

## **Core Study #7**

### **Claims and Challenges**

**Passage:** John 8:12-30

**Themes:** Evidence, choice, belief

**Background and Summary:** John 8 begins with the story of a woman who is caught in adultery. The religious leaders drag her in front of Jesus and they have essentially condemned her to die. But Jesus' response to her is full of grace and mercy. He says to her, "I do not condemn you..." In verse 12, Jesus begins to make specific claims about himself that is fervently disputed by the Pharisees. Here lies some of Jesus' most recognizable lines.

#### **Leader's Preparation**

- Using your **UCM Leader's Guide** (pp. 22-23 or pp. 27-33), ask some observation questions.
  - Ask the who, why, what, where questions if appropriate.
  - What type of literature is it?
  - What is going on in these verses?
  - Key words or phrases: Are there any words, history or cultural issues that you don't understand but may be important to the overall understanding of the passage?

#### **Introductory Question** (selection to choose from)

- What has Jesus been claiming about himself so far in John? What is his evidence?
- What makes a witness reliable?

#### **Discussion Questions** (selection to choose from)

- Jesus says in verse 12, "I am the light of the world: whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."<sup>1</sup>
  - What does light symbolize to you?
  - What does darkness mean to you?
  - How is light connected to life?
  - How is Jesus using these images?

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of God calling someone to be the means of bringing light to the world is rooted in ancient Judaism. There, in the prophet Isaiah in particular, it is Israel who will be the world's true light. But, ultimately, it is the Lord's servant who is anointed to bring God's truth and justice to the world. (Isaiah 42.6; 49.6; 53.1-12; 60.1, 3) - N.T Wright

- What argument do the Pharisees make against Jesus in verse 13? In what situation would a person's testimony become valid (vs 17)?
- In verse 15, Jesus says that He does not judge anyone. Yet in verse 26 Jesus says that he has much to say in judgement of the Pharisses. What can we make of this?<sup>2</sup>
- What is this judgement that Jesus speaks of in light of verse 24?
- What two witnesses does Jesus say He has (vs 18)?
- In what ways had the Father already testified to Jesus?<sup>3</sup>
- What do the Pharisees ask Jesus in verse 19? What does this question reveal about the state of their relationship with God?
- Chapter 8 has a court-like setting. After reading, who do you think was really on trial? Jesus or the Pharisees?
- What does verse 30 lead us to believe about Jesus' testimony?

### **Response Question**

- How do you react to Jesus claims in John 8? Do you embrace what he says or do you fight and resist His claims just like the Pharisees? In what ways are you tempted to reject the light? Bring those things in prayer before Him.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the gospel it's clear that Jesus had not basically/only come to judge the world, or Israel, or individuals; but it's also clear that the fact of His coming to bring rescue, salvation, life and hope would inevitably have the effect of condemning those who didn't want any of those things. - N.T Wright

<sup>3</sup> The Father had testified to Jesus through the Old Testament prophecies and through the miracles Jesus did. He also directly spoke from heaven to claim Jesus as His Son and to affirm His confidence in Him at Jesus' baptism and at the Transfiguration (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). - N.T Wright