

Week Beginning: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Worship Series: #2 in series



living sharing growing



**lifegroups**  
live life abundantly

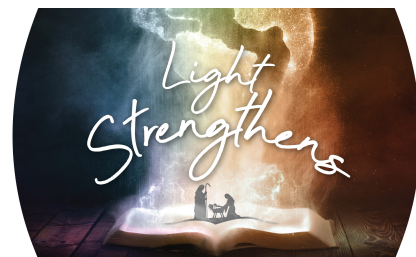
### Theme Verse

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.

Isaiah 42:1

### Remember This Week

In every moment you are chosen, loved and upheld by God and anointed with his Spirit to fulfil his will and bring his light and blessing to the world.



**The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?... One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.**

Psalms 127:1

Heavenly Father, you love and protect us, you strengthen us in our weakness. As we come into your presence and gather around your word today, allow it to strengthen us again, may it shine light into our lives and make us bold to go out and make disciples of all nations. In Jesus name, Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Share a time when your strength has failed you, perhaps during an illness or a physical challenge of some sort? What happened and how did you feel?*
4. *Do you find it easy or difficult to ask for help when a task is too much for you on your own? Why do you think that is?*
5. *People are often asked at job interviews, 'What are your greatest strengths?' What do you think are your greatest strengths? Why?*

It's called SAD - Seasonal Affective Disorder. It's a form of depression common in places with prolonged dark winters, where for days on end you experience little to no natural sunlight. The darkness literally wears you out...drains you...sucks the life right out of you. Prolonged darkness makes you sick. The only cure is more light. But even more than our mental health...intense light also has physical health benefits. Researchers at the University of Colorado have discovered that Intense light amplifies a specific gene that strengthens blood vessels and offers protection against heart attacks. Exposure to the light of Christ also has health benefits that protects from dark times. Prolonged exposure to Christ, through his Word, among his people turns our lives more and more toward him like a plant to the sun. It conforms us to his image and reveals our true identity. It gives us a clear vision for each day and unfailing hope and strength to live out our calling in this world. The Light of Christ strengthens and we will explore how it does that today personally for each one of us.

Read Isaiah 42:1-9

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *In verses 1-4 the pronoun 'him' or 'he' is used, after verse 5 it changes to 'you'. What do you think this means?*
8. *The prophetic words of verses 1-4 are generally considered to be referring to Jesus. How do you think these words could also apply to you?*





Lots of prophesy in the Old Testament serves as an encouraging reminder to the people of Israel, that God is faithful and will ultimately deliver them from their enemies, despite their own weaknesses and failures. Many of the Bible heroes particularly from the time of the judges and kings, were just ordinary men and women whose only remarkable talent was to step out in faith and trust that God was with them. With that kind of attitude to God's word and his promises, God was able to do amazing things through these people.

9. *Who is your favourite Old Testament Bible hero? Share what they did and why you appreciate their story.*
10. *Why do you think heroes like this appear more common in the Old Testament than they do today? Can you think of anyone who might fit that category from more recent times?*

God's word given through prophets and judges, and then later through the apostles, serves as a reminder of the good things God has done for his people and is a record of the things he has promised to us and how he has fulfilled those promises and proven his faithfulness. When we find ourselves surrounded by 'enemies', the pressure and struggles of modern life, the darkness can start to creep in and we can lose sight of the amazing things God has done for us. The light of his love can get choked out of our lives and we become weak and fragile.

Read Romans 6:1-12

The key to receiving strength from the light of God is to live in the light of God which we receive through his Spirit and Word. Even more significantly, when we realise the truth of Paul's letter to the Romans, our unity with Jesus through our baptism enables us to confidently stand beside Jesus as co-heirs. For now we are children of God, sons and daughters, just like Jesus and we are also called to be his servants. Our lives are not our own, we live our lives in him and his life is in us.

11. *Have you ever been aware of God growing or strengthening you as you spent time in his word or spent time with him in prayer? Share how that happened or felt.*
12. *Have you ever been involved in a situation where you reached the limits of your own physical, emotional or spiritual strength, but felt God sustain and support you? What happened?*
13. *Just as Jesus brought strength and healing to many through his ministry, we are now able to strengthen and support each other in a similar way. What are some ways you have been able to help give strength to others or received strength from others?*



Living in the light changes us. It makes us grow into more of what God intended for us to be. It conforms us to the likeness of Christ. It reminds us that, like a sunflower, our ability to stand tall in the garden does not really come from within us, but from the light that the sun/son shines on us.

14. *How could you spend more time living in the 'son' this week?*
15. *Sometimes when we step out of darkness and into the light it can hurt. Sometimes when we are in the dark we can't see and we need someone to help guide us out so we can be strengthened and renewed by the son. Having a spiritual mentor can be an important part of this process. Consider approaching someone to take on a faith mentoring role in your life. Meet with them and share how you are travelling in your faith life. Read the Bible together. Who would you like to do that with?*



- \* Praise God for entering our dark world with the light and life and love of Jesus Christ. Thank Jesus for serving us with his life so that we too can be servants of God, chosen, loved and called by God to be bearers of his blessing to the world. Ask the Holy Spirit to grow in you a heart of compassion that moves you to share the light of Christ to others in their need
- \* Pray that you might find ways to live more fully in the light this year and that God's strength would sustain you through the year ahead.
- \* Pray that as we seek to spend more time in God's Word and in prayer, that the light of God might shine even more brightly through our churches into our communities.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

*Name, the Lord will uphold and strengthen you. Amen.*

