

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
- CG Mission Statement

Icebreaker

Who do you look like, your mom or your dad or neither one? Which one do you act like?

Worship: Jesus' "I am.." statements - John 6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1

Here is a passage/song to help your group as you worship.

Attentively read Jesus' "I am.." statements in John 6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1, pausing to meditate after reading each one. Enter into a time of worship through prayer by using a word or phrase from these verses to praise the Lord.

Text for Discussion: John 8:37-59

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Have you ever been so angry at Jesus that it overflows? To ask this may sound odd or even inappropriate. But the Bible has many stories of people reacting this way to Jesus. At their extreme, people intended to kill Him. Hearing this can feel out of place today, so we dismiss its impact. But what if we're the ones missing the implication of what Jesus says in John 8? There, He makes a clear distinction between people whose hearts are rooted in God... and those who root themselves in the Evil One.

Children of the Devil // How many of us tune out the moment we hear something so abrasive? The idea of Satan being real seems rather antiquated. But eliminating him from the discussion leaves us with an inability to understand, explain and cope with the reality of evil. Evil itself is often dismissed – as if we simply need to educate ourselves enough and we'll no longer need to worry about such things. And yet...

We feel something deep down – the honest reality of our world – which our culture no longer allows us to express. By pushing aside evil and the Devil and believing that humans are inherently good, we have no means to adequately explain the horrors and coarseness of our world. But what's the alternative? The Bible says real, personal evil exists. The Devil exists. Which we must come to terms with because Jesus clearly believes in him too.

What is the implication of Jesus calling these people *Children of the Devil*? Satan is the father of lies and deceit. And what was his first lie? That we know better than God: the idea that our hearts are better judges of what's best for us. Accepting this isn't just believing we know better than God; it's choosing to believe that the Devil knows better than God. For he was first who told this lie. Hearing it this way, we can see why Jesus calls this the pathway to hell. Our self-reliance isn't about harming others; it's about doing damage to ourselves. Because living as if God doesn't exist is ultimately an act of hatred toward our Father.

Child of Abraham // What is the alternative? What does it mean to be the children of Abraham? It's not about our pedigree or our religiosity or performing appropriately to justify our identity. That's still an act of self-reliance. The whole point of Abraham was that he didn't trust himself. He rooted his life and his identity in God – trusting in God, deepening his relationship with Him. When God promised that He was going to take care of Abraham, his response was trust.

This means we choose to believe God knows what's best for us and will take care of us no matter what. We hold tight in those darkest moments, knowing Christ died on our behalf and through His resurrection conquered the darkness once and for all. We come to see that it is our duty to be emissaries of this glorious truth and perfect gift. Because God's imprint is upon our souls, even the broken places where He is healing us. The Gospel is bigger than any other aspect of our lives. Bigger than our achievements or our reputation. Bigger than our mistakes or scars. Because there is no other love like the love God has offered through Jesus.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How can you know you are a child of God? How is it that believers have His DNA?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- The scene is set by Jesus' words in John 8:31-33. How do these verses show what a true disciple is?
 - What kind of freedom was He talking about?
 - Did the Jews get what He was talking about? Why or why not?
- What traits did Jesus say the children of Abraham possess? John 8:39-47.
 - What is the difference between Abraham and the Jews Jesus was talking to? See Romans 4:20-25
- How does Jesus describe who their father really is? John 8:41-47.
 - Why did Jesus call them a "child of their father the devil"?
 - Do you think we can belong to God but act like children of the devil? Why or why not?
- What promise does Jesus give to the one who keeps His word? John 8:51.
 - What did He mean?
 - How did the Jews misunderstand Him?
- Why do the Jews compare Jesus to Abraham?
 - What did Jesus mean by "My day" and how did Abraham see it? John 8:56
- What was Jesus saying when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM"? John 8:58, see also Exodus 3:13-15.
 - How did the Jews react to Jesus' bold claim? See Leviticus 24:16
 - What options does this claim leave us with when forming an opinion of who Jesus' is?
- How can you know you are a child of God? How is it that believers have His DNA?
 - What does a child of God do according to this passage?
 - What would you like to remember and apply to your life?

Prayer

Use the A.C.T.S. model of prayer - Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

Experiments of the Month

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus)

Spiritual Formation Experiment:

Use this version of St. Ignatius's prayer of Daily Examen: 1) Quiet yourself before God's presence. 2) Review the last 24 hours with gratitude. 3) Reflect on your emotions and present them to God. 4) Pray about an aspect of the day with joy or ask for pardon and peace. 5) Ask God to guide you for tomorrow and look forward to the next 24 hours with trust and hope.

Missional Experiment:

Write an email explaining why you love Christ and what He means to you making sure you glorify Him and tell why you enjoy Him. Ask God if there is someone who needs to read the beauty of what you have written. When you are ready, send the letter to someone you wish to share it with either a Christian or a seeker. Share with your group what your experience was like in writing your story, sharing it with someone else and their response.