

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Week 3: John 1:35-51 - Jesus: Come and See

CONTEXT

A quick look back: Spend a few minutes reviewing the big picture of John from previous weeks. What kind of literature is the gospel of John? Who wrote it? What is the book's main purpose? How is the book organized? Where are we in the large story of Scripture? What did John the Baptist teach us last week?

Today's Passage: Today we pick up right where we left off, as John the Baptist points two of his disciples towards Jesus, and then fades into the background. As we learned in our introduction video, the first chapter of John gives us 7 different names for Jesus. John the Baptist gave us the first 2, and now the new followers of Christ will give us 5 more in rapid succession. This passage helps us to see how people respond when they are found by eternal life, and how the invitation to "Come and see" sets the pattern for a life with Jesus.

CONTENT:

Read John 1: 35-51 out loud and then pick ONE of the following ways (Option A, B, or C) to help your group engage with this passage.

Option A. Notice/Wonder: Ask everyone to read the passage again quietly on their own. As they read, ask them to make a list like the one below. Remember that what people notice or wonder can just be small, simple things.

What do I NOTICE about this text? What do I WONDER about?

Once everyone has had the chance to make their list, come together as a group and share your observations, writing them on a board or a place where everyone can see the list as it develops.

Option B. Creative Engagement: Give everyone paper and drawing supplies. Have everyone read the passage again on their own, then invite them to spend some time illustrating the passage (or a part of the passage) in whatever way they want- concrete, abstract, colors, images, words. When everyone has completed their art, come together and spend time sharing with each other what you drew and why.

Option C. Guided Bible Study Questions:

1. This passage introduces us to 5 new followers of Christ, each called in a unique way. What do you notice about each of their stories? Are there any patterns of speech/action in this passage?
2. John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God and the Son of God. What are the 5 new "names" that the disciples give Jesus in this passage?

3. The first 2 curious disciples are invited by Jesus to “come and see” where he is staying (vs 37-39). They then “remain/stay” with Jesus, which is the start of a whole new life for these two. It may seem that they initiated their movement towards Jesus, but John 1: 14 tells us something different. What do we learn from this verse? Who came to whose “home” first?

4. There are two “calls” in this passage that demonstrate Jesus miraculous “knowing” of his disciples before they know him. One is with Simon (vs 40-42), the other is with Nathanael (vs 45-49). Look at these two interactions- what do you see and learn about Jesus as He interacts with these two?

5. Jesus describes an interesting scene to Nathanael in vs 51. It seems to be a direct reference to a dream Jacob (an important figure in the Old Testament) had all the way back in Gen 28: 10-17. Read the Genesis passage together. Jacob’s dream seems to give him a little “peek” into heaven, as He realizes that God’s activity and presence is much closer than he ever knew. How might this story relate to Jesus? What object in the Genesis story does Jesus seem to be comparing himself to? Why might the truths of the Genesis passage be important at this point in the calling of the first disciples?

APPLICATION:

How does all of this connect to our lives? Here are some questions to help guide your discussion.

- We see in this passage that when the disciples spend time with Jesus, one of their first instincts is to gather other people they love and invite them to “come and see.” Who are the important people in your life that have acted as spiritual friends or companions or encouragers?
- John has now given us 7 names for Jesus- Lamb of God, Son of God, Rabbi/teacher, Messiah/Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, King of Israel, and Son of Man. Which of these stand out to you today? Why do you think that identity seems important to you right now?
- In the stories of Peter and Nathanael, we meet a God who knows our past and our future, who sees our doubts and questions, and who longs to draw us into relationship with Him and gift us with our true identity. What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you about yourself and your life with God?
- Jesus’ call to “Follow me!” means more than just “walk behind me.” It means to “go where I go and do what I do”- to have all of our lives shaped by how Jesus actually lived and loved and served. From what you know of Jesus and his life, what are some of his patterns that are particularly hard for you to imitate? What are some of his patterns that are especially meaningful or tender to you?

PRAYER:

Close your time together in prayer using one of the ideas below.

- Use words/images/themes from the passage to guide your prayer.
- Raise up your “wonderings” from the notice/wonder section to God in prayer
- Take prayer requests and pray over each other as a group or in small groups
- Use the written prayer to the right:

*God you see us under the fig tree, or brewing coffee in the kitchen,
or studying for class, or relaxing on the couch,
and you recognize us for who we are.
We wonder what you are up to, where you might be found,
and you invite us to come and see.
Rabbi, Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, King of Israel, Son of Man-
move in our hearts and souls,
give us the curiosity and the courage to come and see,
and then to share what we have seen and heard.
We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

