



### What He Said Week 3 – What Jesus Said... About Religion Spiritual Formation Guide

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take the next spiritual step, contact us at [info@wschurch.org](mailto:info@wschurch.org).

#### Scripture:

"The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Hebrews 4:12

"Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

John 3:6

#### Reflection Questions:

- What thoughts, feelings and images come to mind when you hear the word, *religion*? Is this more of a positive or negative word in your life?
- What stood out to you from Sunday's service? How did you sense God at work in you through the songs, the message, and being together with others as part of the church? (The message's main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)
- Have someone read aloud John 3:1-21. What do you notice in this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus?
- Nicodemus's religion was halting his spiritual progress.

- Biblical faith (i.e. what the Bible actually says) often contradicts religious assumptions (e.g. what you've believed to be true about God, sin, forgiveness, etc.). Have you ever experienced this in your faith journey?
- The "new birth" Jesus promises is *received*, not *achieved*. Is this truth easy or difficult for you to embrace and live out in your life?
- Our culture pushes the two following messages about religion. 1.) All religion is useless. 2.) You can choose or build your own religion. Which of these messages is more tempting for you to believe and live by?
- When is it most tempting for you to allow "spiritual position" to be a substitute for "spiritual passion"?
- Take time to close your group with prayer.

Want some resources and ideas for how to grow spiritually? Visit [www.wschurch.org/resources](http://www.wschurch.org/resources) to see some of the tools that our team is recommending.

#### Message Main Points and Scripture:

- **Nicodemus - his religion was halting his spiritual progress.**
- John 3:1 – *“There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”*
- **Biblical faith often contradicts religious assumptions.**
- Hebrews 4:12 – *“The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*
- **It is difficult to consider spiritual truth that undermines your spiritual assumptions.**
- **Some of you know the risk Nicodemus was taking.**
- Mark 12:30 - *“Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart and with ALL your soul and with ALL your mind and with ALL your strength.”*
- John 3:3 – *“Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”*
- **Nicodemus had spent his whole life TRYING, not TRUSTING.**
- John 3:4 - *“What do you mean? How can a man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”*
- **The new birth is received, not achieved.**
- **TRY AGAIN is different from BORN AGAIN.**
- Ephesians 2:9-10 – *“Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”*
- John 3:6 - *“Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind*

*blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."*

- John 3:9 - *"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.*
- John 3:16 - *"For God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son..."*
- **Trusting religion will fail you, but trusting Jesus will save you.**
- John 14:6 - *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."*
- John 3:10 - *Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things?"*
- **Spiritual position is no substitute for spiritual passion!**
- **Matthew 20:26-27** - *"Among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave."*