

The Gospel of **JOHN** Discussion Guide

March 11-12, 2023

John 9:1-41

Ice Breaker Questions

- In today's text, Jesus heals a man born blind. Have you, or a family member or friend encountered any long term physical limitation? How has this limitation positively and negatively impacted your life, or the life of your loved one?

Understand Their Story

As the Feast of Booths ends and Jesus leaves the temple (John 7-8), controversy follows him. Since this week's text is long, we've broken it down into scenes below. Each scene has a central theme or question, so we hope that as you engage with each section individually you will see how they tie together.¹

Scene	Main Characters	Central Question / Idea
#1 - John 9:1-7		
#2 - John 9:8-12		
#3 - John 9:13-17		
#4 - John 9:18-23		
#5 - John 9:24-34		
#6 - John 9:35-41		

1. In this text, the words blind and see have both physical meanings and spiritual meanings. A man who was born blind is quickly given physical sight (v7), and gradually receives spiritual sight (v 8-38). In contrast, the Pharisees who can physically see Jesus are actually blind (v 40-41). How does John trace the development of the man's faith? What steps of understanding does this man take?

- a. How does this thinking about the 'blind' man's journey of faith encourage you as you think about people who you know who aren't yet Christians?

¹ The color coding is significant :-). Rows with the same shading have similar central themes & questions.

Connect to His Story.

2. In this text, the disciples and the Pharisees link physical blindness and sin (v 1-2, 34), but as the man debates with the Pharisees he establishes a link between spiritual blindness and God's response to sin (v 30-33). God would not respond to Jesus's requests, he says, if Jesus was a sinner. The blind man is a better theologian than the Pharisees! Read these texts to see his theology at work in scripture:
 - a. Psalm 34:15-22. Who is the LORD "for"? What does he do for these people?
 - b. Proverbs 15:29. How does this verse relate to the blind man's argument?
 - c. Isaiah 1:12-17. How does this text reflect the dynamics of the story in John 9?

Apply to Our Story

3. In John 9 a blind man receives both physical and spiritual sight, and ends by calling Jesus, "Lord" and worshiping him. This is how all of us are called to respond to this story! As we journey through this story, however, there are several side comments which are also significant, so depending on how much time you have, talk through a few of them below:
 - a. Re-read the disciples' question in 9:2. Have you ever struggled with feeling like a negative circumstance or situation in your life is a sign of God's displeasure, or punishment? Do you sometimes find yourself thinking in 'karma-like' terms - that good things should happen to those who do good and vice versa?
 - b. Re-read the parent's responses to the Pharisees in 9:20-23. How does their response challenge or convict you? Are there times you have not spoken the truth for fear of others? Are there situations in which you could be canceled if you confessed Jesus to be the Christ?

Pray for each other and for people whom you know. All of us will stand before Jesus one day (John 9:39), and have to give an account for what we have done with him. Pray that you wouldn't be blinded to the truth because of other pressures (inward sin or outward pressure to conform), and that Jesus would open those whose eyes those who are spiritually blind.

God's work and our Work

How All of Life Connects to the Gospel - in John 9:1-41

The Theology of Work Commentary articles on John 9 makes the following observation:

Christ's unusual method of healing and the subsequent actions of the no-longer-blind man, again show that the world of flesh-and-bone — and mud — is the place of God's kingdom. Jesus' method — mixing spit with dirt and putting it on the man's eyes — is not madness, but a calculated echo of the creation of mankind (Genesis 2:7). In both biblical and Greek tradition, mud (pēlos) is used to describe what people are made of. Note, for example, Job 10:9, "Remember that you fashioned me like clay; will you turn me to dust again?"²

Jesus is the light of the world (9:5), who works with the things of this world (mud), to redeem the people of the world.

- How could you use the natural resources at your fingertips (wood, earth, plants, flowers, rocks, etc) for the good of others and to bring glory to God?

² <https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/john/#seeing-and-believing-john-9>