



GETTING STARTED

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

Let's do life together!/Opening Discussion: Welcome to your LIFEgroup; how was your week? Did anyone see God do something in their life this past week? Did anyone get baptized this past weekend? Please tell us your **story**. This week we are talking about eternal security - share with us your **story** of how you accepted Christ.

Our Subject Today: This week we continue in our sermon series, CHRISTIAN(ESE) and will dig deeper into the Christian doctrine of Eternal Security, or as many call it "Once saved, always saved". This study will set the biblical foundation so you can defend the faith and understand how to help someone who needs or wants to be saved and / or may think they can lose their salvation.

VIDEO NOTES/QUESTIONS

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY / OBSERVATION: Two of the themes of John's Gospel are the availability of eternal life to all who believe in Jesus and that miracles are meant to encourage faith in Him.

INTERPRETATION: See Commentary on pages 5-6

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) The Devil will do everything within his power to try and get us to doubt, because a doubting Christian is an ineffective Christian in every aspect of their life. More than that, a doubting Christian is also a defeated Christian. Why?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David's words - "Because trying to live the Christian life with doubt is like trying to ride a bike with the brakes on...It's a hard, and tiring grind where day after day after day, we struggle to make progress in believing the promises of God."

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read John 3:1-8**

2) Who was the man named Nicodemus? Why do you think Nicodemus came to see Jesus at night? What question did Nicodemus “not” ask that Jesus answered?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: **First question** -Pastor David said - Nicodemus was a religious man, he was a Pharisee, but Nicodemus was also a law man, meaning that he was member of something called the Sanhedrin...think Supreme Court Justice in Jesus' day. **Second question** - He came at night because he did not want others in his group talking to Jesus and he was pressed with the eternal question of what must I do to get to Heaven. **Third question** - Jesus read his heart, He knew what he was going to ask before he spoke, so in the same way Jesus knows our needs and is waiting for us to bring them to Him. *Pastor David* -“Nic...in order for you to understand miracles, you need to become a miracle...

“... because your Father knows the things you need before you ask Him. (Matthew 6:8) CSB

3) According to the Scripture we just read what kind of birth is Jesus talking about? Why do you think Jesus used a word picture to help Nicodemus and us today to understand? How do people use the words “born again” today in general conversations?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: You can defend the faith by explaining to people the following: The birth that Jesus is talking about here isn't a physical birth, but a **spiritual birth**. In fact, you might be interested to know that the phrase “born again” literally means, “born from above.” It's a word picture of a person experiencing a change of heart, a spiritual transformation if you will, where we exchange our sin and our shame and our guilt and our death, for the righteousness and the purity and holiness of God Himself. Pastor David said: Like Nicodemus, you and I cannot get into heaven by being religions or by being smart. We cannot get into heaven by having lots of academic achievements or degrees on our wall. Nor, can you and I get into heaven just by being around Jesus and Jesus' people. No, the only way for any of us to get into the kingdom of God, is that we too must be born again, born from above, by repenting of our sin and trust Jesus Christ to be our savior...that's it.

Read Romans 8:37-39

4) What is the promise that God gives the born again believer in Jesus?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David's words: one of the most all-inclusive statements either in, or outside the Bible. Listen to what Paul writes to us & pay attention to the ten strong opponents that can NEVER, EVER, EVER separate a believer from the love of God

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read *John 10:27-29***

5) From these verses what promise does Jesus give the born again believer? Why do you think he felt there was a need to teach this illustration of the sheep?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: First question - this is a foundational Scripture on security of the believer. Nothing can remove you from the hand of God once you are adopted into His family. Second question - What did God call the people of Israel? "He replied, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (*Matthew 15:24*) CSB

Read *Philippians 1:3-6*

6) When we are born again we are saved for a purpose; according to these verses, what has He begun in you?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Pastor David's words - (Remember who? The Christians in Philippi) In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He (and that's talking about God) who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Other Scripture to dig deeper from the sermon if you have time: *Hebrews 10:11-14; Revelation 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:13-14; Hebrews 7:23-25*

SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)**POSSIBLE SUMMARY/TAKE-AWAY:**

- I will not live in doubt anymore about my salvation
- I can know that I am secure in Jesus
- I can defend my faith, according to the Word of God, about the doctrine of Eternal Security

WORK OUT (This Week's Assignments)

- This week take extra time in your personal time of worship and thank God for your salvation and the security you have in Christ.
- This week review the Scripture we covered to be prepared to defend the faith on eternal security

MY NEXT STEPS FROM THE WEEKEND WORSHIP

1. This week, I will trust that Jesus loves me, not based on my performance but because of the cross.
2. This week, I will answer this question, "Why do I think God accepts me and will let me into heaven?"
3. This week, I will memorize Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
4. This week, I will read all of 1 John (18 verses per day) to learn more about the security of my salvation and my eternal home.

