Planning to Be Saved, Part 1

An Awkward Conversation · John 3:1-9

Read it. Talk about it. Live it.

Introduction for Group Leaders

This guide is designed to help your group move beyond surface-level familiarity with salvation and wrestle honestly with what it truly means to be born again. Nicodemus was a man of great religious standing who still had unanswered questions. This passage gives us permission to ask hard questions and expect real answers. Encourage honesty and vulnerability in your group discussion.

Key Takeaways

1. Being born again does not just demand total surrender and transformation — it facilitates it. Salvation is not merely a religious obligation. It is the very mechanism through which genuine change becomes possible in a person's life.

2. Religious pedigree is not a substitute for personal rebirth. Nicodemus held one of the highest positions available in Jewish religious life. His credentials, however, did not exempt him from the requirement Jesus laid out plainly in John 3:3 — that a man must be born again to even see the kingdom of God.

3. The kingdom Jesus offers is not what most people expect. Jewish expectations centered on national restoration and political freedom. Jesus revealed a kingdom rooted in spiritual dominion, personal transformation, and freedom from sin — not freedom from a government.

4. Salvation is a lifelong commitment expressed in faithful, repeatable actions. It is not a one-time statement or transaction. It is a challenge lived out over a lifetime.

Discussion Questions

OPENING (GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED)

1. Have you ever had a conversation about faith or salvation that felt awkward or uncomfortable? What made it feel that way, and did you push through it or avoid it?

2. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, wanting answers but also wanting to avoid judgment, ridicule, and rejection. In what areas of your spiritual life do you find yourself approaching God or the church "by night" — privately, carefully, or with hesitation?

GOING DEEPER (ENGAGING THE TEXT)

1. Nicodemus did not ask Jesus a question. He made a thesis statement — presenting evidence and waiting for Jesus to either confirm or challenge his understanding. What does that tell us about how Nicodemus approached truth? How do you approach truth when it challenges your existing beliefs?
2. Nicodemus assumed his access to God was secure because of who he was and where he came from. The sermon pointed out that he did not question his access — he assumed it. Where might you be making the same assumption in your own walk with God?
3. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3 that a person must be born again to see the kingdom of God. The sermon described the Jewish understanding of rebirth as being tied entirely to family lineage — if you were from the seed of Abraham, you had access. Jesus flipped that entirely. How does it change your understanding of salvation to know that your spiritual heritage, church background, or family history cannot do for you what only a personal rebirth can?
4. The sermon highlighted that Jesus used alternating singular and plural Greek pronouns in this passage, making it clear that rebirth was not just required for Nicodemus personally but for every Jew. How does it reshape your understanding of the gospel to know that Jesus was not simply addressing one man's spiritual curiosity but making a universal declaration?

PERSONAL REFLECTION (MAKING IT REAL)

1. The sermon offered three key points for anyone planning to be saved. Work through each one honestly as a group:
   - A family history of church attendance or saved relatives cannot save you. What does it look like practically to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, as described in Philippians 2:12?
   - A position, job, or title in a church organization will not save you. Have you ever confused your role in the church with your relationship with God? How do you keep those two things from blurring together?
   - Salvation demands transformation — not a one-time statement or transaction, but a lifelong commitment expressed in faithful and repeatable actions. What does that kind of transformation look like in your daily life right now?
2. The sermon noted that a generation is waiting for revival and that we are nearly two generations removed from the last great move of the Spirit. What is your personal responsibility in preparing for and participating in revival? What might need to change in your life to be ready?

LOOKING AHEAD

1. The next part of this series is titled "You Want Me to DO WHAT???" — which suggests that the demands of salvation are about to become even more specific and challenging. What questions are you still carrying from this week's message that you hope get addressed?

Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following to put into practice:

1. **Have the awkward conversation.** Identify one person in your life who may be approaching faith the way Nicodemus did — curious but cautious, interested but afraid of judgment. Pray for an opportunity to have an honest conversation with them about what it means to be born again.
2. **Audit your assumptions.** Set aside 15 to 20 minutes this week to honestly examine whether you have been assuming your access to God rather than actively pursuing it. Write down what genuine, ongoing transformation looks like in your life right now — not what it looked like in the past.
3. **Identify one faithful, repeatable action.** Salvation is expressed through faithful and repeatable actions done over a lifetime. Choose one concrete spiritual discipline — daily prayer, Scripture reading, accountability with another believer — and commit to practicing it consistently for the next 30 days.
4. **Pray for revival personally.** The sermon pointed toward a coming move of God over the next several years. Begin praying daily and specifically that God would prepare your heart, your family, and your church to be part of what He is doing.

Closing Thought for the Group

Nicodemus was not a villain in this story. He was a serious man asking serious questions. Jesus did not turn him away or shame him for coming at night. He met him exactly where he was and told him the truth. That same truth is available to every person in your group. The question is not whether God is willing to save — the question is whether we are willing to stop assuming and start surrendering.

Next Week: Planning to Be Saved (Part 2) — "Reborn"

GATHER WITH US

Full Harvest Church

429 S. 9th St., McAlester, OK · Sunday School 11 AM · Service 12 PM

More study guides: fullharvestchurch.com/small-groups

Daily devotionals: @fullharvestchurch on Instagram