

LIFE GROUPS	TEACHING PLAN	
	<b>FW</b>	<i>Study of John</i>
	JUNE 20	21

# RESTORED SIGHT AND SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

JOHN 9:1-41

JUNE 20, 2021

TEACHING PLAN

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## PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying John 9:1-41. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

## HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: JESUS PERFORMED A MIRACLE AND RESTORED SIGHT TO MAN WHO WAS FORMERLY BLIND. WHILE THE NEIGHBORS DISCUSSED WHAT JESUS DID, THE PHARISEES DENIED THE MIRACLE AND THE MAN'S PARENTS DEFLECTED RESPONSIBILITY. THE MAN OBEYED JESUS AND DECLARED WHAT JESUS HAD DONE FOR HIM.

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WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: WHILE SOME DISCUSS AMONG THEMSELVES AND OTHERS BECOME DIVIDED AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, OUR OBEDIENCE BECOMES A PLATFORM FROM WHICH THE WORKS OF GOD ARE DISPLAYED.

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GOSPEL CONNECTION: OUR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS IS HEALED THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SEE THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS.

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## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

**Notes:**

- 1 Think of the person you know who is most ardently against Christianity? How did you come to know this person?
  
- 2 What would you say is their biggest issue with Christianity?
  
- 3 Have you ever tried to respond to their concerns? If so, how did that go?

Whether they find the Bible implausible or Christians uncompassionate, or cannot allow themselves to believe there would be one way to heaven, all the reasons people deny Jesus come down to one basic sin: disbelief. All who deny Christ, for any and all reasons stem from this same sin. Their hearts and minds are too hard to see what Jesus has done and respond with obedience, repentance, and faith. Of course, these problems are not new, they have existed since Jesus' earthly ministry. In John Chapter 9, Jesus healed a man who had been blind since birth. Instead of seeing the work Jesus did, everyone around the man denied this healing could have been done by Jesus. All Jesus does, He does so we may believe in and worship Him.

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## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

### Notes:

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 9:1-12.

- Why did the disciples assume the man's blindness was the result of some sin on his parents' part?
- For what purpose did Jesus say this man was actually born blind?

In Jewish tradition, people assumed that individuals born with physical ailments suffered because of sin in the lives of their parents. The disciples were merely reflecting the views of their culture, but Jesus saw this man's condition differently. Jesus said this man had been born blind to prepare him for such a time that the works of God may be displayed through him. Jesus was about to help this long-suffering man and show him the power of God.

- How do Jesus' words in verse 3 affect your perception of your own suffering?
- Re-read verses 6-7. How did Jesus use common things to accomplish His uncommon purpose in this man? Why did He used mud and saliva?
- Did Jesus need to use these elements? How else could Jesus have healed the man? How had He healed others?

All that was needed for Jesus to heal this man was a command. As we've seen in this series, Jesus speaks and the wind and waves obey. In John Chapter 5, Jesus healed a lame man simply by speaking. But that is not how Jesus chose to heal this man. Rather, He used mud and saliva and touched the man, as if He were re-creating Him. John's gospel features several parallels to the garden of Eden, and Jesus' activity here is reminiscent of when God formed man through personal touch using the dirt of the ground.

**Notes:**

- How did the neighbors respond when they saw the man had been healed?
- Why do you think they refused to believe the man when he said Jesus healed Him? Why do you think some people are more interested in talking about Jesus than obeying Him or believing Him?

The man's neighbors were more interested in discussing Jesus than believing in Him. They found the man's testimony about Jesus unsatisfactory, so they sought the Pharisees' help. Skepticism was easier for them than belief. Too often, we feel like we need to know before we can obey, but in God's economy, the opposite is often true: We must obey before we understand why God acts the way He does.

- Has there ever been a time when you had to obey before you understood? Explain.

> HAVE VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 9:13-34.

- Why did John note that this miracle occurred on the Sabbath? Why was this detail important?

- Why did the Pharisees deny Jesus' involvement in this miracle? Why were they so angry?

**Notes:**

- What did the formerly blind man see that the Pharisees missed?

The interaction between the formerly blind man and the Pharisees could not be more ironic. Although he had once been physically blind, he could now see. More importantly, he could see Jesus for who He was: the Messiah. The Pharisees could not see God's work because of their rigid and legalistic interpretation of God's law. Denying the miracle was easier for them than accepting that Jesus was a man of God. They knew only God can restore sight to a blind person, so admitting Jesus had done this was essentially the same as admitting Jesus was God.

- What did it mean for the Pharisees to cast the man out of the synagogue?

- Why did the man's parents deflect what Jesus did?

The synagogue was the center of social life and regular worship for the Jews. To be cast out of the synagogue was to be cut off from your entire social network—your family, friends, everyone. The man's parents wanted to avoid the same fate as their son, so they deflected their answers to him. The parents denied Jesus to save face with the popular and influential leaders of their society. The healed man alone gave credit where credit was due.

- How did the formerly blind man respond to the Pharisees' question? How was His response different than his neighbors', his parents', and the Pharisees'?
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Faced with an opportunity to deny Jesus and the work He had done in the man's life, the formerly blind man declared what Jesus had done for him. Following Jesus cost this man his entire network of relationships. Even though the Pharisees had cast him out, he was not alone. Jesus was coming to find Him.

