

# THE TRUE LIGHT

unit 18 | session 5



## CHRIST CONNECTION

God spoke through Old Testament prophets, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus.

# POINTING TO THE LIGHT

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

**Luke 1; John 1**

## JOHN FULFILLED A PROMISE

### LUKE 1:5-17

5 In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest of Abijah's division named Zechariah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 Both were righteous in God's sight, living without blame according to all the commands and requirements of the Lord. 7 But they had no children because Elizabeth could not conceive, and both of them were well along in years. 8 When his division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9 it happened that he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. 10 At the hour of incense the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. 11 An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified and overcome with fear. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. 14 There will be joy and delight for you, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and will never drink wine or beer. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. 16 He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people."

## THE LIGHT WAS COMING

### JOHN 1:6-9

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

## MAIN POINT.

Our lives should point to Jesus and prepare others to know Him.



## THEOLOGY CONNECTION

### PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE

If God is in control and already knows the future, why pray? The Bible teaches that although God has a plan for this world that He promises to fulfill, He often uses prayer to accomplish His divine purpose. Though God knows the end result, the means that lead to that end result will be accomplished through prayer. In this sense, it is true that “prayer changes things,” and it is also true that God uses prayer to change our hearts so that our will comes into conformity with His.

# DISCUSSION

## JOHN FULFILLED A PROMISE

LUKE 1:5-17

- Have you ever prayed for a long time for something and felt like God was silent or late?
- Why do you think God chose an older, childless couple to fulfill His promise in Malachi 4:5-6?
- Why do we often not trust God’s timing? When have you wanted God’s timing to be different?

## THE LIGHT WAS COMING

JOHN 1:6-9

- What’s more common: seeking attention for ourselves or giving attention to others? Why?
- Why do we need light? What would life be like without light?
- Why would John need to announce that “the true light” was coming? What does this tell you about the condition of the world?



**WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE SO THAT YOUR LIFE POINTS TO JESUS AND PREPARES OTHERS TO SEE HIM?**

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

Do promises mean anything to you? If you’ve ever had someone break a promise, then you may not take them seriously. You may even put up walls of distrust, requiring people to prove themselves over time before you believe them. Kept promises build trust; broken promises damage it. When we are hurt by broken promises, we may become hesitant to believe people when they say they’ll do something or be something for us. We don’t want to risk being hurt again by allowing ourselves to believe someone else’s words. But we must realize that God isn’t like people who’ve betrayed us. He isn’t going to break a promise. He never, ever has; He never, ever will. God’s promises have either already been fulfilled in Jesus’s birth, death, and resurrection, or they’ll be revealed when Jesus returns to make all things new. If you’ve been hurt by someone, know that God deserves your trust. He won’t fail you; He won’t leave you; He has already given His Son for you. God is truth (John 14:6). He is love (1 John 4:8). His Word is sure.



## DAY ONE

# MATTHEW 5:14-16

Our lesson this week was about John the Baptist coming to tell the world about “the true light that gives light to everyone”—Jesus, the promised Messiah (John 1:9). And as believers, that true Light lives in us. We reflect His light into the world. In today’s passage, Jesus told His followers to shine their light before others so that God would receive glory. Our lives are meant to be like a spotlight, visible and clear, pointing people to something bigger than ourselves. Just like a town on a hill can’t be hidden, our lives as followers of Jesus aren’t meant to be hidden either. Jesus gave a practical example: No one lights a lamp just to hide it under a basket. That would be ridiculous! The purpose of a lamp is to give light to everyone in the house. In the same way, our purpose as “light” is to shine so brightly that others can see it.

But what exactly is this “light” that Jesus is talking about? It’s not just about being a good person or having good morals. Our light is reflected in how we live—our kindness, our integrity, our compassion, our joy, our patience, our forgiveness, our holiness. It’s the way we treat friends, how we react to pressure, how we handle success and failure, and how we speak truth with love. When people see these qualities in us, it’s not so we look good. Instead, our good deeds should direct attention past us and straight to God. Our lives become a powerful testimony, making people curious about the source of our light. It prepares their hearts to know Jesus because they see a glimpse of His character and love reflected in us. So, don’t hide your light! Let your life shine brightly so others can see Jesus!

