



One Hope Community Church

Book of John Small Group Study

Chapter 3

How to effectively use this guide:

Always begin in prayer. Before opening your Bible, ask God to send His Holy Spirit to you and ask Him to reveal whatever wisdom and insights He wants you to learn.

Reflect on what you have read and take notes. The questions below are designed to help you examine the scriptures even more and provide discussion points for your meeting.

Please remember to go over the agreement below as a small group each time a new person joins your group:

- We gather to grow in relationship with each other and God.
- We trust the Holy Spirit is our guide and the one who transforms our hearts.
- Our small group is an inviting place to discuss the Bible, share life, ask questions, and seek truth while we challenge and learn from each other.
- We commit to keep confidential all personal information shared during discussion and prayer time.
- We respect each other's backgrounds, and avoid negative discussions about politics and denomination differences. We will choose love over judgment.
- We commit to completing the personal study to the best of our ability as preparation, questions, and insights are a gift to the group.
- We listen, not fix. Fixing is God's job. We own our stories. It is okay to ask for help, but if not asked for, our job is to listen, support and pray.
- We will be brief with our answers so that all members have time to share.

Your group won't get through all these questions. Select which ones you find to be the most thought provoking for your group.

Meeting Agenda

Gather / Socialize / Catch Up

Worship: God so Loved - We the Kingdom

https://youtu.be/PK9pljv_s-A?si=m3DUYwETGj5wjEI2

Read Scripture / Answer Questions
Closing prayer

Week #3 Reading Plan

Day 1: John 3:1-8
Day 2: John 3:9-15
Day 3: John 3:16-21
Day 4: John 3:22-30
Day 5: John 3:31-36

Background on Pharisees and Sadducees:

Pharisees believed in the supernatural resurrection (heaven and hell), demons and angels. They took what Moses said literally, not as a metaphor. They believed their relationship with God was personal, emphasizing prayer. Pharisees believed people had a free will and actions on earth affected life after death. They also believed in the Oral Law – the unwritten teachings of Moses and other prophets after him. They believed in converting people to Judaism. They preserved Jewish tradition and culture to the point of being hypercritical. They taught in synagogues and were middle class men. Most of their doctrine was in line with what Jesus taught, but they had become prideful and unkind.

Sadducees did not believe in the supernatural resurrection. They followed the written Law of Moses to make decisions and to discipline, picking apart what Jews did in their everyday lives. They did not believe God was directly involved with human life. Sadducees believed that a person's righteousness was measured by their success and riches. They were willing to adopt Roman and Greek traditions. They were usually wealthy, upper-class priests who worked in the temples. Wealth and power motivated them.

Knowing the above, why do you think Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Jesus at night?

When was a time you were like a Pharisee, criticizing others instead of offering God's love? How does the legalism of the law (Sadducees emphasis) make it hard to give yourself and others grace? When was a time when you were tempted to adopt the ways of current culture?

Jesus teaches Nicodemus about being born from above (being born again). Birth metaphors help us understand. A child will grow to resemble his or her birth parents and those who raise him or her. A person born of the Spirit will grow in likeness to God (Ephesians 5:1-2). A mother is in pain during childbirth (a result of sin entering the world, Genesis 3:16). Jesus bore the pain of our sins on the cross to offer us grace and right relationship with Him (1 Peter 2:24). Just as our mothers "do the work" of birthing us, so too Jesus "does the work" for spiritual birth (Ephesians 2:8-9).

What does it mean to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, to be born again? What questions do you have about being born again?

Moses lifted up the serpent (Numbers 21:4-9) when people were going between rebellion and repentance. Nicodemus would know this scripture, and how the Israelites chose rebellion and were punished. To be healed, as an act of faith, they had to look at a bronze snake on a pole.

What foreshadowing do you notice about Jesus? What thoughts do you have about how our actions separate us from God (rebellion) BUT His actions with our repentance redeem us and heal us?

John 3:16 is known as “The gospel in a nutshell.” The word “so” in Greek is “houtos” and means “in this manner.” Replacing “so” with this meaning: “For God in this manner (HOW) loved the world...” (The NLT translates, “This is HOW God loved the world...”) It was not our value that deemed us worthy of redemption or love but rather BECAUSE Jesus came down and gave His life for us, HE gave us redemption, love and worth! Our part is to respond.

If you have not already accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, would you like to do that now?

John the Baptist was well known, the last prophet of the Old Testament and had many of his own disciples. The Greek word for disciple is “mathetes” which comes from the word “manthano” which means “to learn.” The word disciple literally means a learner or student. His disciples were so loyal to him that they pointed out Jesus baptizing more people than him as if something was wrong. John replies that Jesus must become more important while John becomes less (John 3:30). He echoes what the Pharisees believed about eternal life and points to Jesus as the way. John knew the scriptures and knew who God is. John pointed out it is not “us versus them” but “us and us with Jesus.”

When you are tempted with “us versus them” thinking, how might it help to remember to change it to “us AND us WITH JESUS”? When tempted with pride (Pharisees) or power (Sadducees), how does John’s example of becoming less so that Jesus can become more challenge you? What are practical ways you can live that out?