HOW MY GROUP CAN PRAY FOR ME THIS WEEK

> [Record Group Prayer Request Here:](#)

COMMENTARY

Eternal Security: God protects believers for the completion of their salvation. The natural gulf between the invisible, infinite God and finite, fallible humanity makes the quest for assurance and security a very significant theological issue. The Bible does teach that salvation does not depend merely upon human effort. God is the author of salvation (*2 Cor. 5:18-19; John 3:16*). God justifies or treats as acceptable sinners who receive Christ in faith (*Rom. 3:21-26*). No one can earn assurance or security with God. Security does not come by absolutions, church attendance, good works, reciting Scripture, or performances of penance. God who has begun the work of salvation in Christians also provides the necessary assurance to bring His work to its completion in the day of Christ (*Phil. 1:6*). God in Christ protects and keeps Christians (*John 10:27-29; 2 Thess. 3:3*) just as Jesus took seriously the task of preserving the disciples while He was on earth (*John 17:12-15*). We do not possess the strength to secure ourselves.

The biblical view of security, however, is probably best epitomized in the Christian doctrine of perseverance (*Eph. 6:18; Heb. 12:1; James 1:25*). Christians must realize that their security does not lie in a fairy-tale approach to life where once a person becomes a Christian everything is a bed of roses forever and ever. Such a view fails to take seriously the traumas of human life.

Along with great promises of assurance, the Bible contains strong warnings that call Christians to consistent living, even as they have yielded to temptations and sin and capitulated to the hostile forces of evil (*1 Cor. 10:1-12; Heb. 2:1-3; 3:12-19; 6:1-8; 10:26-31; James 5:19-20*).

These warnings appear in the NT within clear statements reminding believers that temptation is accompanied by God's presence. Christians are expected to resist temptations and flee ungodly activity (*1 Cor. 10:13-14*). Evil patterns of life are inconsistent with Christian transformation. The Christian is anchored to the person of God. Evil has to be dealt with. The Christian can find in God an enduring security for the soul. Such is the meaning of *Heb. 6:17-20*. God's consistency is the basis for a Christian's security in the midst of the world's traumas.

The confidence or secure sense of the believer with respect to the life hereafter is rooted in the united witness of the NT writers that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the hinge point of the Christian faith. In raising His Son Jesus, God provided Christians with the sign of the destinies and the basis for their security. Without the resurrection the Christian proclamation would be empty (*1 Cor. 15:14*). Moreover, in the coming of the Holy Spirit, God provided the guarantee of our marvelous relationship with God (*2 Cor. 1:22*). As we identify with the ultimate power of Christ in the resurrection, we, too, shall experience the effective meaning of the security of the believer in the triumph of God (*1 Cor. 15:20-28*) (Gerald L. Borchert, "Security of the Believer." ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003]).

Question 2. John 3:1-8. It is useless to speculate why Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, though interpreters have invested a great amount of ink in doing so. We should not infer that Nicodemus was afraid or embarrassed to be with Jesus. The text does not suggest Nicodemus's motive, but John does emphasize his personal subordination to one he already understood had authority from God. When Nicodemus called Jesus Rabbi, this member of the Jewish ruling council placed himself in the role of learner. The conversation which unfolded led him to eternal life.

Nicodemus was rich, he was highly educated, he was interested in spiritual matters, he had a solid grasp of Old Testament Scripture—but he knew something was missing in his life. A theologian approached a carpenter and graciously acknowledged him as a teacher from God *because of the signs*. Nicodemus demonstrates that religious training without spiritual insight is useless. Jesus wasted no time getting to the heart of the problem. He told the teacher he must be born again or from above, a word which appears again in verses 7 and 31. Unless God changes our hearts his way, from the inside out, any discussion of the kingdom is useless. Verse 3 deals with the source of the new birth, and verse 5 talks about the process. This is the regeneration which he provides at the time of faith in Christ.