**Notes:**

> HAVE VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 9:35-41.

- Why would Jesus seek this man after he had been cast out of the synagogue?
- How did the man respond to learning that Jesus—the One who healed him—was the “Son of Man”?
- Why was the man’s healing not the greatest miracle that day? What was the greatest healing?

The spiritually blind Pharisees could not see beyond their devotion to their interpretation of the Law, even if it meant harming the poor and marginalized. But Jesus sought out the weak and suffering man. Jesus revealed Himself to the blind man and brought a greater miracle than the restoration of his sight. Jesus restored the blind man’s soul.

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## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

### Notes:

- The blind man's neighbors were more interested in talking about Jesus than believing in Jesus. Why must our belief in Jesus always turn into obedience of Jesus? What does it reveal about a person if they are interested in talking but not doing? Why are both necessary?
- How does spiritual blindness, like the Pharisees', keep us from seeing Jesus for who He is and following Him in obedience? How do we guard against spiritual blindness in our own lives?
- What story do you have to tell about how Jesus changed your life? How could you use something Jesus has done in your life to tell someone else about who Jesus is?

## PRAY

Thank Jesus for the healing He brings, and thank Him for healing you. Pray that Jesus' healing in your life would not end with you, but rather you would faithfully share the story of how Jesus has changed your life with others.

## FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

### Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
  - How has obeying Jesus allowed you to see something you might have otherwise missed?
  - Who can you share your story with this week?
- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
- > The challenge to memorize John 9:25.
- > The text for next week's study, so group members can read it in anticipation of next weekend: John 10:1-42.

## JOHN 9:1-41

9:1-41. Jesus' identity as "the light of the world" was illustrated in His sixth and penultimate "sign" recorded in John's Gospel—the healing of a man born blind (see note at 2:11). As in chapter 5, Jesus healed on the Sabbath and thus suffered persecution from the Jewish leaders. But in contrast to the lame man of chapter 5, who showed no faith and reported Jesus to the authorities, the formerly blind man showed a progression of faith and ended up worshiping Jesus (9:38). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their spiritual blindness (vv. 40-41).

**Notes:**

9:2. The disciples' question reflected the assumption, customary in ancient Judaism, that suffering could be traced to specific sins (cp. Job 4:7). The underlying concern of this assumption is to clear God of wrongdoing against innocent people (Ex 20:5; Num 14:18; Dt 5:9). Yet the NT makes it clear that suffering is not always a direct result of a person's sin (Lk 13:2-3; 2Co 12:7; Gal 4:13). We should not speculate about the cause of a person's suffering but realize that even evil can contribute to the greater glory of God (esp. the crucifixion; cp. Jn 12:28,37-41; 17:1,5).

9:7. Jesus' sending the man to wash in the pool of Siloam is reminiscent of Elijah's sending Naaman to wash in the Jordan River (2Ki 5:10-13). The words which means "Sent" may echo the messianic reference in Gen 49:10 (cp. Isa 8:6); see notes at Jn 1:38 and 3:16-18). After 9:7, Jesus is not heard from again until verse 35.

9:14. The mention of the Sabbath here (cp. 5:9) resumes the earlier Sabbath controversy in chapter 5. Jesus had moistened clay with His saliva and then kneaded it to make mud. Kneading dough, and by analogy kneading clay, was included among the 39 classes of work forbidden on the Sabbath by Jewish rabbinic tradition ( m. Shabb.7:2).

9:16. The division among the Pharisees follows the differing ways of reasoning observed by the schools of Shammai and Hillel. The former argued from foundational principles ("anyone who breaks the law is a sinner"),

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the latter from the established facts of a case ("Jesus has performed a good work").

9:24. The Pharisees' exhortation to the healed man, Give glory to God, was a solemn warning for him to tell the truth (Jos 7:19; 2Ch 30:8; Jer 13:16).

9:28. The Pharisees' claim of being Moses' disciples was undermined by their failure to listen to the One of whom Moses wrote.

9:29. The Pharisees' assertion, We know that God has spoken to Moses, harks back to God's giving Moses the law at Mount Sinai (Ex 33:11; Num 12:2-8; cp. Jn 1:17).

9:31-33. The healed man's major premise, that God doesn't listen to sinners, is borne out by the OT (Ps 34:15; 66:20; 109:7; 145:19). His minor premise, that there was no precedent for opening the eyes of a person born blind, is also confirmed by the absence of such instances cited in OT or extrabiblical sources. The man's conclusion, If this man were not from God, He wouldn't be able to do anything (cp. 3:2), fit with the common Jewish view that miracles were performed in answer to prayer.

9:34. The Pharisees' charge against the healed man may allude to Ps 51:5. Threw him out refers to expulsion from the synagogue. The way this was done suggests an impulsive action rather than excommunication based on a formal procedure.

9:39-41. Giving sight to the righteous blind (Ps 146:8; Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7,18) and blinding unrighteous persons who can see (Isa 6:10; 42:19; Jer 5:21; cp. Mt 13:13-15; Jn 12:40) are common OT themes. Elsewhere, Jesus called the Pharisees "blind guides" (Mt 23:16; cp. 15:14; 23:26).

**Notes:**