

## Session 10: John 9:1–41

### **SESSION GOALS**

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

#### **Main Idea**

Jesus is light of the world who heals our spiritual blindness when we put our faith in him.

#### **Head Change**

To know that Jesus fully forgives our sins, heals our past, and will never abandon us.

#### **Heart Change**

To feel comfort in the nearness of Christ, especially when the world rejects us.

#### **Life Change**

To trust in Jesus, being willing to tell anyone who asks about the hope we have found in him.

### **OPEN**

**When have you faced rejection? How did you respond to that rejection?**

In John 9 we meet a man who was born blind. As we follow his story of redemption, rejection, and healing, we will see our own stories reflected in him. Knowing Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever be given, but not everyone will see it that way.

### **READ**

John 9:1–41 (If you are pressed for time, you can shorten your reading to John 9:1–17, 28–39.)

## **WATCH**

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Dr. Tony Evans's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**Why might God allow difficulty in our lives?**

**Why were the Pharisees upset with the healing of the man born blind?**

**In what ways do we see Jesus's divinity in this chapter?**

Show Session 10: *John 9:1–41* (10 minutes).

## **DISCUSS**

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Read John 9:1–12.

It was commonly believed in ancient Judea that a child born with any infirmities or malformations was the direct result of a parent's sin. So, when the disciples saw the beggar in John 9, they immediately blamed him and his parents for his poverty and difficulties. We don't hold that belief in modern times, but we sometimes blame the poor and homeless for their situations. **When you see someone asking for money on the street, what do you think about them? What do you assume led them to that position?**

Jesus told his disciples the man was born blind “so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” Where the disciples saw a curse, Jesus saw an opportunity. **What can we learn from Jesus's compassion towards the man who was born blind?**

Dr. Evans taught us that God may allow difficult circumstances in our lives so that he might display his glory to the world. But when we are struggling—physically, financially, spiritually, etc.—it may be difficult for us to see God's purposes. It may even feel like God is anything but near to us. **What are you tempted to believe about God when things are not going well in your life?**

Difficult situations are not punishments from God. While we may feel the negative results of sin in our lives, God does not punish Christians with sickness or trials when we sin. Our difficulties are allowed for his greater glory. **How might your present circumstances—like that of the man born blind—provide an opportunity for God to be glorified through you?**

In verse 4, Jesus again refers to himself as the light of the world as he brings literal light into this man's darkness. **In what ways is spiritual blindness like physical blindness?**

People believed that sin caused this man to be blind. When Jesus gives him sight, he is showing that he has power over sin, even sins that affect us before we are born. When he heals you, he heals you completely. **In what ways is God's total forgiveness good news for you?**

**What sins in your life—if any—are hard to believe Jesus could heal?**

John 9:7 tells us that the man was told to wash in the pool of Siloam, which means “sent.” The man is almost immediately confronted by a group of people asking him how he was healed. It may not seem like it, but this is the Christian story: Jesus came to a beggar, healed him, and then sent him out to tell others about the healing he found. **Who has Jesus sent you to, specifically?**

Read John 9:13–34.

We don’t know why the people took the man to the Pharisees, but it is likely that they were amazed by what happened and were looking for answers. Since the man who was born blind did not know who healed him, they went to the most knowledgeable people in town. But, instead of seeing the goodness of Jesus’s act, the Pharisees only saw sin and error. **What lengths did the Pharisees go to avoid seeing the blessing of a blind man being given sight?**

**Why do you think the Pharisees worked so hard to reject the man’s answer? Why were they unwilling to trust that Jesus had miraculously healed him?**

When people ask us where we found healing, we need to be ready to give them an answer. **Do you feel able to answer people’s questions about Jesus? How might you and the people in your small group prepare yourselves to answer questions about him?**

**Note:** To think more about apologetic evangelism, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.

The Pharisees’ primary objection to this miracle is that it’s performed on the Sabbath. They reject Jesus’s work because it does not line up with their expectations. **What is your reaction when God does not work according to your expectations? What tempts you to think that God is acting “out of line”?**

The Pharisees dismiss the man born blind after he calls Jesus a prophet in verse 17. His parents refuse to support him for fear that they will be kicked out of the synagogue. These rejections did not result from sin but from telling the truth. When we live for Jesus, we very well may be dismissed, refused, or unsupported because of the truth.

**When have you felt unaccepted because you follow Jesus?**

**What should our response be to personal rejection for the sake of the gospel?**

When the Pharisees question the man a second time, they start with the phrase, “Give glory to God.” In essence, they are telling the man to glorify God by telling them what they want to hear. But God cannot be glorified with lies. **When is it easier for you to forget the truth for the sake of appeasing others?**

**Note:** To learn more about what it means to “glorify God,” go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.

The Pharisees were so committed to rejecting Jesus that they refused to see the simple truth of the miracle in front of them. Look at verses 31–33. **What does the man claim to know about Jesus? What do you think the man born blind could see that the Pharisees could not?**

The Pharisees promised to kick anyone out of the synagogue if they proclaimed Jesus to be the Christ. The man born blind does not even get close to that, and yet, they still kick him out of the synagogue claiming, “You were born entirely of sins.” **When we define people by their sin instead of their redemption in Christ, how might that affect our view of them?**

Read John 9:35–41.

