



Links Players

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS 5: IN THE LIGHT

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12, NIV)

IF YOU HAVE EVER PLAYED GOLF UNDER THE LIGHTS, you know it's a different game. High shots—and these are common, because you are usually playing a short course—soar above the lights' reach, disappear for a moment, then reappear as they fall to the earth, hopefully near to where you were expecting. Odd shadows on the ground mean you don't see things, including the contours of the greens, as you normally would. It takes some getting used to.

Now imagine if you were playing in true darkness on a championship course, with maybe just a headlamp to help you see the ball as you swing and to help you find your ball in the vast spread of turf. You'd better be a straight hitter!

Golf was not meant to be played after dark, and the life of a disciple is meant for the light as well. In fact, Jesus promised it: follow me and you'll walk in the light. But what does this mean?

To begin, we must remember that the people of Scripture understood darkness better than we do. Without the aid of electric lights, your only hope of finding your way on a moonless night was fire. You could carry a torch, but it was inconvenient and slow.

That said, there is an especially notable incident of men moving in the dark in the pages of the Gospels. It was the night Jesus was betrayed in the garden. Led to Jesus by Judas Iscariot, the religious leaders and temple guards laid forceful hands on the Lord. "This is your hour," Jesus said to them, "—when darkness reigns" (Luke 22:53). In the hours of that same night, Peter denied Jesus three times.

None of these ill actions surprised Jesus. We know from John 3 that "light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." The light John wrote of was Christ himself. Set against him, the choices people made were made in darkness; their attempts at living were only blunders.

If the light of Christ has shone in your own life, you know how true all of this is. *Our* attempts at living without Jesus were blunders. And when we try to hide from his light even now, we trip and fall. Jesus leads his followers into the light, where true life is lived. We are richly blessed when we go with him there.

Opening questions What experiences have you had playing golf at night? What did you like and dislike about it? • Generally, would you consider yourself a "night owl" or a day person?

READING Matthew 4:12-16; John 3:19-21; 1 John 1:5-7

Prophetic light (Matthew 4)

How did the prophecy of Isaiah point to Jesus? How do you see Jesus' call to repentance fitting into a life in the light rather than in the darkness?

The revealing light (John 3)

Why do you think we "love the darkness" when Christ is not in our lives? Do you have a fear of being exposed, and what role does Jesus play in removing this fear?

Walking in the light (1 John 1)

What attribute of God do we read here? What would walking in the darkness look like? What comes of walking in the light?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/07kGieFUUc>