

PURSUE RELATIONALLY

To kick things off, have each person in your group answer the following question: Tell us about your most embarrassing moment?

LIVE AUTHENTICALLY

Welcome to week two of At Home Faith. Josh challenged us last week to keep four things important in our lives, even in the midst of the storm: prayer, word, worship and people. We need people surrounding us in the midst of the storm. We are all about to head into a busy season of life that may contain different challenges (school, returning to work in person, etc.). Before we go any further, take some time to focus on the people in your group. Have 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 is one thing you are thankful for this week?

Take some time to pray as a group for your coming week:

- Pray for teachers and students returning to school.
- Pray for those who are returning to work in person, and the decisions that go into making that possible.
- Pray for wisdom for the officials and leaders who are working to keep us safe.

COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

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 Josh 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?



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 Josh 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!

When was the last time you heard and were encouraged by God's promises? We believe that it is important to hear, read and encourage one another with these promises. Even if you are already familiar with some of them, take some time as a group to reread just the list of promises below (should you wish to, read through the scriptures that accompany them as well):

- 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)

Talk:

Which one of these promises do you have a difficult time believing to be true? Why do you think it is tough for you to believe? Which one of these promises inspires you the most? Why? Has God fulfilled any of these promises in your life? Which one? Share with the group how God fulfilled this promise in your life.



DEVOTE DAILY

Pick the promise that you chose above that is difficult for you to believe to be true. Memorize both the promise and the scripture(s) that goes along with it. Spend two minutes every morning and evening reminding yourself of this promise in order to know and begin to believe God's promise to you. For accountability, tell your Group which one you picked, why you chose this promise, and ask them to hold you accountable to memorizing it this week.

Pray: We need prayer now more than ever. As a group, spend some time sharing prayer requests with one another. Take some time to pray God's promises above over one another. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking off to share more freely.

ENGAGE MISSIONALLY

Someone in your life needs to hear the promises of God this week. Whether they are a believer or non-believer, the promises of God are an encouragement to others. Is there someone in your life that could be encouraged by the promise that you have committed to memorize this week? Reach out to that individual, remind them of God's promise to them this week and encourage them to watch this week's message if they have not already.

1 John 4:16 says:

"We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them."

