

STUDY GUIDE

KNOW

GROW IN

PROCLAIM

CHRIST



Sunday Services: 9am / 11.15am / 6pm
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KNOW CHRIST — KNOW LIFE

John 3:1-21

Introduction by Sam Reeve

There is nothing more important than knowing that God is on our side (or that we are on his side!). In this dialogue that happened one night nearly 2000 years ago, Jesus talks in plain terms with a religious teacher and leader about how it's possible. It's one of the most important conversations ever, because one of the speakers is God come in the flesh. What he tells us about our true state, how much God loves us, and how we can make a new start is incredibly good news – if we believe it.

Read John 3:1-21

1. What sort of person is Nicodemus, and how does he approach Jesus? (v1-2)

2. Jesus talks about the need to be *born again* (v3), *born of water and the Spirit* (v5), *born of the Spirit* (v8). How do these terms help to explain what he means?

3. God has mentioned these things before (so Nicodemus should have known what Jesus was talking about). Check out Ezekiel 36:25-28. How does this help to understand what being born again is about?

4. Behind what Jesus says to Nicodemus in verses 13-15 is an incident that occurred more than a thousand years before, when God had rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and was leading them to their own country that he had promised to give them.

5. Read Numbers 21:4-9
 - a. Why were the people bitten by snakes?

 - b. What about people today – have we treated God in similar ways to the people in this incident?

- c. What was the solution then? Who provided it?
- d. What does Jesus say is the solution for people now? (v14)

[Note: 'lifted up' refers to Jesus dying on the cross to pay the price for our sins. See John 8:28 and 12:32 for other uses of this term in John's gospel.]

- 6. What do verses 16-17 tell us about what God is doing through the death of Jesus?
How would you describe the expression of God's love outlined here in your own words?
- 7. What is the difference between those who are condemned and those who are not? (v18)
Read verses 19-21
 - a. What reasons have you heard people give for not believing in Jesus?
 - b. What reasons do/did you have for not believing in Jesus?
 - c. What do verses 19-21 say is the reason people don't come to Jesus?
 - d. What do you think is meant by this?
- 8. What does God want you to do as a result of what Jesus says in this passage?

GROW IN CHRIST

Ephesians 4:11-16

1. Discuss some of the reasons why Christians should be concerned to grow?

Introduction by Nathan Malpass

From the command given to Adam and Eve to 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth',¹ to the promise of God that Abraham's descendants would increase and become a great nation,² to the prophecies of God's kingdom growing,³ to the fulfilment of those prophecies in the coming of Jesus and subsequent spread of God's Word and making of new disciples,⁴ to the prayers of the New Testament for growth in faith, knowledge, maturity, and love,⁵ the Bible is concerned about growth. Growth is a sign of blessing and life. A lack of growth indicates a lack of life and is a sign of death. As we continue our series 'Know, Grow, Proclaim', we turn our attention to 'Grow', and examine what Ephesians 4: 11-16 teaches us on Christian growth. Throughout the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul has outlined how the eternal purposes of God are being worked out in history through Jesus Christ. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, God is putting this broken and divided world back together again as he grants new life to the spiritually dead, and creates a new united humanity under Christ. Ephesians 4 marks a shift in the letter as Paul transitions from what God has done to save sinners and create a new and reconciled society, to how that society must live; from looking at the role of the church in the plans and purposes of God from the outside, to looking at the life of the church and it's

¹ Genesis 1: 28.

² Genesis 12: 1-3; 17: 1-2; 22: 15-18.

³ Isaiah 9: 7; 60: 1-22.

⁴ Matthew 13: 31-32; 28: 18-20; Acts 6: 1, 7; 12: 24; 13: 49

⁵ Ephesians 3: 14-21; Philippians 1: 9-11; Colossian 1: 9-14; 1 Thessalonians 1: 2-5; 2 Thessalonians 2: 3-4.

members from the inside. Verses 1-6 begin with a call to live a life worthy of the calling we have received in Christ Jesus, with a special emphasis on the importance of love and unity. Verses 7-10 make clear that Christian unity does not mean uniformity, as the apostle speaks of the diversity of gifts the risen Christ has given to his church. Verses 11-16, which are the focus of our study, unpack the purpose and goal of the gifts given by Christ and make clear that to live a life worthy of our calling as Christians involves being part of a local church in which we grow together in maturity, unity, and love.

Read Ephesians 4: 11-16

2. What similarity exists between the gifts mentioned in verse 11 (notice that the gifts are actual persons, given by Christ to the church)?
3. What is the purpose of the gifts mentioned in verse 11 (v12 cf. 1 Corinthians 12: 7)?
4. How should this impact the way you think about and use your own gifts?
5. As we grow together through each member playing their part in the work of ministry, positively what goal are we aiming at as a church (v13)?
6. Discuss the significance of the different ways unity is spoken of in the context of this passage (v3, 13).
7. Negatively, what are we aiming to grow beyond as a church (v14)?

8. According to verse 15, how are God's people to grow to maturity?

9. Describe the kind of growth that is in view in this passage?

10. In your own words, summarise how this growth happens?

Think/Grow/Live

- As you think back over the last year of your Christian life use the following questions to consider how you've been going in your 'walking in a manner worthy of your calling':
 - How have you grown in your understanding of the Christian life?
 - How have you grown in your practice of the Christian life?
 - Are there specific areas that you feel you need further instruction and help in?
- Notice that the growth in view throughout Ephesians 4 is corporate. With that in mind, how would you answer the previous questions with regard to the whole church (i.e. change 'you' to 'we' and 'your' to 'our')?
- What part can you play in providing further instruction and help to the body at CrossCulture?

Prayer Points

- Thank God for providing us with what we need to grow to maturity as a body.
 - Thank God for the ways that he has grown us as a church.
 - Ask God to help us to lovely serve for the good of the body so that we might grow in faith, knowledge, maturity, unity and love.
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