

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Unknown Eternity” John 3:3-16 May 4, 2019

Getting Started

The world spends trillions of dollars each year on healthcare, vitamins, diets and exercise, and yet the death rate still remains at 100%, and the average life is 71.

“Seventy years are given to us! Some even live to eighty. But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear and we fly away.”
(Psalm 90:10) But where do we fly away to?

If you were to ask 100 people what happens to us after this physical body dies, what kinds of answers would you probably get?

What were you taught as a child?

What do you believe now?

Going Deeper:

What happens when we die? Three prevailing ideas throughout history:

1. Nothing.
2. Reincarnation.
3. Heaven or Hell.

What did Jesus say about Heaven and Hell?

You must be born again. (John 3:1-16)

Read John 3:1-3 Nicodemus is a fascinating character, so much like many of us. He first comes to Jesus by night, probably because he doesn't want his religious leader friends to know he is interested in learning more from Jesus. Nicodemus starts with a compliment toward Jesus' teaching and miracles.

Then Jesus, who often knew exactly what people really needed to know, threw out a spiritual truth that pierced Nicodemus right to the heart even as it confused his mind.

Read John 3:4-8 Jesus uses a brilliant teaching technique of going from something we know to illustrate something we don't yet know. Jesus says, just as a physical human baby has to be born of water (thought to be the breaking of the mother's water), which shows that a physical birth is about to happen, in the same way, a spiritual birth also has to happen through the coming of not water, but the Holy Spirit into our heart and mind. The Holy Spirit has to convict us of our sin, bring us to repentance for our sin, and show us our great need for salvation.

How did the Holy Spirit do this for you as you came closer to trusting Jesus?

But Nicodemus still doesn't understand what Jesus means. So, to a man who was an expert in knowing the Old Testament like Nicodemus was, Jesus used an Old Testament example.

Read John 3:9-15 Jesus recounts a story (Numbers 21:4-9) of a time when Moses lifted up a snake onto a cross, and all the people who looked upon the snake would be healed of their physical wounds. In a similar way, Jesus is saying that He, as God's Son from heaven, would also be placed on a cross, lifted up, and that all who looked to Him for their healing from sin would be saved.

Read John 3:16 Jesus makes the heart of God very clear in this verse. God's love compelled Him to send Jesus to die as the substitute for our sin. All God asks of us is to let the Holy Spirit convict us, bring us to repentance for our sin, and place our trust, hope, faith, belief, and confidence in Jesus as our Savior.

Tell us your story of when you made this decision.

This episode ends without telling us how Nicodemus responded to Jesus. What we see here is that he first came in **Private**. Many of us who come to faith as teens or adults are afraid of what others will say about us. We experiment quietly and secretly with faith in Jesus, but we aren't yet ready to make a decision.

As The Gospel of John continues, we see Nicodemus two more times. In John 7:50, Nicodemus takes a **Public** stand for Jesus in front of other religious leaders (Pharisees), defending Jesus' right to not be judged unfairly. Obviously, Nicodemus is getting closer to trusting Jesus as Messiah/Savior, but he's not there yet.

Finally, in John 19:39, we see that Nicodemus helps Joseph of Arimathea take Jesus' body down from the cross. This is the moment where I believe Nicodemus has made his faith in Jesus **Personal**. To take a bloody and beaten body down from the cross would require that he climb up a ladder, pull those hands off the nails, drape Jesus' dead body over his shoulder, and carry His bloody body down to the ground. Nicodemus made himself unclean. He no longer cared about who he used to be or where he used to get his significance and worth from. He rejected all that (repentance), and He embraced his Savior. He went all-in. I believe we will see Nicodemus in heaven!

If you died tonight, where would you like to spend eternity? The dirt, recycling or Heaven?

Trust Jesus now. (Romans 10:9-13)

A Prayer of Salvation

Lord Jesus, today I trust you. I accept your forgiveness for all my sins. Fill me with your Spirit. Teach me from your Word, and give me the power to live for you from here to eternity. Amen