

THE **BLAZING** CENTER

STUDY GUIDE



DESIRING GOD

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY GUIDE



A very real and very serious battle is being waged for our eternal destiny. The assault that we face every day is not in the form of bullets, grenades, or poisonous gas. No, the weapons brought against us are more subtle and far more deadly. The evil one attacks us through television and computer screens, in the books we read, in the whispers of our peers, through mirrors, music, and magazines. The lies of the flesh are everywhere and sin's allurements cannot be totally avoided.

But in the swirl of glitz and flash and skin and swagger and muscle,¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 stands unmoved as a beacon of hope: “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.” God is faithful to his children. He can protect their faith and he can grant them a radical, counter-cultural witness in this generation.

It is our prayer that God would be pleased to use this study guide to raise up an army of God-centered, Christ-exalting men and women who know a joy that this world cannot match and cannot touch. It is our desire that countless lives would, by the undeserved and all powerful grace of God, be changed forever.

This study guide is designed to be used in a ten-session, guided group study that focuses on *The Blazing Center* DVD set.² After an introductory lesson, each subsequent lesson examines one 30-minute session from *The Blazing Center*. You, the learner, are encouraged to use the week prior to prepare for the viewing of each session by reading and reflecting upon Scripture, by considering key quotations, and by asking yourself penetrating questions. Your preparatory work for each lesson is marked with the heading “Before You Watch the DVD, Study and Prepare” in Lessons 2–9.

The workload is conveniently divided into five daily (and, we hope, manageable) assignments. There is also a section suggesting further study. This work is to be completed individually before the group convenes to view the DVD and discuss the material.

Throughout this study guide, paragraphs printed in a shaded box (like this one) are excerpts from a book written by John Piper, or excerpts taken from the Desiring God website (www.desiringGod.org). They are included to supplement the study questions and to summarize key or provocative points.

The next section in Lessons 2–9, entitled “While You Watch the DVD, Take Notes,” is to be completed as the DVD is playing. You are encouraged to engage with the DVD by filling in the appropriate blanks and writing down other notes that will aid you in the group discussion. The third section in these weekly lessons is “After You Watch the DVD, Discuss What You’ve Learned.” Three discussion questions are provided to guide and focus the conversation. You may

record, in the spaces provided here, notes that will help you contribute to the conversation. Or, you may use this space to record things from the discussion that you want to remember.

The final section is an application section: “After You Discuss, Make Application.” You will be challenged to record a “take-away point” and to engage in a certain activity that is a fitting response to the content presented in the lesson.

Group leaders should also read through the Leader’s Guide, included at the end of this study guide.

As we’ve said, life transformation will only occur by the grace of God. Therefore, we highly encourage you to pray throughout the learning process. Pray that God would open your mind to see wonderful things in his Word. Pray that he would grant you the insight, concentration, and attention you need in order to benefit from this resource. Pray that God would cause you to rejoice in the truth. And pray that the discussion in your group would be mutually encouraging and edifying. We’ve included specific objectives at the beginning of each lesson. These objectives won’t be realized without the gracious work of God through prayer.

May the soul-satisfying supremacy of God in all things be seen and savored through this resource!

Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION TO *THE BLAZING CENTER*



LESSON OBJECTIVES

It is our prayer that after you have finished this lesson...

- You will get a feel for how you and others in your group approach the glory of God and personal joy.
- Your curiosity would be roused, and questions would begin to come to mind.
- You will be eager to learn more about your joy and God's glory.

ABOUT YOURSELF

1. What is your name?
2. Tell the group something about yourself that they probably don't already know.
3. Describe your relationship with Jesus.

A PREVIEW OF *THE BLAZING CENTER*

LESSON

1

1. What is the place of the emotions in Christianity? Are proper emotions essential to being a Christian or are they optional? Explain. What emotions are proper for Christians?

2. Do you want to be happy? Is that a bad thing? Why or why not? Should your desire to be happy motivate everything you do, or does God sometimes call you to suppress your desire to be happy in order to do the “right thing”?