

A CONVERSATION ABOUT RELIGION

JOHN 3:1-21 // PASTOR TODD DUGARD
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If you're ready to fill that emptiness inside, it's time to be willing to listen (John 3:1-7), be open to something new (John 3:8-15), and be responsive to change (John 3:16-21).

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

"True conversation, according to communications leader Jason DeMers, is characterized in part by having something worthwhile to say, being okay with silence, no one dominating or being argumentative, and having thoughtful intonation in our voices."

If you have ever enjoyed a great conversation about spiritual things, what did you discuss?
(Alternatively: If you've never had a great discussion about spiritual matters, why might that be?)

Can you have great spiritual conversations if you're not willing to move beyond religious clichés and small talk? How do you take what you talk about to a deeper level?

Blaise Pascal and Ecclesiastes 3:11 both observe that we all long to connect with God to address an internal emptiness. Have you seen people trying to fill the void without God? Why are these attempts to address the "internal abyss" and "eternal longing" ultimately unsatisfying?

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. – Ecclesiastes 3:11

To address his personal emptiness, Nicodemus was willing to listen to Jesus. When he heard that he needed to be born again, Nicodemus' conceptions about how to qualify for salvation were challenged to the core of his thinking. Maybe your thoughts can be challenged by what Jesus teaches here. Why do you need to be born again to enter God's kingdom? *(Some people think that all humans will go to heaven or that all those in a particular religion will go to heaven; how does your answer address their thinking).*

Why did Jesus want Nicodemus to remember that Moses raised up a serpent on a pole so that the Israelites could be healed? What new idea(s) did Nicodemus need to be open to before he could understand who Jesus really was?

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' – John 3:5

What has Jesus taught that helps you understand that you also need(ed) to be born again?

Nicodemus stopped identifying with those Pharisees who opposed Jesus, and he honoured Christ after he went to the cross (John 19:38-42). This was a significant and risky change that may indicate he started to grasp what Jesus had taught him. What are significant changes in your life that demonstrate you have understood the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection?

What is still changing? How are you cooperating with Jesus so that he completes the good work he has started in you? (Philippians 1:6)