



John 9

Some Background

The feast of tabernacles continues from back in chapter 7. Light is part of the festival. It looks back to how Yahweh guided his people in the wilderness at night. Jesus calls himself the light in chapter 8:12

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Back in chapter 1 John wrote of the eternal word

4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

At the start of chapter 9 we meet a man who has been in darkness from birth. It is an account that will threaten all who do not think they are or have been in the dark with regard to Jesus. It begins with a discussion about sin and the effects of sin by looking at another person. It finishes in the same way but with a very different view of who is in sin and the consequences of sin.

Sin and suffering are certainly linked in a general way throughout the Bible Genesis 3. Some in this chapter turn this into a 'tight connection' to identify the intensity of the suffering with the sin. While there are a couple of specific examples of a direct link between a person's sin and ailment (eg. Miriam in Numbers 12 1Cor 11:30), other parts of scripture state that this is not an automatic cause and effect (eg. Job, Gal 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:7). (D.A.Carson *The gospel according to John* 1991pp.361)

As we look at the drama it will help us examine ourselves as well as those around us and our relationship with God.

Some suggested questions for your group

Discuss: What different reasons do people use to explain disabilities? Would it be okay to attribute fault to a disability (either to the person themselves or to others)? How might people express an idea like punishment or karma or some other type of cause and effect?

Read John 9

What would it have been like for someone born blind in Jesus' day?

What kind of worldview do the disciples have as to why this man was born blind? Where did they get that view from? Would people say things like that today?

What is Jesus' reason for the man's blindness? How do you think that reason would go down with your colleagues and friends (If it was posted on facebook, what would people say)? Would you feel some of the weight of what they said yourself? Which reason seem more socially acceptable – the disciples' or Jesus'?

Jesus heals the blind man. What kind of questioning/analysis/investigation/processing happens as a result of this healing? How is this influenced by their power and position?

	Previous views	Position of power/influence of others	Method of investigation	Conclusion about Jesus and the miracle
Disciples				
Neighbours				
Pharisees				
Blind man				
Blind man's parents				

The disciples seem to not come to a conclusion in this chapter but seem to oscillate with... How might we ourselves drift between these approaches...what motives lead to different conclusions... how do we see our friends and neighbours working out who Jesus is?

	Previous views	Position of power/influence of others	Method of investigation	Conclusion about Jesus/his followers/sin/a world where things aren't right
Me				
Neighbours				

How do you think Jesus' definition of sin and who is sinful might differ from others in the passage? What do you think is the sin that Jesus says the Pharisees have? What might be the consequence?

How does Jesus explain how people come to a conclusion about who he is (bringing light to darkness)? (39-41) What does that mean for how we respond to Jesus?

How can we introduce Jesus to others? What can we expect? What is in our control? What can we ask Jesus to do?

Pray with the Bible open

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
 That saved a wretch like me
 I once was lost, but now am found
 Was blind but now I see

(John Newton)