



# LIFEGROUP **STUDY GUIDE**

January 7 - January 28





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by Dan Franklin

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

- *Watch last Sunday's message video:*  
[www.lbf.church/messages](http://www.lbf.church/messages)

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

- *Contact Pastor Dan:*  
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# EPIPHANY: CHOOSING BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS

January 7

## MAIN POINT

True believers in Jesus are marked by walking in light instead of darkness.

## INTRODUCTION

Light is great. It allows us to see clearly. It brings us warmth. It makes the world clear to us. It illuminates reality.

But darkness can also be great. If you're playing hide-and-seek, darkness can help you to hide. Many covert military operations take place at night so that soldiers can sneak around more easily. If you're trying to avoid detection, darkness is very helpful.

The Christian holiday of Epiphany is a celebration of Jesus being visited by the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12). In this passage, the light of Jesus is spread beyond Israel to the Gentiles. Epiphany reminds us that, through Jesus, God has shown his light to the whole world.

In this lesson we will look at a passage that calls us to walk in light instead of darkness. If we have already experienced the light of Jesus through the gospel, then we are called to walk in that light. But the darkness is always there, inviting us to prefer it to the light.

## GETTING STARTED

1. What are some advantages to being in the dark?

2. Why do you think light and darkness are such commonly used illustrations for walking with God or walking in sin?

## DIGGING IN

Read 1 John 1:5-7.

**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.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Focus on verse 5. Why do you think John is so emphatic about God being light and having in himself "no darkness at all"?

5. What do you think it means to walk in the darkness? For help, read John 3:19-21.

6. According to verse 7, what two benefits result from walking in the light?

7. Twice in these verses John mentions “fellowship.” How do you think the ideas of (1) having fellowship and (2) the picture of “walking” relate to each other?

11. What are some joys that you experience when you choose to walk in the light, as God is in the light?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. Does John say in verse 7 that we are only purified by Jesus’ blood if we perform the work of obediently walking in the light? Explain your answer.

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. Look at how Paul uses light as an illustration in 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. How does God’s light relate to how we come to believe in Jesus and receive salvation?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. What are some ways in which you are most tempted to walk in the darkness?

# FORMING FAITH AT HOME: THE BATON

January 14

## MAIN POINT

Each generation of believers has the calling to pass the gospel along to the next generation.

## INTRODUCTION

About a year ago, I was struck by the fact that I wasn't sure if my sons knew about a prayer method that had been very helpful to me over the years. The prayer method is often called ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). I realized that for years I had not taught it to them because I had assumed that everyone just kind of knew it. Then a novel thought occurred to me: I only knew about ACTS because someone had passed that practice along to me; how would my sons know if I did not pass it along to them.

To be honest, I was a bit embarrassed that two of my sons were teenagers before I taught them the ACTS method of prayer. While it was not a devastating mistake, it reminded me of the importance of each generation passing along knowledge and practices to the next. We can't simply assume that the next generation will know something that we didn't bother to teach them.

This lesson is part of an all-church initiative called Forming Faith at Home. It's an all-church effort for us to place Jesus at the center of our families so that our children embrace the gospel, walk with Jesus, and carry the baton of the light of Jesus into their generation.

But this all-church initiative is for more than just parents. It is for grandparents, for aunts and uncles, for LIFE Kids teachers and Exit 83 staff, for mentors and influencers (not just those on social media). Whatever generation you are in, you have been entrusted with passing the baton of the gospel to the next generation.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Name the top five priorities that you think parents should have in their role as parents.

2. What are some misplaced priorities that many parents have in our culture today?

## DIGGING IN

Read 2 Timothy 2:2.

**2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.**

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Look closely at this verse. How many "generations" (one group passing the gospel along to the next) do you see here? Identify each "generation."

5. Before Timothy could be in a position to teach others, he "heard" Paul teach him. How can we today put ourselves in a position to "hear" what God wants us to hear?

6. The single command in this passage is “entrust.” It is the idea of giving something to someone else for safekeeping. How does this impact how you view yourself, as someone who not only received the gospel but also was entrusted with it?

7. While this verse is not about parenting, how might its principles apply to God’s call for parents? (For help look up Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Ephesians 6:4)

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. Look below at the list of five habits that we are promoting for our Forming Faith at Home initiative. If you are a parent, which of these do you think God is calling you to focus attention on? If you are not a parent, which of these do you think God is calling you to contribute to?

Have 4-5 Meals Per Week as a Family

Serve Together as a Family

Have One Spiritual Experience in the Home Each Week

Empower Children to Have Spiritual Responsibilities

Help Children Have a Mentor Outside of Their Family

11. Who helped to pass the baton of the gospel (and Christlikeness) along to you? Take some time to give thanks for how God used those people in your life.

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. Some parents seem to have the attitude that as long as they bring their children to church, then they have done their job in passing along the gospel. What parts of this task are the job of parents and what parts are the job of the church? Explain your answer.

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. What do you think is the difference between passing along the gospel to others and passing along morality to others?

