

# LifeGroup Leader Notes

## John 1:35-51

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I (Paul) have a confession. Years ago I preached John 1:35-51, the very passage we explored on Sunday and you'll be diving into now. At the time my main point was, "we're all called to share Jesus, and sharing Jesus is as simply as pointing people to him." *Come and see*, it's right there in the text. Jesus said it to Andrew (v 39) and Andrew copied the same strategy with his brother Simon (v 42). Yes, sharing our faith is part of following Jesus. The problem is, because my focus was humanistic (man centered) I missed the glorious God story. From Genesis to John to you and me, throughout history the one who keeps calling us to him is God! And not just to come and follow him once we get our act together. No, God calls us because he accepts us. He calls us to himself even when we were sinners and he continues to call and accept, even when we continue to stumble. Receiving God's invitation and acceptance doesn't only change our identity (the way we see ourselves), it also changes the way we follow.

Our prayer for you is that God would birth a greater joy, a deeper faith and a stronger resolve to follow Jesus no matter what life throws at you.

### Warming up

1. Answer one of the following
  - a. If you had one extra hour of free time a day, what would you do with it?
  - b. Who is someone you were introduced to that changed or impacted your life?
  - c. If you had to be handcuffed to a person for an entire day, who would you choose?

**Leader** - If your group already knows each other well, up the ante by having people choose the question for the person on their right or left. Sneaky eh?!

2. How has God been speaking to you through Sunday's sermon or your time in His word this past week? Has anyone been reading John?

**Leader** - There has been a church wide challenge to read John. Encourage your LifeGroup to join in, perhaps you could all read it together on YouVersion?

### God Seeks

Together read John 1:35-42a in a couple different versions.

3. Jesus himself wasn't afraid of asking the probing questions of life like "what are you seeking?" (38). Doesn't matter if you're raising kids, studying, working or retired. We all wrestle with hard questions.

- a. What are some of those hard life questions you have wrestled with?

**Leader-** "What do I really want in life? Why am I doing this? Do I matter?"

- b. How has God answered or met you in those questions? What ones are you still wrestling with?

**Leader** - Notice that in v 38 Jesus didn't ask Andrew and his friend, who do you seek, but what do you seek? In what ways have you discovered Jesus to be the answer to your question: "What do I really want in life?" In what ways is he not? What about some of the other questions your group has wrestled through? This is the supreme question of life - What am I looking for? What do I really want? It is helpful to realize that everyone wrestles with these questions and that Christians can have a fulfilling answer.

4. Consider Andrew's story (vv 35-42b)

- a. Compare v 38 with v 41. How did his view of Jesus change and why is this significant?

**Leader** - Andrew went from calling Jesus Rabbi (title of respect) to Messiah (title of divinity). This is significant because: 1) It tells us that just after a day with Jesus that Andrew was convinced, he believed. 2) It tells that Andrew's witness was driven by personal relationship and conviction, not by some notion of religious obligation or sense of superiority.

- b. How has Jesus revealed himself to you in the past? How has he revealed himself lately?

- c. How has your view of Jesus changed as you have grown in relationship with Him?

## God Accepts

Together read 1:42b-51

Have someone read the following recap from Sunday:

*What did Jesus say when he met Peter (v 42)? Why did He call him by his full name? Our names are core to our identity. There's a reason why our parents sometimes used our full-names when we were in trouble. It's a way of saying, I know you, you can't hide from me! Who was Simon son of John? He was a rash, rude and rough piece of work. Yet Jesus sought him and welcomed him. Jesus also gave him hope of being able to break free from his old self - you shall be called Cephas.*

*The same can be said of Nathaniel. His condescending reaction to Philip's invitation reveals a jaded and closed mind. Yet again, how does Jesus respond to him? "Here is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit." Jesus sees the good in him despite also knowing how critical, judgemental and arrogant Nathaniel can be (cf I saw you while you were under the fig tree BEFORE Philip called you v*

48) *The point is: believing is more than knowing. It's embracing God's invitation and acceptance. That's what Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathaniel all did.*

5. Have you ever struggled with the notion of God welcoming and accepting you? What changed or needs to change? (cf Romans 5:8-11 noting that "while we were still sinners" and for that matter "still are sinners.")

**Leader** - Encourage people not just to make this a "back when I came to Jesus" answer. God doesn't just seek and accept us once in our lives. He's doing it throughout all of our days. Below are some wonderful passages that might help people in your group who struggle with the reality that God loves and accepts them: Ps 139:1-18, Jer 1:4-5, Matt 10:29-31, Lk 15:7-32, 1 Jn 3:1-3.

Strategic pause - Take a minute to praise and pray together.

## God Calls

Together read John 1:43

6. Jesus not only seeks and accepts, but also calls us to follow. Why is it so important that following Jesus be rooted in our welcome and acceptance?

**Leader** - We see that believing is more than knowing: It's embracing God's invitation and acceptance. It's following Jesus because we are loved and accepted. Whenever following flows from anything less than God's love and acceptance, it usually lands in painful and broken places. Note the joy Andrew (41), Philip (45) and Nathaniel (49) expressed in the text. To truly know Jesus is to experience a deep healing and peace of the soul. He is what we truly need and are looking for. He seeks us and accepts us. He invites us to join him in the grand journey of redemption. This acceptance is what led James to say "consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." (Ja 1:2-4, cf Paul Rom 5:1-11). You see faith not rooted in God's seeking and accepting will never lead to transformation, nor will it endure.

7. As Lange and Schaff suggest: *(Follow) cannot mean merely: Join the journeying company [Alford]; yet neither is it the call to the Apostolic office. It is the invitation to discipleship, in the form of a travelling companionship. The rest of the interview (how Jesus knew Philip, and Philip knew the Lord) is not mentioned; only the decisive word of the call.*<sup>5</sup> On Sunday we touched on 6 core comments of disciples:
  - a. Identification: baptism, communion, membership
  - b. Celebration: weekly corporate worship
  - c. Walk with Jesus: dig into His Word, pray, join a LifeGroup
  - d. Give: learn to be a contributor not just a consumer.
  - e. Share the load: discover and deploy your gifts.
  - f. Join the Mission: extend God's invitation to "come and see."

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<sup>5</sup> J.P. Lange, & Peter Schaff, (2008). [A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John](#) Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, (p. 94).

Which area comes most naturally to you? Which area do you find most challenging to follow? What area do you sense God is wanting to grow in you? What might that look like?

**Leader** - This is a great opportunity to discuss both the challenges and opportunities of sharing faith with family and friends - the very people that we already know and that know us. Please let Doug know how we can help equip and support you and your group in the mission God has called us on together.

Strategic Pause - Take a minute to solidify any learning and to pray for each other together.