



Week Two: John 3:1-21
“Jesus and Nicodemus”

Study Guide for the week of
September 19, 2021

I. Read John 3:1-21. Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. When have you felt like you wanted to start life all over again?
2. What is required to enter the kingdom of God? ([3:5-6](#))
3. What is the result of believing in the Son of Man? ([3:15](#), [18](#))
4. Why did God send His Son into the world? ([3:17](#))
5. How would you describe what it means to be born again to someone?
6. How does God’s gift of His Son affect our lives?
7. For what specific spiritual truths will you seek answers this week?

II. Going deeper: More questions for discussion and reflection:

1. If we could see ourselves and the world the way God does, how might that change our thoughts, words, and actions?
2. Read [Ezekiel 36:25–27](#) and [37:9–10](#) in light of Nicodemus’ ignorance. How can we help one another to not miss vitally important things in the Scriptures?
3. “For God loved the world in this way...” How does a cross-centered understanding of God’s love affect the way you think about your relationship with him?
4. What areas of your life are still hiding in the dark? How is God asking you to expose remaining sin to the light so that you can experience his grace? Who do you need to meet with and talk to this week?

III. Prayer Points

1. Prayerfully thank God for the new spiritual birth that he has given to you. Ask him to help you live your life in line with this new birth.
2. Pray, by name, for those in your life who need to experience the new birth and regeneration only the Holy Spirit can bring.

IV. Life Application Bible Notes

The Visit in Samaria

Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover, cleared the Temple, and talked with Nicodemus, a religious leader, about eternal life. He then left Jerusalem and traveled in Judea. On his way to Galilee, he visited Sychar and other villages in Samaria. Unlike most Jews of the day, he did not try to avoid the region of Samaria.

3:8 Jesus explained that we cannot control the work of the Holy Spirit. He works in ways we cannot predict or understand. Just as you did not control your physical birth, so you cannot control your spiritual birth. It is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:16](#); [1 Corinthians 2:10-12](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:5, 6](#)).

3:10, 11 This Jewish teacher of the Bible knew the Old Testament thoroughly, but he didn't understand what it said about the Messiah. Knowledge is not salvation. You should know the Bible, but even more important, you should understand the God whom the Bible reveals and the salvation that God offers.

3:14, 15 When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, God sent a plague of snakes to punish the people for their rebellious attitudes. Those doomed to die from snakebite could be healed by obeying God's command to look up at the elevated bronze snake and by believing that God would heal them if they did (see [Numbers 21:8, 9](#)). Similarly, our salvation happens when we look up to Jesus, believing he will save us. God has provided this way for us to be healed of sin's deadly bite.

3:16 The message of the Good News comes to a focus in this verse. God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice. God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life that he had bought for us. When we share the Good News with others, our love must be like Jesus'—willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love.

3:16 Some people are repulsed by the idea of eternal life because their lives are miserable. But eternal life is not an extension of a person's miserable, mortal life; eternal life is God's life embodied in Christ given to all believers now as a guarantee that they will live forever. In eternal life there is no death, sickness, enemy, evil, or sin. When we don't know Christ, we make choices as though this life is all we have. In reality, this life is just the introduction to eternity. Receive this new life by faith and begin to evaluate all that happens from an eternal perspective.

3:16 To "believe" is more than intellectual agreement that Jesus is God. It means to put our trust and confidence in him that he alone can save us. It is to put Christ in charge of our present plans and eternal destiny. Believing is both trusting his words as reliable, and relying on him for the power to change. If you have never trusted Christ, let this promise of everlasting life be yours—and believe.

3:18 People often try to protect themselves from their fears by putting their faith in something they do or have: good deeds, skill or intelligence, money or possessions. But only God can save us from the one thing that we really need to fear—eternal condemnation. We believe in God by

recognizing the insufficiency of our own efforts to find salvation and by asking him to do his work in us. When Jesus talks about unbelievers, he means those who reject or ignore him completely, not those who have momentary doubts.

3:19-21 Many people don't want their lives exposed to God's light because they are afraid of what will be revealed. They don't want to be changed. Don't be surprised when these same people are threatened by your desire to obey God and do what is right, because they are afraid that the light in you may expose some of the darkness in their lives. Rather than giving in to discouragement, keep praying that they will come to see how much better it is to live in light than in darkness.

Gospel of John Study Guide questions and notes are from

