**Support Notes from Donnie**

1,2,3 John ABF Study

January 28th

***Central Bible Passage***

5This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

8If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 1:5-10 through 2:12

**Methods Ideas**

***Introduction***

***Engaging Question and Brainstorm***

Ask class members to think of a time when they were in a physically dark place, past or recently(closet, cave, back street,

Then ask if anyone had a particularly fearful experience and ask if they would share it with the group.

Then say, as you remembers yourself being in the dark or hear stories of others, consider the following questions.

***Follow up questions:***

* What are common emotions and thoughts experienced?
* What limitations do you experience?
* What consequences could be had?
* How are people impacted when they are in that dark place for an extended amount of time? Or even worse, when they begin to doubt if they will ever escape the darkness?
* How can you prevent being in the dark?

**Transition to lesson.** Today we will be studying about spiritual darkness. I think you will see afresh similarities between experiencing physical darkness and spiritual darkness. Some of the same emotions are felt. Huge personal limitations are experienced in spiritual darkness. Greater damage occurs the longer you live in spiritual darkness. Spiritual darkness is the absence of God. Yet, we can take measures to escape darkness. God is light and light dispels darkness and infuses hope!

**Other things you might research or do…**

* Search for a video of someone feeling the effects of darkness
* Study about the many ways people are impacted when experiencing physical darkness for too long of a time and make further comparisons to spiritual darkness.

**An Exercise to Better Equip Folks to Confess to God in a Biblical Manner**

At some point before the experiential, teach them about **confession**. This will help prepare them for their own time of personal confession at the close of the lesson.

When teaching about confession, coach them to understand what biblical confessions look like, the kind of confessions that lead to godly sorrow and change.

Teach them that confession begins with taking the time needed to **think and feel the same way God thinks and feels about their sins.**

Ask them to share ways that people sin. Give time brainstorm many examples of ways people sin.

Then ask:

* What does God **think** about specific sins as these? Focus on the **thoughts** of God.
  + Examples
    - You knew better but did it anyway.
    - When you are in the act of sin, sins prevents you from loving others and me.
    - Your sin negatively influenced **more** people than you fully know.
    - Your sin influenced people more **fully** than you know
    - I had something much better in store for you.
* What does God **feel** about these specific sins and others?
  + Examples
    - He hurts for the people hurt
    - He feels disgust
    - He feels grief
    - He feels exasperation
    - He feels disappointment
    - He feels anger

**Say to them:** at the close of the teaching time, you will have an opportunity to confess any sins that you have not yet. Maybe, you have confessed those sins but now realize the depth of your confession is quite shallow. You have discovered that you did not enter into the thoughts and feelings concerning your sins that God possessed. So you will have an opportunity to walk afresh in the light.