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Women's Activities Text "1" to #208.203.1777

Men's Activities Text "1" to #208.203.1822

"Nicodemus"

1. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 NIV).
 - a. In Matthew 21:28-32, we see two types of lost people represented.
 - i. Jesus seeks to save them both.
 - b. It's possible to be religious and still lost OR intelligent and still lost.
 - i. The traps: **self-righteousness** and **arrogance in my knowledge**.

John 5:34b (ESV) "[...] but I say these things so that you [religious leaders] may be saved."

2. **Thesis:** Every lost person can become a disciple of Jesus by being like Nicodemus:
 - a. 1) Be like Nicodemus: Seek truth and follow it where it leads.
 - b. 2) Be like Nicodemus: Humble yourself.
 - c. 3) Be like Nicodemus: Follow Jesus even though it costs you.
3. **Who is Nicodemus: "Israel's Teacher"**
 - a. **John 3:** Nicodemus - a religious leader - seeks Jesus out **at night**.
 - b. **John 7:** Nicodemus timidly but publicly stands up for Jesus... just a little.
 - c. **John 19:** Nicodemus helps to give Jesus a burial fit for a king **in broad daylight**.
4. **Be Like Nicodemus: Seek Truth and Follow It Where It Leads.**
 - a. In John 3:1-8, Nicodemus comes at night to question Jesus with genuine interest.
 - i. Are you truly seeking truth and willing to follow it where it leads?
 1. Science: *The Riot and the Dance, God's Crime Scene* - Wallace
 2. Philosophy: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis
 3. Historical and Archeological Evidence: *More Than Just a Carpenter; Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell
 - ii. Nicodemus admits evidence that challenges his worldview.

John 3:2b (NIV) "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

- b. Jesus begins talking to Nicodemus about **regeneration - new life**.
 - i. Other terms: Born again, born anew, born from above, made alive.
 - ii. In our first birth, we are born physically and inherit our sin nature.
 - iii. In our second birth, we are made alive spiritually and declared righteous.
 - iv. Regeneration is a work of the Spirit and no one sees or enters the kingdom of God unless the Spirit does this for them.
 - c. **Baptism** is a commanded symbol of being born again that identifies a person with the death and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is for all adults and children who both understand the gospel and believe the gospel.
 - i. Baptism is an *evidence* of faith that is to immediately follow belief.
5. **Be Like Nicodemus: Humble Yourself.**
 - a. In John 3:9-21 Nicodemus is called "Israel's teacher" but he is confused.
 - i. Nicodemus needs to humble himself to receive truth from Jesus.
 - ii. **God's favor cannot be gained through mere study or religion.**
 - b. Who does the Spirit regenerate? Who is born again?

John 3:14 (NIV) “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness [Numbers 21:4-9], so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

- i. Salvation isn't based upon works (the size of the look).
- ii. The Spirit regenerates those who look to Jesus in faith.
- c. Nicodemus, it isn't your social status, your education and degrees, your reputation, your good deeds and giving that will save you from death... it's faith in the Son of Man lifted up on the cross.
 - i. Note of clarification: Jesus is not anti-intellectual.
- d. Who is John 3:16 said to: the Woman at the well or Nicodemus?
 - i. Nicodemus...and Jesus is beckoning him: “Come into the light!”

6. Be Like Nicodemus: Follow Jesus Even Though It Costs You.

- a. In John 7:45-52, Nicodemus timidly speaks up and stands up for Jesus.

John 7:51 (NIV) “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

- i. This is significant because he risks being seen as a sympathizer to Jesus.
- b. **Are you a secret disciple of Jesus out of fear of [fill in the blank]?**
- c. In John 19:38-42, Nicodemus helps bury Jesus with a burial fit for a king.
 - i. He brings ~75 pounds of myrrh and aloes in broad daylight for Jesus.
 - ii. He's aligning with a condemned man and risking much to express love.

7. Nicodemus's Story: How Does It Change the Way I Live?

- a. Are you like Nicodemus coming at night?
 - i. Are you willing to follow the evidence where it leads?
- b. Are you willing to humble yourself?
 - i. Salvation is not for the most studied or religious, but for the person who in faith trusts in Jesus like the story of the Israelites and the fiery serpents.
 - 1. Are you living in the light?
- c. Are you willing to follow Jesus (be His disciple) even though it will cost you?

Small Group Discussion Questions:

Ice Breaker: Tell your best snake story.

Story the following passages: John 7:45-52 & John 19:38-42.

1. Why do you think Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night in John 3?
2. Read John 3:1-21. What is Jesus's main message/s to Nicodemus?
 - a. What is Jesus saying to you?
3. Find at least five similarities that exist between Jesus on the cross and the story that he alludes to in Numbers 21:4-9 about the fiery serpents.
4. Following Jesus takes humility. How did Nicodemus need to humble himself to follow?
 - a. How do you need to humble yourself to follow Jesus?
5. Following Jesus will cost you. Nicodemus had a lot to lose. Are you wrestling to follow Jesus in any way because of what you know it will cost you?
6. If you are a believer and have not been baptized, that is your next step in being a disciple of Jesus. Is there anything that this group can do to walk alongside you?