The first time You appears in *verse 7* it is singular as in *verses 3 and 5*. Obviously Jesus was talking directly to Nicodemus. But in the last phrase of *verse 7*, the You becomes plural saying, in effect, "all of you." The new birth was not just for Nicodemus. The movement from flesh to spirit, from world to kingdom, from death to life is a necessity for every human being (Kenneth O. Gangel, *John*, vol. 4, *Holman New Testament Commentary* [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

COMMENTARY

Question 4. Romans 8:37-39. Paul reflected upon the words of the psalmist (in *Ps 44:22*), which he found so appropriate to his situation. The troubles to be faced by the Christian are nothing new but have always been the experience of God's people. Nevertheless in all these difficult situations we are winning an overwhelming victory through the one who has proven his love for us (v. 37). It is the love of Christ that supports and enables the believer to face adversity and to conquer it. The final two verses of chap. 8 supply the climax of Paul's inspired and eloquent words of praise to the love of God. The apostle voiced his confidence that there is nothing that could separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. His list of ten terms moves from physical danger through the hierarchy of superhuman powers, those that now exist or ever will, powers from on high or from below, and culminates in the inclusive phrase "anything else in God's whole world" (Phillips). It is true that life contains its full share of hardships (v. 18). But God is at work in all the circumstances of life to conform those whom he has chosen into the likeness of his dear Son. The process is God's. We are his workmanship (*Eph 2:10*) (Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995]).

Question 5. John 10:14-18. In comparison to the hired hand, the relationship of the shepherd to the sheep was a personal one (*10:12-13*; cf. *10:3*). The shepherd's personal investment in this relationship was the life of the shepherd. The authentic shepherd in fact was the sacrificial Lamb who gave his life for the world. In this text the meaning that is being emphasized is that Jesus represents authentic security for his people whereas those who are not aligned with Jesus are ultimately destructive symbols set against the well-being of the sheep. The good shepherd's relationship with his sheep is based on their interpersonal knowledge of each other (*10:14*). The use of *ginōskein* ("know") here is far more than cognitive (factual) knowledge. The relationship between Jesus and his sheep is modeled on the relationship between Jesus and the Father (*10:15*). It is this relationship that supplied the rationale for the self-sacrifice of Jesus for his sheep. The discussion of *10:17-18* thus flows from the presupposition of this relationship (Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, vol. 25A, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996]).

Question 6. Philippians 1:3-6. All St. Paul's Epistles, except those to the *Galatians*, *1 Timothy*, and *Titus*, begin with a thanksgiving. In this Epistle the thanksgiving is especially warm and earnest; no cloud of doubt darkened the apostle's confidence in the Philippians; he pours forth his gratitude to God for their spiritual gifts fervently and without reserve.

St. Paul thanks God for their help, their co-operation towards the work of the gospel. This fellowship began "in the beginning of the gospel," when the Philippians sent aid to the apostle at Thessalonica and Corinth; it continued "until now"—ten years; they had just sent their alms to St. Paul at Rome by Epaphroditus (ch. *4:10*).

St. Paul's thanksgiving refers, not only to the past, but also to the future. He has a confident trustfulness in God's power and love. The good work is self-consecration, the sacrifice of themselves, their souls and bodies, issuing in the co-operation of labour and almsgiving. The good work is God's; he began it and he will perfect it. The beginning is the pledge of the consummation. Yet it is also their work—their co-operation towards the gospel (comp. ch. *2:12, 13*)

(H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Philippians*, The Pulpit Commentary [London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909]).

Doubt: Doubt may be divided into three general areas. Factual doubt usually raises issues regarding the truth of Christianity. Emotional doubt chiefly concerns our moods and feelings. Volitional doubt is a category that ranges from weak faith to a lack of motivation to follow the Lord. Almost all believers, as well as unbelievers, experience doubt at times.

The answer to factual doubt is the facts. In other words, questions concerning God, Jesus, the Bible, or the resurrection are answered by the data.

Emotional doubt is the most common as well as the most painful variety. Frequently, these doubters repeatedly wonder whether they are saved, while exhibiting signs of their obvious love for the Lord. The best response, every single time a doubt arises, is to weed out and correct the improper thought by concentrating on God's truth rather than on our shaky beliefs.

Volitional doubt covers a wide range of uncertainty. Any biblical means of stirring the dying embers may be helpful here. Members of the body of Christ need to be alert and sensitive, helping each other focus on the Lord and His kingdom (Gary R. Habermas, "How Should a Christian Deal with Doubt?," in *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith*, ed. Ted Cabal et al. [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007]).

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