The man born blind is the first person John records who’s persecuted for following Jesus. By being put out of the synagogue, he lost his ability to worship, to hear the Word of God read, and to participate in communal festivals. It might have been tempting to think of his sight as a curse. **Despite the new difficulties in his life, what blessings did he receive? Do you think the blessings were worth the struggles? Why or why not?**

The man born blind knows that following Jesus was worth the cost of persecution and is eager to find the Son of Man, or Messiah. He may have lost the ability to worship within the synagogue, but he met and believed in God himself. All told, the cost of persecution was much smaller than the reward of knowing Jesus. **What things have you lost for the sake of Christ? In what ways is knowing him better than anything the world has to offer?**

**Note:** To meditate on the cost of discipleship, go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.

In verses 40–42, the Pharisees try to justify themselves before Jesus. Unlike the man born blind, they think they are free of sin. Dr. Evans said, “Until you recognize your sinfulness, you don’t need a savior.” **In what ways does the confidence of the Pharisees prove they are spiritually blind?**

Jesus forgives our sin, heals our wounds, and send us out to proclaim his glory. **What blessings have you been given and experienced in Christ? What could it look like for you to see your blessings—your spiritual sight, salvation, and knowing Jesus—as greater than the struggles that come with proclaiming Jesus this week?**

## **LAST WORD**

John 9 is like a mirror: it shows us who we are, what we are called to do, and the hope we have in Jesus. Before Christ, we are all blind beggars. Jesus, in his unfailing compassion, came to us and gave us light and life. He washed us of our sins and sent us out to tell the world of the hope we have found in him.

But not all people will accept us. Some will reject us unfairly—even our loved ones. But Christ will never abandon us. Even during trial, persecution, and difficulty, we know that knowing him is a far greater reward than anything we have lost.

## **GO DEEPER**

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

### **1. Apologetic Evangelism**

When we think of apologetics, we tend to think of philosophers and seminary graduates arguing about complicated issues that very few of us understand. While that is a part of apologetics, it's not the whole picture. Every Christian should be an apologist.

Apologetics is the practice of giving a reason for what you believe. Read 1 Peter 3:15.

Every Christian should be ready to talk about the hope they have found in Jesus. **What hope have you found in Jesus? What has he changed in your life?**

Sometimes, apologetics gets tied up in academic arguments. There is a place for that, but when a friend asks you about why you pray or why you go to church, they aren't asking for a formal treatise on creationism. They simply want to know what you believe and why.

**How might you share the hope of Jesus with a friend? Coworker? Family member?**

Being an apologist is not about being a good arguer. Instead, it's all about pointing people to Jesus. Now read 1 Peter 3:16–17.

**According to Peter, one of Jesus's disciples, how should we conduct ourselves in apologetic evangelism?**

**What can you do to become a more prepared, more respectful evangelist?**

Glorifying God is something that we all should be doing with every second of our day, but what exactly does it mean to glorify God? Do we have to be praying or singing worship songs all day long? Do I need to quit my job so I can spend more time worshipping?

While worship and prayer are great ways to glorify God, there are very easy things you can do to point toward God in ways that will glorify him.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17.

### **When are you meant to glorify God?**

#### **In what ways do these verses expand your view of when you worship God?**

Even when we are doing the most basic daily tasks like eating or drinking, we should be doing it with a heart of worship. Everything we do should be in harmony with the Word of God, under the authority of God, and as followers of Jesus. Everything you do should point to, highlight, or glorify Jesus.

#### **What can you do to more faithfully glorify God in your daily routine? At work? With your neighbors? When no one is watching?**

### **3. The Cost of Discipleship**

The man born blind was rejected by the Pharisees, not supported by his family, and kicked out of his synagogue for defending Jesus. But when he left his synagogue, he met Jesus himself and believed in him. He lost what many would consider too much. But what he gained was far greater.

Fear of loss can keep us from following after Jesus, but we should see Jesus as a better prize than anything the world has to offer.

Take some time to meditate on Philippians 3:4–11. Read it multiple times, even read it out loud if it helps you focus. Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal the truth of this passage to you and convict you as he needs to.

#### **What was Paul willing to lose for the sake of knowing Jesus? What did Paul gain when he followed Jesus? In**

**retrospect, how important were his achievements, acclaim, power, and reputation?**

**What are you afraid God will ask you to give up if you follow him?**

**What could it mean to your life or reputation if you lose it?**

Even if you lose everything, you will still have Jesus and all he offers us. God makes you the same offer that he made Paul. When we follow him, we get nothing less than God himself. There is nothing on earth that can compare to the richness of him.

**What can you do to focus your day on the riches and blessings of Christ?**