

8. How does the story of Nicodemus demonstrate that good, sincere, and religious people will not go to heaven? What is the missing element in his life? (3:7)

9. How do we experience the new birth? (3:12)

10. Have you been born again? If not, are you ready to accept and trust in Christ?

**Summary:** Good people, sincere people, religious people - don't go to heaven, but only those who have been *born again*. The New Birth is the *work of the Holy Spirit*. It takes place when a person accepts & trusts Jesus as their Savior. The New Birth results in *forgiveness*, a *changed heart & life*, and a *personal relationship* with God as His child.

**Suggested Prayer:** "Dear God, I believe Jesus died on the cross for me and rose from the dead. I **apologize** for my sins. Please forgive me and make me clean on the inside. I **accept** and **trust** Jesus as my Savior. Heal the broken places in my life. Help me to recover and pursue your design for my life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen"

Sharing & Praying Together  Memorize - John 3:3

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Conversation #2 - Assurance—Can I Know for Sure?

1 John 5:11-13 NLT <sup>11</sup> *And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* <sup>12</sup> *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.* <sup>13</sup> **I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.**"

1. When have you been concerned about whether you would go to heaven? Do you think it is possible for you to know for sure you are going to heaven or can you only hope so and will have to wait and see after you die? Explain your answer.
2. Where is eternal life located? (5:11) What do you think is meant by eternal life?
3. What promise does God make to those who have Christ in their heart & life? (5:12)
4. What is the consequence of rejecting or neglecting Christ? (5:12)
5. To whom did John write this letter? Why did he write it? (5:13)
6. Based on verses 5:12-13, a formula for the assurance of salvation could be **AC + CP = Assurance**. That is, **AC** (accept Christ) + **CP** (claim the promise of 5:12) = **Assurance**. Has

there been a specific time when you accepted Christ as your Savior? If so, share your story.

7. We must **accept** Christ (AC) to have salvation. According to **1 John 5:13**, why must we **claim** the promise (CP) of 1 John 5:12 to have assurance?

8. In your own words, how can you be confident that you have eternal life based on 1 John 5:12-13?

9. What do you think God is saying to you through this study?

**Summary:** God wants you to have the *assurance* of your salvation. You can know for sure that you have eternal life when you *accept* Christ as your Savior (AC) & *claim* God's promise of eternal life (CP).

Sharing & Praying Together  Memorize - 1 John 5:13

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Conversation #3 - Good Works—What Good are Good Works - Salvation or Service?

Ephesians 2:8-10 NLT <sup>8</sup> **God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.** <sup>9</sup> *Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.* <sup>10</sup> *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."*

1. What do you think of the popular idea that we get into heaven only if our good deeds outweigh the bad? Is this biblical?
2. How would you define the word "grace"? What role does "grace" have in the process of salvation? (2:8)
3. What does the word "saved" mean to you? From **what** are we saved? (2:8). (compare Romans 5:9; 6:7, 14; Hebrews 10:22)
4. If grace is God's part of salvation, what is our part? (2:8)
5. What does it mean that salvation is a "gift" from God? (2:8).
6. What does it mean that salvation is "not a reward for the good things we have done"? (2:9). How do people try to earn salvation?
7. Why do you think God created a plan of salvation that eliminated human-boasting in one's accomplishments? (2:9)
8. Good works come AFTER salvation, not as a way to earn salvation. Good works are for **service** (2:10), not **salvation**

(2:8-9). How does verse 10 describe saved people? What does this mean to you? Why did God save and change you? (2:10)

9. When did God make plans for you to serve Him (compare Ephesians 1:4)? What can you do to serve God? (2:10)

10. What do you think God is saying to you through this study?

**Summary:** Good works will *not* save us but they allow us to serve & *glorify* God and to be a *blessing* to others.

Sharing & Praying Together  Memorize - Ephesians 2:8

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Conversation #4 - Life Change—What Difference Does Christ Make in My Life?

Titus 3:3-7 NLT <sup>3</sup> *Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other.* <sup>4</sup> *But —When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love,* <sup>5</sup> **he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.** <sup>6</sup> *He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior.* <sup>7</sup> *Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life."*

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT *"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"*

1. What did Paul say characterized the life of a person before salvation? (3:3). How would you describe your life before salvation?
2. What did God reveal to us? How does this make you feel? (3:4)
3. What does it mean to be "saved"? (3:5). How is this similar to being rescued? From **what** are we rescued? (Romans 5:9; 6:7).
4. How are we **not** saved? (3:5). How is this like Ephesians 2:9?
5. What motivated God to save us? (3:5)
6. What are three changes that took place in your life when God saved you? What do these mean to you? (Last sentence of 3:5)
7. What do you know about the Holy Spirit? What kind of encounter did we have with the Holy Spirit when we were saved? (3:6)

# Conversations About Following Christ

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Conversation #1 - The New Birth—Will Good People Go to Heaven?

