



The Love of The Father | Ronnie Johnson | 5.24.20
Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What's the last great TV show or movie you watched? What did you like about it?

SHARE

Welcome to another week of Take-Home Church. As we continue to learn how to be the church in the middle of this pandemic, take a few minutes to check in with your Group. Our circumstances may not be ideal, but that doesn't mean we stop living life in community. So, before we go any further, take some time to talk with your Group by having everyone answer these questions:

Rate your week on a scale of 1 to 10. Why did you pick that number?

What is one thing you feel like God is currently teaching you?

What is one challenge you are facing this coming week?

What was the most inspiring thing that happened to you this week?

GROW

Read John 3:1-20

What is your initial reaction to this story?

John 3 is one of the most famous chapters in Scripture. The 16th verse gives us an amazing invitation into eternal life, and the only prerequisite is believing in God. However, as Ronnie reminded us this week, there is a difference between “knowing” and “believing.” It’s one thing to know a bunch of information about God; it’s another thing to actually believe in God. That’s why John later wrote, “so we have come to know and believe the love that God has for us” (1 John 4:16). Knowledge is great, but it’s only the first step. The goal of the Christian journey is to experience the love of the Father.

Nicodemus knew a ton of information about God, but Jesus invited him into something much bigger. He gave him an opportunity to be born again and experience firsthand how much God cares about him. But Nicodemus had a hard time wrapping his mind around this invitation. The news was almost too good to believe. Remember, he spent his entire life on an intellectual ascent, trying to understand God, so it’s no wonder he struggled to believe that following God can be that easy.

Fortunately, John 3 is not the end of his story. Before we look at his transformation, stop, and answer these questions:

Can you relate to Nicodemus in this story? Do you ever find it difficult to believe that eternal life is as easy as believing in Jesus?

Is it easier for you to believe in God or know things about Him?

Do you believe that God loves you? If so, how does that love change, you today?

M O V E

Read John 19:38-42

What difference did you notice about Nicodemus in John 19 as opposed to John 3?

Although there is not much resolution to Nicodemus’ story in John 3, something amazing happens a few years later. Nicodemus springs into action the moment they hang Jesus on the cross.

Nicodemus brought about seventy-five pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes to begin the process of Jesus' burial. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs (John 19:39-40).

The weight of this passage is lost on us today. In those days, when someone important died, you would anoint the body with about one pound of oil. However, Nicodemus brings seventy-five pounds! That's over the top generosity. Some scholars believe seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes would've cost around \$150,000. Apparently, Nicodemus was so moved by his conversation with Jesus that he went all out to honor Him.

That's what the Father's love does to us. It melts even the hardest hearts and turns stingy souls into generous ones. As Ronnie reminded us this week, it's God's love that persuades us to act. Our job is to frequently remind ourselves how much God loves us!

One way to do that is to constantly meditate on and remind each other of God's promises. Let's reread the list Ronnie gave us:

- Every time you are in need, I'll be there (Nahum 1:7, Isaiah 40:29)
- Even when you make mistakes, my grace will be there all the more (Romans 5:20)
- I'll never grow tired or weary (Isaiah 40:28)
- Every need that you have, I'll provide (2 Cor. 9:8, Philippians 4:19)
- I'll stick closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24)
- When your heart breaks, I'll be near. (Psalm 34:18)
- I will never leave you (Deuteronomy 31:6)
- It's my pleasure to give you everything I have worked for (Luke 12:32)
- You can always come to me when you don't know what to do (James 1:5)
- I will never, ever, ever stop loving you (Romans 8:38-29)
- I promise to only do good to you (Psalm 107:1, Psalm 23:6, Psalm 84:11, Psalm 145:9)
- I want to give you all the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4, John 14:13)
- I want great things for your future (Jeremiah 29:11)
- I won't ever keep a record of your wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5, Psalm 103:12)
- My love for you isn't contingent on your love for me (1 John 4:10)
- I will only give you gifts that are good and perfect (James 1:17)
- Even on your worst day, I would give my life for you. (Romans 5:8, Romans 5:10)

Do you have a difficult time believing any of these promises? Which one? Why do you think it's tough for you?

As you read through that list, which promises stuck out to you the most? Why?

Take-Home Assignment: Pick-A-Promise

Pick one promise from the list that is especially applicable to you today. Memorize both the promise and the scripture that goes along with it. Spend two minutes every morning and evening, reminding yourself of this promise. For accountability, tell your Group which one you picked and why.

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time, sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate calls to share more freely.

T O G O

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14