**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Pursue Jesus**

“If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.” ([Jeremiah 29:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je29.13))

*Jesus’ offer is remarkably clear: If we look for Jesus, we’ll find Him. He’s not hiding from us, but closely connecting with Him does take us being intentional. We’re called to follow Him, to pursue Him. In this volume, we’ll look at how individuals pursued Jesus through the challenges of their circumstances. Pursuing Jesus is not only a mental exercise for personal growth, but it also means living out our faith in tangible ways: showing up, listening carefully, receiving grace, and trusting Him.*

**Session Overview**

**Listen Carefully**

**Biblical Encounter**: Nicodemus Seeks Jesus for Answers ([John 3:1–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.1-21))

**Outcome**: Seek Jesus to know His truth.

*In this session, we’ll look at the story of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus at night, seeking truth from Him. Our world is still filled with people wanting to know truth. We’re bombarded with all sorts of messages, making it difficult to know what’s true and what isn’t. It’s when we turn to Jesus for answers that we can fully grasp what real truth is.*

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| *First time leading* Live *for Adults? Check out the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)*.* |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What was the last question you needed to search the Internet to find the answer? |

Searching for answers has never been easier. We live in a day and age where knowledge is available at the swipe of a finger or the push of a button. Need to know the number of ounces in a cup? Forgot what time zone you live in? Worried about some symptom your body is experiencing? No problem. Just grab your closest device and search.

While it’s convenient to have much of the world’s knowledge in the palm of our hand, it’s exactly that: the *world’s* knowledge. When it comes to the deep, burning questions of our soul, the Internet isn’t necessarily the best place to look. We need truth that only God can provide through His written Word and spoken voice. When we’re questioning our existence, overwhelmed by life’s circumstances, or concerned about our future, we need absolute truth. God’s ways and thoughts are higher than ours ([Isaiah 55:8–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Is55.8-9)), and His answers for our life will exceed any search engine.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: How well would God say you listen to Him?



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| **QUESTION**How well would God say you listen to Him? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

Throughout His ministry on earth, Jesus often clashed with the Pharisees. The Pharisees were a religious group within Judaism. They emphasized strictly following the Law and religious traditions. Because of this, they had a tendency to be very judgmental. These men challenged Jesus’ behavior and questioned His teaching. They even made plans to destroy Him.

However, at least one Pharisee was moved enough by Jesus’ activity to do something about it. After witnessing Jesus’ miraculous signs, Nicodemus was convinced that God was with Jesus. Nicodemus was so convinced that he insisted on meeting Jesus. But to protect his reputation as a Pharisee and high-level Jewish leader, Nicodemus went to Jesus at night to ask Him some burning questions.

**Did You Know?**

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| Nicodemus was likely one of seventy-one members of the great Sanhedrin, the highest self-governing body of the Jews. This group of leaders could be compared to a Jewish supreme court of legal, political, and religious justices. It was made up of priests, elders, and scribes. During much of the Roman reign over the Jews, the Sanhedrin was a powerful influence on secular government. |

**Nicodemus Goes to Jesus**

Read [John 3:1–3](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.1-3).

As a Pharisee, Nicodemus had access to more religious information than most people. He was an expert on the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and all that this law of Moses required. Nicodemus was an expert on legal matters, politics, traditions, and rituals. Yet none of that prepared him for what Jesus said was necessary to be a part of His kingdom: being born again. Nicodemus’s understanding of God and the miracles of Jesus had led him to recognize Jesus as a teacher from God, but Jesus was more than that. Not only did He tell Nicodemus the truth, He *is* the Truth. Though Nicodemus likely didn’t know it, he had gone straight to the Source to better understand God.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Nicodemus was hoping to accomplish by meeting with Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What did Nicodemus risk by going to meet with Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What risks have you taken to seek Jesus? |

**Nicodemus Has Questions for Jesus**

Read [John 3:4–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.4-9).

Up to this moment with Jesus, Nicodemus had probably thought he understood a lot about God’s kingdom. After all, he was a prominent member of a Jewish religious group. But after hearing just a sentence of truth from the Savior of the world, he had a lot of questions. Nicodemus knew about the laws and commandments that a person must follow to stay pure and holy, but no one probably had ever told him that he needed to reenter his mother’s womb! He was confused—like most people would have been in his shoes. He was hearing about how to truly have spiritual life and what Jesus meant by “born again.” Needless to say, this was probably blowing his mind. Nicodemus was quick to ask questions. But his conversation with Jesus proved that when we have questions, Jesus has answers.

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| **QUESTION**What do you imagine it was like for Nicodemus to hear these truths being spoken by Jesus for the first time? |

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| **QUESTION**What questions would you have had for Jesus if you were Nicodemus? |

**Nicodemus Listens Carefully to Jesus**

Read [John 3:10–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.10-21).

It’s likely that as we read this passage, you recognized one of the most quoted verses of the Bible: [John 3:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.16). In this verse, and in this conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus revealed so much about God’s great loving plan to rescue us from our sin. It’s interesting that Nicodemus, who as a leader was perceived to have all the answers, had a lot to learn about how to really live a life free from sin and receive eternal life. Had Nicodemus assumed he knew everything and not really listened to Jesus, he would have missed the most life-transforming conversation a person can have. We can be confident that when we listen carefully to Jesus, we’ll hear His transforming plans for our life too.

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| **QUESTION**Imagine if Nicodemus had assumed he already had all the answers and stayed home that night. How different would his life have been if he had not gone to meet with Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Nicodemus did after he left the meeting with Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**Who would be the first person you would tell about an encounter like this? Why? |

**Nicodemus at Jesus’ Burial**

Our first picture of Nicodemus was someone who met secretly with Jesus ([John 3:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.2)). He seemed to be more concerned with his own reputation than he was with having a public relationship with Jesus. However, something must have changed during or after that dark night when Jesus spoke personally to Nicodemus about God’s love and His plan for eternal life.

