

# The Gospel According to John

## What If You Are Just Average?

October 29, 2023

### John 3

**1** Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. **2** He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' **3** Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' **4** Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' **5** Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. **6** What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." **8** The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' **9** Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' **10** Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

**11** 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. **12** If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **13** No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. **14** And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

**16** 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

**17** 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. **18** Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. **19** And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. **20** For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. **21** But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

**22** After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. **23** John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized— **24** John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.

**25** Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. **26** They came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him.' **27** John answered, 'No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. **28** You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him." **29** He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. **30** He must increase, but I must decrease.'

**31** The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all. **32** He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. **33** Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God is true. **34** He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. **35** The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. **36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.

What is better, to pursue being a 90% free throw shooter or to pursue being the best free throw shooter you can be?

"Different characters in the story of Jesus have to learn to play great parts without pride and small parts without shame." \_ C. S. Lewis

"What if what counts is not comparing yourself with other people but simply following Jesus?" \_ N. T. Wright

Nicodemus

Why John the Baptist?

What if John accepts what Nicodemus, and those he represents, will not?

What if you're just average?

John 21v20-22

**20** Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?' **21** When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' **22** Jesus said to him, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!'

**Songs:** Ain't No Grave, Embers, How Deep the Father's Love For Us, God With Us, We Will Follow

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