



Small Group Curriculum

Questions In The Dark • WEEK 1 • [John 3:1-8](#)

The context for quite possibly the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, is given to Nicodemus, one of the most religious elites in the days of Jesus as he sought out answers under the shade of night. Nicodemus had all that one could possibly desire under the sun: money, power, affluence and all enrobed in the finest garments. Yet still these things did not satisfy him and he sought out what Jesus had to offer. Jesus explains to him that none can see the Kingdom of God unless they have been “born again”. In his shortmindedness, Nicodemus ponders how he might do this.

Jesus would go on to explain that it is only through the love of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son that anyone might attain eternal life (John 3:16). We are all messy and incapable of cleansing ourselves. We all need Jesus, who lived a perfect life and is the Son of God, to pay the price for our shortcomings and insufficiencies.

REMINDERS

- Worship Workshop: for anyone at Awakening that is wanting to improve their musical skills. Monday, February 9th 6-8pm. More info and registration [here](#).
- Team Night: If you are a current or prospective volunteer, join us for Team Night to hear where God is taking our church, huddle with your volunteer team, and enjoy tacos with one another. Sunday, March 8th 4-6:15pm. More info and registration [here](#).

ICEBREAKER

What keeps you up at night? Is it pondering the interconnectivities of the universe, anxiety fueled by your news feed, reliving the nostalgia of Stars Hollow with the Gilmore Girls for the 17th time?

Whatever is there is a prompting, a thing, an idea that causes us to ponder something or distract us from the thing that is the root cause of our midnight stirrings. We all need each other in these troubling times- share the deep stuff, share the stuff that makes you laugh at yourself because we all need that too.

INTRODUCTION

When everything fades away when you lay your head on your pillow, it can be a harrowing time. The noise and distractions of life pause in the darkness and our sincerest thoughts boil to the surface. These are the thoughts that we need to offer up in prayer unto our God. No matter if we are seeking or we have already walked with the Lord many years, the necessity to come back to Jesus remains constant. In all that we do, we must find new places in our lives to submit unto God that in his greatness and by the blood of Jesus we might find new life, redemption, healing and release from the bondage of sin, Satan, and death (Rev 12:11).

AWAKENING

While we are bound to this world, it is inevitable that we will experience pain and turbulence. Jesus even promises that following after him is sure to bring persecution (John 15:20). However we follow Jesus because the King of all creation has invited us into the middle of the story in which God will claim ultimate victory and right every injustice. It is difficult to relinquish control, but we must strive to put our trust and our lives into the hands of the almighty God.

DISCUSSION

Read [1 Corinthians 15:50-58](#)

- What promises are we given in these verses which are affirmed through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?
- Though we are living, it can feel as though we are experiencing the pains of death and destruction all around us. Take a moment to share with the group, what has been feeling like fear, death, anxiety or confusion in your life recently?

Read [John 3:16-21](#)

- Why did God send Jesus into the world to save the world? Why not do it some other way? He is God afterall- can't he do whatever he wants?
- What does it say about God that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world in verse 17, but Jesus goes on to give the outline for judgement in verses 19-21?
 - What is the difference between condemnation and judgement?
 - How is it a gift to followers of Jesus that he will pass judgement upon the world (judge evil)?
- If we as followers of Jesus have hope despite what is going on in the world and in our personal world, how should we respond to the world around us with the hope of Jesus within us?

RESPONSE

Homework for the week:

[John 16](#) (After Jesus' resurrection and some of his parting words to his followers)

- Read the passage a couple of times at least and pick out 2-3 promises that Jesus himself affirms as truth. Write down the ones that you need to carry you through this week and put them on the lock screen of your phone or somewhere in your house where you will see them every day.
- Journal about the trials we are facing in this world and reflect on what Jesus says about who he is and what our role is and what God's role is in all of it. If you find yourself frustrated with anything, share it with the Lord and ask your group leaders or mentors to guide you in that frustration.
- Send at least one text encouraging one of your group members in the area that they are struggling with over the next week.

PRAYER

God in heaven you are all powerful and all loving and you sought out each and every one of us to be your redeemed children. No matter what we are facing or how messy our lives are, you have made a way for us to return to you. Lord remind us to live in your grace because there is



simply no possible way for us to do any of this on our own. It is only by the blood of Jesus that we claim righteousness. May we be emboldened to share the good news of who you are and be salt and light in this world that seems to be overflowing with sin and darkness.

Finish with the Lord's prayer:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one.'