

PREPARATION

Spend the week studying John 9:1-41. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

DETERMINE | which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.

PRAY | for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

LANDING POINT | The supernatural life is about seeing with spiritual eyes in order to do God's work and bring Him glory.

◦ Remember the 4 Rules for Small Group Discussion

- 1. Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
- 2. No cross-talk.** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
- 3. No fixing.** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
- 4. Sharing.** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

This week your group will discuss the sixth sign in John's Gospel: the healing of the man born blind. This is a story about spiritual sight and how Jesus gives us eyes to see God's truth and how we should respond to it. The supernatural life is about seeing with spiritual eyes in order to do God's work and bring Him glory.

Have you ever been blind to a situation and what was really happening? If so, explain.

Explain what it means to have spiritual eyes in your own words.

LEARN

Select 2-3 questions to discuss as a group.

◦ The Miracle

One day Jesus was walking with His disciples, and He noticed a man who was blind from birth. Jesus' disciples asked Him, "What happened to this man? Who sinned to cause this?" Without so much as a pause, Jesus responded, "This man was born blind for a purpose – to bring God glory. We must do the work the Father sent me here to do. While I'm with you, I am the Light of the World." Then Jesus knelt down, spat on the ground and began making mud. He took the mud and put it over the man's eyes and told him to bathe in a nearby pool. The man did this and was healed. For the first time in this man's life, he could see the world!

Read John 9:1-41 as a group. What stands out to you in this story? Why?

Imagine what it would be like to see for the first time. What would it reveal to you about God's creation? Be descriptive.

◦ The Aftermath

When something like this happens, people are sure to talk. The man's neighbors noticed that he could see. So they asked him what happened, and the man told them that Jesus had healed him. They brought him to the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees. They questioned him and the man responded that he thought Jesus was a prophet.

After calling in the man's parents to share what happened, they called the man in a second time. The Pharisees' tone is sharper this time. "Surely this man who healed you is a sinner." To this the man said, "All I know is I was blind and now I see. Who could do this but someone sent by God?" The Pharisees were furious and cast the man out.

Why do you think the Pharisees were so upset by this man's story?

◦ A life-changing encounter

Afterward, Jesus found the man and asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" To this the man responded, "Who is this man that I may believe him?" "You've already seen Him. He's the one talking to you," Jesus responded. For the first time the man saw Jesus for who He truly was – the Son of God. So he fell to his knees and worshipped Him.

Jesus did more than change this man's physical condition. What more did He do?

 LIVE

- **A specific purpose**

Jesus gave this man sight for a purpose – to give God glory. Jesus didn't give the man sight to show off. He did it to point others to the divine power behind the miracle. Jesus wanted others to see that His Father was working through Him. Jesus' miracles validated His message that He was sent by God.

How do Jesus' miracles validate His message?

In what ways do others see God's power working through you?

- **Spiritual eyes**

Jesus brought God's light into this man's world. He gave him spiritual eyes. The man's story reveals how he came to faith. At first he thought Jesus was just a prophet. Then he saw that Jesus was the Son of God and worshipped Him. However, John contrasted the man in the story with the Pharisees, who were blinded by the darkness of their sin. They couldn't see Jesus for who He truly was.

What causes you to be blind to God's truth?

What's something you do (or can do) to keep you from being blind to seeing Jesus as He truly is?

 LEAD

Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.

- **God wants you to see**

We are all like the man from the story. We were blind to God and He gave us sight. Everyone has eyes but not all can see. This story reveals three different kinds of eyes. First, there are those with clueless eyes. They are completely blind to God and His ways. In the story, this was the man before the miracle. Next, there are those with religious eyes. They know about God's truth, but it doesn't change their heart or their actions. The Pharisees were the example of "good religion." They did all the right things and obeyed the rules, but they totally missed Jesus. Third, there are those with spiritual eyes. These are the ones who know God's truth and live by it. They worship God and orient their lives around Him. This was the man after he encountered Jesus.

What could your group do to help one another see with spiritual eyes?

LEAD [CONT'D]

God wants you to help others see

Did you catch how Jesus was teaching His disciples before He did His miracle? He told them, “We must work the works of Him who sent me.” God wants to use you to do His good work. Jesus is the Light of the World, and, as His followers, we are called to be a light to the world. God wants us to help others move from spiritual darkness to light. The best way to do this is through relationships and story. Share your life with others and tell them the story of God, both in your life and in the Bible.

Identify someone who needs to see with spiritual eyes. Who are they and how will you reach out to them?

Supernatural eyes

The supernatural life is about seeing with spiritual eyes in order to do God's work and bring Him glory. You have the supernatural power to bring healing and light into people's lives. This brings God glory because it shows Him as only one who can truly heal our wounds and give us eyes to see what truly matters in this life (and in eternity).

What would it look like for you to experience God's supernatural power and see with His eyes? How would your life and relationships be different?

PRAY

Thank God for spiritual eyes to see your need for God and how He provided for that need through Jesus. Pray for supernatural power to see the world as God does and to help bring others out of darkness and into the light of Jesus.

FOLLOW UP

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

- Read 1 John 1:5-10 and reflect on what it means to walk in God's light.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their life.

 COMMENTARY

- **Cause and effect**

Too often people assume a cause-and-effect relationship between someone's sin and their suffering. It's natural for humans to think this way. It's easier to think this way and sit in judgment over others. It's far more challenging to consider the purposes God might have for someone's suffering. While suffering can be brought about by sin, that is not always the case. One thing to remember is Jesus always shifts our focus to God and His purposes. God is in the business of using our story to reveal His good works of redemption. And He loves to turn our tragedies into triumphs for His glory.

- **Light of the World**

John's Gospel (along with his epistles) use the motif of light and darkness often. That Jesus brought light into this blind man's eyes is meant to be understood both literally and spiritually. Jesus is the "light" that brings "to this dark world true knowledge, moral purity, and the light that shows the very presence of God."¹

- **Courage under fire**

The man from this story showed great boldness in the face of opposition. Unlike his parents who avoided a head-on collision with the Pharisees, this man took a stand for truth. Jesus had healed him and no one could have done what He did unless they were from God. His example reminds us that we must stand for God's truth, even when our culture believes otherwise.

1. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2019.