

Jesus is more concerned about spiritual death than physical death. He assures his followers that their heavenly Father cares for them, and encourages them to "not be afraid" (v. 31). He challenges them to proclaim his message and to acknowledge him before others. If they do, Jesus promises to acknowledge them "before my Father in heaven" (v. 32).

**Questions:** Where do you see the threat of spiritual death today? How can you share the message of Jesus and acknowledge him in the world? In what ways, if any, does a shift from body to spirit help you to feel less fear?

### **John 1:5**

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* (For context, read 1:1-5.)

Jesus is the Word of God who was "in the beginning with God" (v. 2). He played a role in the creation of the universe, and created everything including the life that "was the light of all people" (v. 4). This light shines brightly even today, and cannot be overcome by darkness.

**Questions:** What confidence do you gain from Jesus being part of God's creation of the entire universe? What is the significance of his light being able to conquer darkness? How can you share his light today?

### **Philippians 4:6-7**

*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* (For context, read 4:4-9.)

The apostle Paul has suffered persecution as a missionary, but still he rejoices in the Lord. In every circumstance, he recommends giving thanks and lifting requests to God in prayer. He promises that the peace of God will guard our "hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (v. 7), and recommends that we maintain a focus on positive qualities such as justice, purity and excellence (v. 8).

**Questions:** Although many Americans are scared about what lies ahead for us, what value do you see in rejoicing in the Lord? How can prayer help us in times of uncertainty and threat? While you remain watchful and aware, how can you focus on positive qualities instead of negative emotions? What is the benefit of doing so?

### **For Further Discussion**

1. When have you reacted in fear to a political, economic and/or spiritual crisis? Did you remain in a state of fear? If not, what helped you reassess the situation?
2. During World War II, loyal and patriotic American citizens were taken from their homes and put in internment camps because they were of Japanese descent. The attack at Pearl Harbor and the political situation prior to that war were much more dire, yet it is still considered a black mark on our history that the internment camps were ever authorized. How does the current situation compare with that of the past? What lesson might we learn from the past that might help us in the present?