

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK THREE: JESUS' FRIENDS

READING

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"). 42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"). 43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me." 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. 45 Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" "Come and see for yourself," Philip replied. John 1 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this passage, Jesus invites some men to follow him – to be his disciples. A disciple is a learner who follows the instructions of his or her teacher. These disciples would become Jesus' closest friends during the next three years. And this story is where it all begins.

Andrew follows Jesus because he overhears John the Baptist call him "the Lamb of God." Andrew must have really believed John because not only did he begin following Jesus, he went and told his brother, Simon, that they had "found the Messiah." This was an extraordinary thing to say! The word messiah (Christ) means savior or deliverer. The Jewish people were desperately waiting for a messiah that would lead them to victory over their oppressors (the bad guys). Simon must have been excited to meet Jesus!

The next day, Jesus invites Philip to follow him. Like Andrew, Philip has to share this with someone. He finds and tells Nathanael, but Nathanael isn't convinced. Philip doesn't argue with him or try to convince him; he just invites him to "come and see for yourself."

So, what do we learn from how these men became Jesus' friends?

1) There are different ways God uses to bring people into friendship with Jesus. Maybe like Andrew, you heard someone talk about Jesus and that is why you became his friend. Maybe like Simon, you were invited to learn about Jesus by a friend or family member. Maybe like Nathanael, you have hard questions and aren't sure – Jesus wants to be your friend too!

2) Becoming Jesus' friend changes your life. One encounter with Jesus and Simon was given a new name (Peter) and a new reason to live (follow Jesus).

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3) When you are Jesus' friend, you want others to be his friend too. This isn't a friendship to keep a secret. This is a friendship to tell others about because what Jesus did for you, he wants to do for them!

RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION:

- Who are your closest friends? What do you like about them?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- Who can be Jesus' friend?
- Is our friendship with Jesus supposed to be a secret? Why or why not?

CHILDREN:

- How is Jesus different than your other friends?
- Why did Andrew and Philip tell others about their new friend Jesus?
- Do you have any friends that need to know about Jesus?

TEENAGERS:

- What is one way that friendship with Jesus has changed who you are?
- Why did Andrew and Philip tell others about their new friend Jesus?
- What are some different ways that you can introduce Jesus to your friends?

ADULTS:

- What is one way that friendship with Jesus has changed who you are?
- What is the story of the beginning of my friendship with Jesus?
- Who can I share my story with?

PRAYER

God, thank you that Jesus invites me to follow Him and to be His friend. Help me to value that friendship and to follow him with all of my heart and in every area of my life. Point me toward those who are not friends with Jesus and provide me with opportunities to invite them to "come and see." Thank you for being a faithful friend. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

Jesus was not the type of Messiah most Jewish people were anticipating. They hoped for a mighty warrior, strategic general and powerful politician all rolled into one. The OT (especially Isaiah) speaks of a messiah and a suffering servant. It's unlikely that anyone thought that the messiah and servant would be the same person.

How did Jesus, the suffering servant, show himself to also be the promised Messiah? Why did we need him to be both? In what ways is the biblical Jesus still not what some might expect?