John 3:1-7, 10; 1:12-13 NLT *“1 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2 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.’ 3 Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.’ 4 ‘What do you mean?’ exclaimed Nicodemus. ‘How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?’ 5 Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don’t be surprised when I say, “You must be born again.”*

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*“10 Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?”*

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*“12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.”*

1. To what strict Jewish group did Nicodemus belong? (3:1) What responsibility did Nicodemus have? (3:10)
2. Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night? (3:2)
3. Why did Nicodemus believe Jesus was from God? (3:2) Why should we believe that Jesus is from God?
4. What is the requirement for seeing the kingdom of God? (3:3)
5. What misunderstanding did Nicodemus have? (3:4)
6. Being “born of water” referred to physical birth, as the context of verse 6 indicated. What two types of birth does everyone need to enter the kingdom of God (heaven)? (3:5-6)
7. From these verses, we can observe that Nicodemus was good, sincere, religious, and highly knowledgeable in the scriptures (3:10). However, despite all this, what need did he have? (3:7)

8. What are two things God’s grace accomplished in your life at your salvation? What do these mean to you? (3:7)
9. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, what change takes place at salvation? What are the most obvious changes you have noticed in your life?
10. What do you think God is saying to you through this study?

**Summary:** Becoming a follower of Christ is *not* about joining something or adopting a new set of beliefs. Rather, it is an encounter with God’s redeeming power that cleanses us and changes us from the inside out.

Sharing & Praying Together  Memorize - Titus 3:5

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Conversation #5 - Discipleship - What Does it Mean to Follow Jesus as His Disciple?

**What is a disciple?** Our definition is—a **growing, fully devoted, spiritually reproducing follower of Jesus Christ.**

### “Growing”

2 Peter 3:18 NLT *“Rather, you must **grow** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* 1 Timothy 4:7 NLT *“...train yourself to be **godly** [like God or like Jesus].”*

1. Why does God want you to grow spiritually? (2 Peter 3:18; 1 Timothy 4:7).

### “Fully Devoted”

Jesus Christ wants us to be 100% devoted to him. He gave his **all** for us on the cross. He is asking his followers to give their all to him.

Luke 9:23-26 NLT *“23 **Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. 24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, [Mark 8:35: “...and for the sake of the Good News”], you will save it. 25 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.”***

2. What are the conditions for being a disciple? (Luke 9:23)
3. If the cross represented crucifixion, what do you think Jesus meant by taking up your cross daily? How do you die to self-centeredness? (Luke 9:23)

4. What is the consequence of living a self-centered life? What is the result of living as a servant to others? (Luke 9:24-25)
5. What did Jesus say about being ashamed of him and the gospel? (Luke 9:26) Why are some people ashamed of Him?
6. To what degree (1-10) is your heart devoted to Jesus Christ?

### “Spiritually Reproducing Follower of Jesus Christ”

Matthew 4:18-20 NLT *“18 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 19 Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!’ 20 And they left their nets at once and followed him.”*

7. Who did Jesus see as he was walking? What were they doing? (Matt. 4:18)
8. What exactly did Jesus say to them? What did it mean to “fish for people”? What does this mean for you today? (Matt. 4:19)
9. What was their response and how long did it take? (Matt. 4:20)

2 Timothy 2:2 NLT *“**You** [Timothy] have heard **me** [Paul] teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now **teach these truths** to other **trustworthy people** who will be able to pass them on to **others.**”*

10. What did Paul urge Timothy to do with what he had been taught? What type of person was he to disciple? Why do you think this quality is important?

Notice the **progression** for **multiplying** disciples: (1) **Paul** taught ⇒ (2) **Timothy** who should teach ⇒ (3) **“trustworthy people”** who will be equipped and qualified to ⇒ (4) teach & train **“others.”**

11. Who is someone you might be able to meet with for spiritual conversations and discipleship?

**Summary:** Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ requires setting aside one’s personal desires & being radically devoted to him.

Sharing & Praying Together  Memorize - Luke 9:23 NLT

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