's pretty awesome.

Now, look at how vs. 2 describes the world before God initiated creation. That is some pretty deep, pretty awesome stuff. Darkness over the deep? What does that even mean? How mysterious is that? But even as the darkness was covering all things, there was the Holy Spirit, "hovering" over the formless void.

Into this dark and lifeless expanse, God spoke light. Seriously. He spoke light. How does that even happen? Our finite human minds cannot begin to grasp all that this means. But we can grasp enough to know this: the Creator God spoke light into the darkness, and everything changed. The universe began. The cosmos was set in motion. Our world and eventually our lives were all brought into being. You exist because God wants you to be a part of His creation. But not just you: Flowers. Mountains. Waterfalls. Stars. Your family. Your pet. Creation exists because God saw fit for it to.

As you begin this four-week devotional on how God's light impacts you and the world around you, let's start by focusing on the world around you.

When was the last time you paused long enough to look around you at the majesty of God's creation and thanked Him for it? Maybe today is that day for you.

That's your challenge for today. Today, notice God's creation, specifically the light of God's goodness, as it's reflected all around you. Consider taking the space provided below to write down what you saw around you. Maybe even take the time to write a prayer of thanks to God for His mighty work of creation.



WEEK ONE DAY TWO

What is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for you?

That's a big question, isn't it? I mean, hopefully, you have a long list of awesome things people have done for you. But the funny thing is that pretty much anything anyone does for us is pretty great. Someone sharing their dessert with you at lunch? Makes your day. Someone driving from several hours away to visit you in the hospital? It also makes your day! It doesn't matter if it's big or small. Part of being human is how we're wired to respond to people showing us they care. We love it when people do nice things for us.

Take a moment and read John 1:1-13. This is one of the coolest passages in the Bible. Why? There's so much going on! First of all, you see John making a case for the Trinity right out of the gate. See, John was taking some creative license by calling Jesus "the Word." The Greek word *logos*, which means "word," is used to describe HOW God communicates. Jesus was the fullest expression of God's message of love and redemption for humankind. For this, and a few other reasons, John uses "the Word" to describe Jesus.

Yesterday you read Genesis 1:1-5. Genesis 1:1, the first verse in the Bible, says, "In the beginning, God . . ." John echoes that same sentiment with his words here in John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word . . ." As part of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), Jesus was present and active at creation. That in itself should blow our minds. Jesus is God. Jesus was actively engaged in the creation of the world. And, ages later, He would become even more active in creation when He became a human being and lived on our earth, teaching us about the Kingdom of Heaven, and ultimately, through His death and resurrection, purchasing a right relationship with God for all who would believe. This is powerful. It is the most powerful truth ever. But that's not our focus for today.

For today's focus, pay close attention to verses 12-13. Here we see Jesus' mission and purpose explained. Jesus came to earth to make a way back to God for everyone who would ever believe in Him. Sin would no longer be a barrier between God and people. Jesus had conquered the darkness. Through His faithful death on the cross, He paid for the sins of all humankind.

In John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Jesus came to earth and went to the cross because He loves us. Period. When we consider the most amazing things one person would do for another, this act of sacrifice by Jesus stands out as the most selfless gift ever given. Have you taken the time to appreciate the God who cared so much for you that He came to earth to save you?



Questions to Consider

1. In your own words, describe the gift that Jesus gives to all who believe in Him.
2. What role does your gratitude play in your faith relationship with Jesus?
3. What does it mean to you that because of His great love for you, Jesus gave you the privilege of becoming a child of God?
4. Today, spend some time in prayer thanking Jesus, the Light of the World, for His great compassion for you. Thank Him that He gives you life, not only here on this earth but for eternity with Him.



WEEK ONE

DAY THREE

When we think about WHY God chose to save us from the penalty of our sins, there are many ways to answer the question. But at least one of the reasons is so that we will shine our light in the same way Jesus did, with the same purpose and the same results. There is a transition from seeing Jesus as light to seeing us as HIS light. It's powerful when we understand our faith in those terms.

Pause for a few seconds and read Matthew 5:14-16. Jesus was the light of the world, and yet in Matthew 5, He looks at His followers and says that WE are the light. So often, we make the Gospel and salvation to be all about the eternity we'll spend with Jesus. That's a big part of it, and it's awesome. But part of why we have been saved is so that we will shine light in the SAME WAY Jesus did, with the same purpose and the same results. The light of God in us draws others out of the darkness. This is a huge part of our purpose as Christ-followers.

This is God's call on us as believers. It's not optional. He expects us to live in such a way that our lives light up the darkness and point others to Him. This doesn't happen by accident. We have to be intentional about living in such a way.

So, here's your task today: consider the call Jesus has given you and how you might express this in your life.

Matthew 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

In the space below, brainstorm SPECIFICALLY some very practical things you can do to shine your light. But not just in any old way. Write down specifically how these actions draw others to Jesus.

Ways I will shine my light

How these will point people to Jesus