# SANCTITY OF LIFE: LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME

## January 21

### MAIN POINT

For believers in Jesus, children are a welcome gift, not an inconvenient liability.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years there have been a flurry of videos and articles about the advantages of not having children. The lists usually include advantages like more sleep, fewer expenses, more time to travel, and more time to give to career aspirations. In light of this, there are a growing number of couples who are choosing not to have children because they see children as a threat to their independence. These couples not only choose not to have children, but they celebrate this choice as something good and wise (and sometimes even as something ecologically responsible).

When this attitude is rampant it is no shock that we also vigilantly protect abortion rights. After all, if children are a threat to our freedom, our income, our time, and our hobbies, then no one should be “forced” to have one. We set aside the ethical question of whether or not abortion is murder, and we instead weigh the competing priorities of the unborn children and the pregnant woman. Instead of seeing children as a gift, we see them as a liability.

Every January, LBF Church celebrates Sanctity of Life Sunday. While this Sunday is often associated (rightly) with opposition to abortion, this observance is not just about combating a negative practice. It is also about championing something positive. Not only are children deserving of life and protection, but children are a good gift to be welcomed. We are not just combating the evil of killing unborn babies; we are combating a whole mindset that sees children as a problem to be avoided instead of as a gift to be welcomed.

In this lesson we will look at a passage that presents children in a way that is foreign to many people in 21st Century American culture. And we will be invited into a mindset that is more godly, more joyful, and more life-giving.

### GETTING STARTED

1. What are some reasons why people in our culture see children more as a liability than a benefit?

2. If our society treated children as a gift and a blessing, what would change about how we behave?

### DIGGING IN

Read Psalm 127:1-5.

**1 Unless the Lord builds the house,  
the builders labor in vain.**

**Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
the guards stand watch in vain.**

**2 In vain you rise early  
and stay up late,  
toiling for food to eat—**

**for he grants sleep to those he loves.**

**3 Children are a heritage from the Lord,  
offspring a reward from him.**

**4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior  
are children born in one's youth.**

**5 Blessed is the man  
whose quiver is full of them.**

**They will not be put to shame  
when they contend with their opponents in court.**



3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Focus on verse 1. What other human efforts (in addition to building a house or guarding a city) are futile if the Lord is not giving them success?

5. What do you think verse 2 is telling us about how we are invited to respond to our inability to control the world around us?

6. How do you think the statements about children in verses 3-4 relate to the foundation the psalmist laid in verses 1-2?

7. How would you summarize the perspective this Psalm gives us on children?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. There are obviously situations in which having a child seems less desirable and more difficult. It is in those kinds of situations that abortion seems particularly appealing. How do you think this Psalm applies in situations like those?

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. Children can be seen as liabilities because they are needy and they don't (initially) contribute very much practical value to society. Read Ephesians 2:1-5. How did God respond to us when we were needy and not terribly useful?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. How do your attitude and your actions need to adjust in relation to the children that God has brought into your life (either your own children or children in proximity to you)?

11. How can you positively influence the people around you to a biblical perspective toward children? Think of specific people God may be calling you to influence.

# GO TEAMS: WITNESSES

January 28

## MAIN POINT

Believers in Jesus are called to be witnesses to the whole world.

## INTRODUCTION

Christians often use “witness” as a verb to refer to what we otherwise call “sharing our faith.” But it is rare for us to pause and think about why we use the word “witness.”

A witness is someone who has seen something. In fact, the main way we talk about witnesses in our culture today is when we are talking about a court case. Someone is brought forward as a witness if they have observed something that has bearing on a case. They witnessed a crime. They witnessed an accident. Or they witnessed that the defendant was somewhere else, and so they must not be guilty. A witness is someone who has seen something.

So it is no wonder that Jesus told the apostles that they would be his witnesses. After all, they not only had seen him teach and work miracles, but they had also seen him alive after his death and resurrection. They could tell others the truth about Jesus because they had seen it. They were witnesses.

Today we are not witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection in the same way that the apostles were. And yet we still are called to be Jesus’ witnesses. We can pass along the eyewitnesses testimony of the apostles, and we can also bear witness to what we have seen Jesus do in our own lives.

In this lesson we will explore what it means for us to step into our calling as Jesus’ witnesses.

## GETTING STARTED

1. What qualifies someone as a reliable witness?

2. In what ways are you able to bear witness to others about Jesus and the gospel?

## DIGGING IN

Read Acts 1:8.

**8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Read Acts 1:1-7 to see the lead-up to this verse. What do you learn from reading the context?

5. Why do you think it is significant that Jesus talks about receiving the Holy Spirit before he talks about serving as witnesses?

6. Jesus says, “You will be my witnesses.” What do you think is involved in being one of Jesus’ witnesses?

## **TAKING IT TO HEART**

10. What would help you to feel more prepared to be a witness for Jesus?

7. What stands out to you about the progression of places that Jesus gives at the end of verse 8?

11. What are your regular opportunities to be witnesses for Jesus, and how (specifically) do you sense that God is calling you to act in those opportunities?

## **WRESTLING WITH ISSUES**

8. Do you think that this calling to be Jesus’ witnesses is just for the original apostles or for all believers for all time? Explain how you came to your answer.

## **CONNECTING TO THE GOSPEL**

9. Read Acts 4:18-20 and focus on what Peter and John said when they were told to stop bearing witness about Jesus. How do their words demonstrate a key motivation for why a believer would choose to bear witnesses to others about Jesus?