- **WHAT ARE SOME “BASKETS” (THINGS THAT HIDE YOUR LIGHT) THAT STUDENTS OFTEN DEAL WITH IN THEIR LIVES (LIKE FEAR OF JUDGMENT, PEER PRESSURE, OR APATHY)?**
- **HOW DOES IT HIT YOU TO REALIZE THAT CHOOSING TO LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH AND SHOW GOD’S LOVE PREPARES PEOPLE’S HEARTS TO BE MORE OPEN TO HEARING ABOUT JESUS?**

## PRAY

**JESUS, HELP ME TO LET MY LIGHT SHINE BRIGHTLY THROUGH MY GOOD DEEDS AND CHARACTER. MAY MY LIFE ALWAYS POINT OTHERS TO YOU SO THEY MAY KNOW AND GLORIFY YOU.**



## DAY TWO

# JOHN 13:34-35

Think about your favorite brand or sports team. They usually have a logo—something instantly recognizable that tells you who they are and what they stand for. In a way, Jesus gave His followers a “logo” too—an unmistakable mark that would show the world whose they are. Jesus gave His followers a command: “Love one another.” Seems simple, right? Well, the second part of this command is to love one another “just as I have loved you.” So how is that? Jesus loved sacrificially, unconditionally, even when people didn’t deserve it, even when it was inconvenient or painful. He loved people who didn’t love Him in return. He washed His disciples’ feet, He healed the sick, He befriended outcasts, and ultimately, He gave His life. That’s the kind of love He calls us to.

When we genuinely love one another within the church, and when we extend that same kind of selfless love to those outside of it—to our friends, our family, our classmates, even people we find difficult—it really stands out in a world that often prioritizes self-interest. When people see believers loving each other and loving the world with Jesus’s love, they see something different, supernatural even. They see a reflection of God Himself.

This kind of love is the most powerful type of evangelism. When we truly love like Jesus, people will inevitably ask, “What is it about them? Where does that come from?” And that opens the door for us to point them to the source: Jesus. Our lives become a living invitation.

- **WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS SAID “EVERYONE WILL KNOW” HIM BY OUR LOVE, RATHER THAN BY OUR KNOWLEDGE OR OUR WORSHIP MUSIC?**
- **WHAT’S ONE PRACTICAL WAY YOU CAN SHOW JESUS’S LOVE TO SOMEONE THIS WEEK WHO MIGHT NOT EXPECT IT?**

## PRAY

**JESUS, THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME PERFECTLY.  
HELP ME TO LOVE OTHERS WITH THE SAME  
SELFLESS LOVE YOU SHOWED SO THAT THEY MAY  
COME TO KNOW YOU.**



## DAY THREE

# COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

Think about someone you admire. What do you admire most about them? Often, what stands out about people is not necessarily what they do but how they do it—how they talk to people, how they serve others, how they think before they speak, how their character stands out. In a world full of quick judgments and harsh words, someone who speaks with grace, wisdom, and kindness really stands out. This is what Paul described in today’s passage. Paul told the Colossians to be wise toward outsiders—people who didn’t know Jesus. Being “wise” means being intentional and thoughtful about how we live our lives around them. Our actions speak volumes—often louder than our words. Are we kind, honest, and joyful, even when no one is looking? Are we living out the love of Christ in our daily interactions? Next, he said to make “the most of the time.” Life throws us all sorts of moments—a casual chat in the hallway, a group project, a social media comment. These aren’t just random occurrences but chances to show Jesus to others. Paul also said: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt.” “Gracious” means our words should be kind, loving, and encouraging, not critical or gossipy. “Seasoned with salt” means our words should be flavorful, interesting, and make sense. Salt preserves and adds taste; our words should do the same. They should preserve truth and make the gospel appealing; they should be thoughtful and relevant, not preachy or awkward.

Why is all this important? “So that you may know how you should answer each person.” When your life is wise and your words are gracious and relevant, people will notice. They’ll see something different in you, and they might just ask about it. And when they do, you’ll be prepared to point them to the source of that difference: Jesus. Our lives become a living invitation, preparing hearts to hear about the incredible hope we have in Him.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUR CONVERSATION TO BE “GRACIOUS” AND “SEASONED WITH SALT”?**
- **HOW CAN LIVING OUT THESE VERSES HELP CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO SHARE ABOUT JESUS?**

## PRAY

**HEAVENLY FATHER, HELP ME TO LIVE WISELY AND  
THOUGHTFULLY IN FRONT OF OTHERS. MAY MY  
CONVERSATIONS ALWAYS BE FULL OF GRACE AND  
TRUTH, POINTING PEOPLE TO YOU.**



## DAY FOUR

# 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

Do you know what an ambassador does? An ambassador for a country goes and lives in another country as a representative of his or her home country. Your job would be to officially speak for your country, to show what your nation is like, and to build good relationships. Every word you say and every action you take would reflect back on the country you represent. In today's passage, Paul tells us that we are ambassadors for Christ. We represent and work for His kingdom—in our schools, in our communities, in our friendships, on our teams, and in our groups. Through us, God appeals to the people we encounter—an invitation into His kingdom!

The goal of an ambassador is to reconcile—to bring people into a right relationship. Our mission as Christ's ambassadors is to help others "be reconciled to God." Our lives, our words, and our love should be so compelling that others want to know more about this Jesus we represent and will eventually be led to understand His message of forgiveness and new life.

