

## Session 4



# “Jesus Over My Old Self”

(Nicodemus)

**Purpose:** To recognize our need for faith in Jesus.

**Group Practice Check -In:** Discipleship is about putting our faith into practice. Let's take a quick look back at last week:

- Which application option did you try this week and how did it go? (If you didn't do it, that's OK, but can you identify why not?)

**Icebreaker:** What's the biggest leap of faith you've ever taken?

**Read:** John 3:1-2

**Observe:** What do we learn about the Pharisees from these verses?

**Discuss:**

According to Nicodemus, the Pharisees knew Jesus was from God because of the signs he performed.

- Has anything in your own life felt like a clear and undeniable sign from God?
- The Pharisees believed Jesus was from God, but they still opposed him. What were they lacking?
- How would you respond to someone who believes that Jesus is from God, but doesn't submit to Jesus as God?

Nicodemus likely came at night so that he wouldn't be seen going to speak to Jesus.

- When have social expectations or pressures influenced your own pursuit of a stronger relationship with Jesus?

- How can we help someone dealing with that kind of pressure?

**Read:** John 3:3-8

**Observe:** What does it mean to be born again?

**Discuss:**

Notice the transition from verse 2 to verse 3. Nicodemus isn't asking a question and doesn't mention the kingdom of God but Jesus responds with a warning about the need to be born again.

- Why do you think Jesus responds to Nicodemus like this?

Born again, saved, redeemed, justified. The Bible uses many terms to describe it, but until we experience this transformation, we are completely separated from God.

- How many times did you hear the Gospel before you stepped over the line of faith? or, have you stepped over the line of faith?
- How can we approach salvation discussions with people who already know about Jesus, but don't believe in him?

In verse 8, Jesus compares the work of the Spirit to the wind. We can't see it, but we can see evidence of it.

- What are some ways you've seen the evidence of the Spirit in your own life?

**Read:** John 3:9-15 and Numbers 21:4-9

**Observe:** What's the connection between Jesus and the serpent Moses raised up?

**Discuss:**

Jesus repeats his rebuke of Nicodemus, even emphasizing Nicodemus's role as "Israel's teacher." A man like this should not be confused about what Jesus is saying... but we often have similar gaps in our own understanding.

- How can we bridge the gap between what we should know and accept and what we do know and accept?

**Read:** John 3:16-21, John 7:45-52, and John 19:38-40

**Observe:** Describe how Nicodemus changed over time as he interacted with Jesus.

**Discuss:**

Nicodemus doesn't respond again in John 3. Maybe they talked more, or maybe he just walked away in silence. But we see how Nicodemus shows up throughout the story.

- By the end of his story, do you think Nicodemus showed evidence of true belief?

John 3:16-21 emphasizes again that there's a difference between "knowing Jesus is from God" and believing in Jesus. It also gives hope. Just as the bronze snake saved those who looked at it, Jesus saves those who believe in him.

- What does this, "not condemned" mean for us in our daily discipleship?

## Application Suggestions:

**Leader notes:** Ask everyone to pick a practice for this week, and encourage everyone to adopt something as a permanent regular practice.

**The Daily Scripture Rhythm.** Commit to reading one chapter of Scripture each day for the next month (starting with the Rest of John or another Gospel). Set a consistent time and place each day to build a lasting habit of daily reflection.

**"Line of Faith" Conversation.** Nicodemus took a step of faith. He moved from asking questions in secret to identifying himself with Jesus by caring for His body. Schedule a coffee or phone call with a friend, mentor, or pastor to talk through your current faith journey to identify and plan your next spiritual step.

**Rooted.** Take the leap from this short-term group into long-term community. Sign up for Rooted or get connected in a long-term small group to continue building relationships, studying the Bible, and growing alongside others.