Read [John 19:38–42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn19.38-42).

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| **QUESTION**What do you think this says about how Nicodemus viewed Jesus after their talk? |

As we encounter Nicodemus following Jesus’ crucifixion, we see a man who was no longer a secret disciple. Nicodemus’s choice to help Joseph prepare the body for burial was a public admission of his commitment to Jesus. Chapters earlier, Nicodemus had heard about a Savior who would die for his sins, and now he was physically carrying that Savior’s body to a tomb. When we seek Jesus and allow Him to answer our burning questions, we will encounter His truth. As we respond to His truth, our life is forever transformed.

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever stood up for Jesus in front of a crowd? Tell us about it. |

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| **QUESTION**How have people seen the change in your life as you seek Jesus? |

**Reflect**

**Seek Jesus to know His truth.**

“There’s no such thing as a stupid question.” You’ve probably heard this phrase at least once in your life. It’s important to recognize that Jesus is not bothered or intimidated by our questions. The questions we ask Jesus lead to answers, and His answers lead to His truth. Questions motivated by a hunger to know Jesus more can lead us to the kind of truth that transforms our life.

Nicodemus had witnessed Jesus’ power and had seen His miracles firsthand. He was convinced that Jesus was sent from God. Nicodemus was hungry to meet with Jesus and learn more from Him. He had deep, burning questions and needed answers. Nicodemus was even willing to risk his reputation to talk with and honor Jesus. He is an example of how much knowing truth should matter to us.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**If Jesus were standing in front of you right now, what burning questions would you have for Him? |

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| **QUESTION**Nicodemus took a big risk to meet with Jesus. When it comes to your relationship with Jesus, have you settled into a life of comfort or are you taking risks to encounter Him in a deeper way and show others that you believe in His truth? |

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| **QUESTION**Nicodemus was convinced that Jesus had more to teach him. What’s the most recent truth Jesus has revealed to you? How did you respond to that truth? |

**Activate**

Nicodemus heard about God’s great plan of salvation after a powerful encounter with Jesus’ truth. Today, as Jesus’ representatives, we have the opportunity to be like Jesus in our life encounters. Chances are, God has placed someone in your life who is currently questioning if God loves them. Knowing His truth, you can share God’s great plan of love with them like Jesus did with Nicodemus.

**Challenge**

Identify someone in your life who needs to know that God loves them so much He sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to die for their sins and give them eternal life. Make plans to tell that person this week. Following your conversation, ask if you can pray with them. Pray that Jesus would continue to reveal himself to them and answer every question they might have.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and pray together. Also remember to pray for them during the week. |

As we seek Jesus, we will know His truth. Regular quiet times are a great way to do that. Before next time, continue to seek answers with the personal devotions.

**Live on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: Nicodemus Seeks Jesus for Answers**

Read [John 3:1–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn3.1-21).

Look back over Live in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**Like Nicodemus, are you actively seeking Jesus for answers in your life? If not, what can you do to change that? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 2: Accept the Invitation**

Read [Matthew 7:7–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt7.7-11).

Have you ever known someone who seemed completely unapproachable? Maybe you were afraid to talk to them or ask them for anything. Thankfully, Jesus is not that way. In fact, He invites us to engage with Him. He doesn’t judge us or condemn us for having questions. He gives us permission to come boldly to Him ([Hebrews 4:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Heb4.16)) whenever we are in need. He is not bothered by our questions or overwhelmed by the number of times we might ask. Instead, He lovingly turns His ear toward us and invites us to ask for anything we need.

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| **QUESTION**How does it make you feel to know that Jesus will listen to you? |

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| **QUESTION**What prevents you from bringing all of your questions to Jesus? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 3: Start a Conversation**

Read [Matthew 6:5–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.5-13).

When was the last time you had a deep meaningful conversation with a close friend? When we open our mouth to pray, we’re starting a conversation with our Heavenly Father, God. When we pray, we have His full attention. We shouldn’t feel like we’re talking to someone far off or someone uninterested in our life. We should be confident that we’re engaged in a conversation with a loving God who cares about every detail of our life and has our best interest in mind. God is waiting for you to start a conversation with Him.

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| **QUESTION**When was the last time you had a deep conversation with God? What was the topic of your conversation? |

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| **QUESTION**What could be the benefits of setting aside a consistent time for prayer? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 4: Listen for Revelation**

Read [Proverbs 2:1–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Pr2.1-6).

Have you ever had a conversation with someone who did all the talking? A conversation is only healthy if both people are able to equally contribute with honest dialogue and active listening. When we start a conversation with God and communicate our questions to Him, He wants to have an opportunity to give us the answers we need. So it’s important for us to listen carefully and pay attention as He speaks to us. Time spent listening to God’s voice will yield the wisdom we so desperately need.

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| **QUESTION**When you reflect on your conversations with God, who does most of the talking? You or Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**How might incorporating moments of silence change your prayer time and its outcome? |

**Live on Your Own**

**Day 5: Experience Life Transformation**

Read [John 7:40–53](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn7.40-53).

When Nicodemus finished his late-night conversation with Jesus, we’re left not knowing what happened between them. Did Nicodemus become one of Jesus’ followers or did he walk away unchanged? With a little digging later in the Book of John, we discover that Nicodemus appeared to be devoted to Jesus. How sad that the religious leaders challenging Nicodemus told him to search the Scriptures to find truth. Sadly, they didn’t see truth for themselves.

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think Nicodemus spoke up to the Pharisees? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Nicodemus was feeling as he challenged his peers? |