

Nathanael: Come and See
John 1:35-51
Small Group Guide

Opening Icebreaker Question:

- What person, not counting your spouse, brings out the best in you?

BACKGROUND: Nathanael was from a town called Cana, in the region of Galilee in Northern Israel. We know that he becomes a disciple of Jesus, but it's not clear whether he was one of the 12 men appointed as apostles. There may be good reason to think that he is the same man as the apostle called Bartholomew in the other 3 Gospel accounts, but either way, he ended up among the close friends and disciples of Jesus.

It's important that we understand what's going on here in the first chapter of John's Gospel. John the Apostle is writing about some of the men who have been disciples of John the Baptist. John the Baptist understood his role in life to be preparing people for the coming of the Messiah. John the Baptist got lots of attention. Lots of people followed him. And he's been telling his disciples to be ready for the Messiah—the promised Rescuer that God would send for his people. What we're seeing here in John 1 is what happens when John the Baptist finally identifies Jesus as the one they've all been waiting for.

TAKE TURNS READING John 1:35-51

1. The phrase “Come and see” is mentioned in some form twice in this passage. Pastor Josh stated that there are three invitations within this phrase. First, it **is an invitation to come and think**. It means to come and examine the evidence for who Jesus is.
 - a. How do you feel about this approach to Jesus? Is this examination of evidence an important part of your own faith, or do you view it as unnecessary?
 - b. Assuming that you have evaluated the evidence for Jesus and the Gospels, what elements of your investigation did you find convincing? What questions still remain in your mind?
 - c. Do you know anyone who is an evidenced-based thinker and who might be attracted to this type of look at Jesus? What are resources we might use with someone like this?¹
2. The second invitation with “Come and see” is **to come and see who Jesus really is by processing with friends**. Josh says, “The Christian faith is an encounter with a person—not just a philosophy—and therefore it's crucial that we discover this person, Jesus, with friends.”
 - a. What examples of this pattern do you see in John 1? What other examples can you recall from Scripture?
 - b. What friends have been most influential in your journey to/with Jesus? Who currently invigorates you most to grow in Christ?
 - c. On another note, who in your life might view you as a trusted friend, with whom they can process the claims of Jesus? Is God moving you to invite them to “come and see?”

¹ The Bible, The Alpha Course, books such as *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* and *The Case for Christ* (and other books by Lee Stroebel), and even personal interaction where you cause another to think through issues related to Christ.

- d. None of us like the stereotypical salesman. How can we present Christ to “seekers” in a different, more authentic way?
 - e. Consider this proposal: What if you were appointed by God as the only or the best person in someone’s life to influence them for Christ? How would you interact with non-believing friends or family based on this statement?
3. The third invitation within “Come and see” is related to adventure, and it is twofold: first, you are invited **to come and experience the adventure of being known and transformed.**
- a. How did Jesus reveal that he knew Nathanael supernaturally? How did he see the best in Nathanael?
 - b. Like Nathanael, consider that Jesus knows you better than you know yourself and sees a better potential in you than even you see. How does this make you feel? Or, to say it another way, “What does it mean that Jesus Christ, who called the stars into being², wanted to know you completely at the expense of his life?!”
 - c. In what areas do you sense that God is at work to bring about your transformation? How can we support, help, or pray for you?
4. The “Part B” of the third invitation within “Come and see” is **to come and experience the adventure of heaven on earth** – everything that your heart has ever truly longed for.
- a. Did you ever have this sense in your soul that as beautiful as this world is, you were made for something more? Discuss.
 - b. How have you experienced the chasm between the world as it is and the world as it ought to be?
 - c. If you have time, read Genesis 28:10-22. How is Jesus’ remark to Nathanael in John 1:51 an allusion to this passage? How is Jesus a fulfillment of Jacob’s dream?
 - d. How has heaven broken in on your life in Jesus? (Love? Hope? Relationships? Emotional Health? Other?)
5. **Extra/Optional:** Did you notice that there were two different reactions to the news of Jesus, but only one response (“Come and see”)? The first reaction was a seeking one, “Where are you staying?” The second reaction was a skeptical one, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”
- How does this one response to these different reactions inform how we present Christ to others?**
6. **Share and Pray:** Among our prayer requests, let’s pray that we will grow in our experience of Jesus in our lives (heaven on earth) and be even more motivated to share this with others who don’t believe.

² Ps 147:3-6.