So, the next time you're about to say something or make a choice or react to a situation, pause and remember: You're an ambassador. What kind of representative of God's good kingdom do you want to be?

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR GOD TO MAKE "HIS APPEAL THROUGH US"? CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN SOMEONE'S LIFE POINTED YOU CLOSER TO GOD?**
- **HOW CAN YOU ACTIVELY PREPARE YOURSELF TO POINT OTHERS TO JESUS IN YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLES AND GROUPS?**

## PRAY

**JESUS, HELP ME TO LIVE MY LIFE IN A WAY THAT GENUINELY REPRESENTS YOU TO EVERYONE I ENCOUNTER. EMPOWER ME BY YOUR SPIRIT TO SPEAK WITH GRACE AND TO ACT WITH LOVE SO THAT OTHERS MAY BE DRAWN TO YOU.**



## DAY FIVE

# ACTS 1:8

When you get exciting news, what's the first thing you want to do? You want to tell everyone, right? You can't keep it in! In Acts 1:8, Jesus gave His followers a big mission: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This verse is a powerful foundation for our Christian lives. First, we will receive "power." Jesus doesn't just send us out on our own strength. We are promised the Holy Spirit who will empower us! This isn't some superhero ability but a divine ability to live for the Lord, to speak for Him, and to impact the world around us. It's the power to overcome fear, to love the unlovable, and to share truth even when it's uncomfortable.

Then, He calls us "witnesses." What does a witness do? They see something, and then they tell about what they've seen. That's it. They speak what they know and have experienced. As followers of Jesus, our lives are meant to show and tell others about Him.

The "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth" part? That means our mission starts right where we are—our homes, schools, neighborhoods (Jerusalem), then expands to our wider community and even globally (Judea, Samaria, and beyond). You have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a witness for Jesus. Let your life shine so brightly that others can't help but see Him, and then, be ready to tell them about the amazing hope you've found in Him.

- **WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE FOR YOU TO BE EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR DAILY LIFE AS A STUDENT?**
- **WHAT'S ONE WAY YOU COULD BE MORE PREPARED TO "TELL" SOMEONE ABOUT THE HOPE YOU HAVE IN JESUS?**

## PRAY

**JESUS, HELP ME TO BE A BOLD WITNESS FOR YOU  
IN EVERY AREA OF MY LIFE. MAY I BE PREPARED  
TO GIVE A REASON FOR MY HOPE SO OTHERS CAN  
KNOW YOU.**



BRAND OWNER & CONTENT EDITOR

## ALECIA BRYANT

Do you know that feeling you get when you've been away from your family, your pets, your people, and your stuff for too long, and you just want to be home? As believers, we should ache with this feeling at all times. Why? Because our home isn't here. God's Spirit living within us stretches and reaches for home—eternity. We're made in God's image, designed to be with Him. And though we do our best to make this earth feel like home, we're really just exiles here—foreigners who belong somewhere else, somewhere better. In this volume, we'll study Israel's exile in Babylon, an ungodly foreign nation. For seventy years, God's people faced the pressure to become Babylonian, but many of them recognized that Babylon wasn't home. They refused to be unfaithful to God, even when their lives were threatened, even when settling would've been easier. The truth is that you're living in Babylon too, in a culture pressuring you to conform. Determine in your heart to be faithful. Determine to live as a temporary citizen here. Lean in to that feeling deep inside of you that longs for more and reach toward heaven—toward home.

*Alecia Bryant*



## THE WRITERS

### DEVOTIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

#### ANDREW SLAY

(Unit 16)

Andrew serves as the Pastor of Students and Families at Westwood Baptist Church in Cleveland, TN. He is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, with a Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Apologetics and Culture from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Andrew is passionate about discipleship, biblical fellowship, evangelism, and world missions. He seeks to spur the body of Christ on to walk in obedience to Jesus by fulfilling the Great Commission. He and his wife, Ashley, have two daughters, Graysen Elyse and Emersyn Leigh.

#### CAITLIN HURLBUT

(Unit 17)

Caitlin Hurlbut is a Bible teacher and youth ministry leader in New Orleans and currently serves as a Student Ministry Resident at First Baptist Kenner. With nearly five years of ministry experience, she's dedicated to guiding young people toward a deeper, Christ-centered understanding of Scripture. She studied Missions at Oklahoma Baptist University and is pursuing her Master of Divinity at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

#### ANGELA REED

(Unit 18)

Between wrangling her two girls and supporting her pastor husband, Angela Reed can usually be found defending the Oxford comma or happily lost in a literary world. This punctuation pundit and devoted bibliophile's passion for words began as a teenager, when she felt called to write and edit Bible studies to help others truly know and value God's Word. She earned an MDiv from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and she and her family live and serve in Booneville, MS.

