



**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS  
2 & 3 OCTOBER 2021  
ISAIAH 42**

The main study guide material for the sermon series “Seeing the Light through Isaiah”, is to be purchased at <https://www.ivpress.com/isaiah-40-66-ebook>

The material in this document is intentionally brief. It is intended as a supplement only.

- **Begin by reading the Scripture passage together.**
- **Review the video of the sermon if needed (see <http://www.brnc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Refer to the [main study guide](#) *Chapter 2* as well as this supplementary material.**
- **Feel free to discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.**
- **Remember to budget some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another, before ending your group session.**

### Sidebox: Who is the Servant?

“The Servant” is a much-repeated phrase in Isaiah (14:2, 20:3, 22:20, 24:2, 36:9, 36:11, 37:5, 37:24, 37:35, 41:8-9, 42:1, 42:19, 43:10, 44:1-2, 44:21, 44:21, 44:26, 45:4, 48:20, 49:3, 49:5-7, 50:10, 52:13, 53:11, 54:17, 56:6, 63:17, 65:8, 65:9, 65:13-15, 66:14). Of these, four passages (42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12), have commonly been dubbed as “Servant Songs”.

The servant is a complex metaphor in Isaiah. The word occurs both in the singular and the plural, and could refer to an individual or to a collective entity. Over the centuries, both Jewish and Christian interpreters have suggested that the Servant could denote: Israel as a whole, a chosen remnant from Israel, a personification of Zion/Jerusalem, a specific individual such as a prophet, a ruler (e.g. Cyrus the Persian king, or a future Davidic king), or the Messiah. Whichever the case, the servant is always depicted as God’s instrument to undertake God’s purpose.

Matthew 12:15–21 quotes Isaiah 42:1–4 and applies these words to Jesus Christ as God’s chosen Servant. The New Testament’s citation of this passage demonstrates that the Servant does ultimately refer to a specific individual, Jesus, who is Israel’s promised Messiah. In addition, its citation in Matthew’s Gospel reinforces the truth that God’s desire, in both Old and New Testaments, is for *all nations* (not just Israel) to come to His light.

The complexity of the Servant image is seen in Isaiah 42:18-25, which describes the Servant as blind and deaf. This is likely a reference to ancient Israel as a nation (cf. 44:1). As God’s covenant people, ancient Israel was never deprived of God’s presence, yet allowed sin and disobedience to take hold. Because of this, they failed in their mission to serve God and be a light to Gentile nations. Instead of being a light to the nations to open blind eyes (42:6-7), ancient Israel was itself blinded (42:19-20). God’s sorrow and disappointment is clear in the closing verses of Chapter 42. But there is hope in Chapter 43.

### Response, Application, Prayer

- 1) Consider 42:18-24, which describes Israel the servant as being deliberately and intentionally blind and deaf to God’s ways and God’s word.
  - a) In what ways have you been blind and deaf to God?
  - b) Pray for one another, that we may turn from blindness to God’s light.

