

GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes

DISCUSS: Draw attention to the picture on **PSG page 60** as you introduce **Question #1: When have you needed courage to introduce yourself to someone?**

GUIDE: Direct attention to **The Bible Meets Life** on **PSG, page 61**. Highlight the author's examples of how two casual introductions have impacted the world.

SAY: "Today we will look at how two men intentionally introduced a brother and a friend to Jesus and how that changed their lives."

Reinforce the importance of introducing our family members and friends to Jesus by reading **The Point (PSG, p. 61): We have a responsibility to introduce our friends to Jesus.**

PRAY: Ask God's Spirit to lead you to those you need to introduce to Jesus and to give you the boldness to do it.

SESSION 5

SHARE CHRIST



The Point

We have a responsibility to introduce our friends to Jesus.

The Bible Meets Life

A relationship with Jesus Christ colors every other relationship. As we saw in Session 1, the love of Christ—and our love for Christ—lead us to love others and ground

every aspect of those relationships in love. The best way we can love others is to introduce them to Jesus—the One who leads us to love them.

The Passage

John 1:35-49

The Setting

Following his impressive introduction, John set his Gospel in historical context by linking the beginning of Jesus' ministry with that of John the Baptist. The Baptist had begun preaching and baptizing, and even gathering disciples. He identified the One sent from God to be "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29).

John 1:35-39

35 The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples.

36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

37 The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus.

38 When Jesus turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, “What are you looking for?”

They said to him, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

39 “Come and you’ll see,” he replied. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.

KEY WORDS: **The Lamb of God** (v. 36)—In the Old Testament God prescribed a lamb without blemish as the proper sacrifice for sin. *The Lamb of God* identified Jesus as the ultimate substitutionary sacrifice for sin.

Seek a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

1 ▶ **Verses 35-37.** John the Baptist calling: was to prepare the way for the Messiah. His preaching emphasized the need for repentance and the coming Messiah. One day, John stood with two of his disciples, one later identified as Andrew (v. 40). Both likely grew up in good Jewish homes in which they practiced all the prescribed rituals and sacrifices. They became interested in the excitement surrounding the Baptist’s unique preaching ministry. Having become convinced that their religious heritage lacked the power to atone for their sins, they attached themselves to John as his disciples.

When he **saw Jesus passing by**, John pointed the two disciples to Jesus. By recommending his own disciples to follow Jesus, John had done something quite out of the ordinary. John modeled a servant’s heart because he showed none of the human tendency to make a name for himself.

By calling out, “**Look, the Lamb of God!**” John issued a clarion call for Andrew and the other disciple (perhaps John, brother of James) to follow Jesus. So when these two disciples heard John clearly identify the Messiah, that was all they needed to know. They immediately determined to follow Jesus. The word **followed** (Greek tense of a “once-for-

STUDY THE BIBLE

John 1:35-39



10 minutes

SUMMARIZE: Before reading the passage, set the context by summarizing the information in **The Setting** on page 62.

READ: Read or ask a volunteer to read John 1:35-39.

GUIDE: Refer members to **Key Words** on **PSG page 62** to explain the significance of the phrase *the Lamb of God*.

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 1** on this page and page 64 to show how John the Baptist fulfilled his calling to “prepare the way for the Messiah.” When Jesus passed by, John directed his disciples to Jesus. They immediately determined to follow Jesus. This meant these two were ready to make a commitment to Jesus. They turned their allegiance from John to Jesus and walked with Jesus literally and spiritually.

DISCUSS: Question #2
(PSG, p. 63): When did you first hear about Jesus?

(Alternate: How can we use our words and actions to point others to Jesus?)

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 2** on this page and page 65 to show the progression of the conversation between Jesus and John's two disciples:

- *Jesus: "What are you looking for?"*
- *Men: "Rabbi, where are you staying?"*
- *Jesus: "Come and you'll see."*

The men's question underscored their hunger and commitment to spend time with Jesus—their desire for Him to become their teacher. They sought a personal encounter with Jesus. His response was the invitation of a lifetime, "come and see."

all act") meant these two were ready to make a commitment to Jesus. They turned their allegiance from John to Jesus and walked with Jesus literally, and eventually they would walk with Him spiritually as well.

To become a follower of Jesus, we must agree with holy God that we are sinners and that all of our good works could never atone for our sins. We could never work our way to heaven by our good deeds. God did not send His Son to the earth so He could merely set an example of a good life in order that we might learn how to be better people. Rather, God sent His Son as the sacrifice to save sinners who could not in any way save themselves. We must look to Jesus, the Lamb of God, and place our faith in Him. ◀

2 ▶ Verse 38. Jesus turned around and confronted them, **"What are you looking for?"** This question dramatically formed Jesus' first recorded words in this Gospel. Given the way John had introduced these two followers to Jesus, they were likely so awestruck they could not speak. Jesus' question broke the ice for them. Jesus did not ask them what they were seeking because He lacked information. His question forced them to consider why they followed Him. His probing question not only punched them in their psyches, but it also showed Jesus' eagerness to reach people.

John likely intended for his readers to ask themselves, "What am I looking for?" Even today, Jesus' question to these two disciples remains the basic question of life. Anyone coming to Jesus, whether for the first time or each day in worship, should ask, "What do I want from Jesus? What do I expect to receive from Him? And if I follow Him, how will it change the way I live?"

The pair expressed further interest in their response with another question, **"Rabbi," (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"** By calling Jesus "Rabbi," they acknowledged their shift of allegiance from John to Jesus. As His disciples, they wanted more than a casual conversation by the side of the road, and their question expressed more than an interest in Jesus' lodging place. They wanted to know where He stayed so that they could meet with Him and find out more. Their question underscored their commitment and hunger to spend time with Jesus, for Him to become their teacher. They sought a personal encounter with Jesus.

We need more than to experience a curiosity about Christ or occasional spiritual interest in Him. Smelling the aroma of the gospel from a distance only and allowing Christ to

disappear will leave a person empty. When we spend time with Jesus, we get to know Him and it changes us. We should open our hearts and minds to Jesus and His words.

Verse 39. Jesus replied, “**Come and you’ll see,**” which conveyed the idea, “If you come—and I want you to come—then you will see.” Since **it was about four in the afternoon,** Jesus invited them to spend **that day** and evening with Him. Undoubtedly, Jesus told them something of His mission and answered their questions. ◀

John 1:40-45

40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed him.

41 He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah.” (which is translated “the Christ”),

42 and he brought Simon to Jesus.

When Jesus saw him, he said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which is translated “Peter”).

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, “Follow me.”

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”

Tell others of your experience with Jesus.

Verse 40. After having spent only one evening with Jesus, the two disciples became witnesses to others. The reference to Andrew as **Simon Peter’s brother** presupposed readers’ knowledge of Simon Peter, since this is the first reference to him in John’s Gospel.

Verses 41-42a. Having become convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, Andrew immediately went and found his brother,

TRANSITION: “In the next verses, one of the men, Andrew, immediately found his brother, Simon to share with him the good news, ‘we have found the Messiah.’”

STUDY THE BIBLE

John 1:40-45



10 minutes

READ: Read or ask a volunteer to read John 1:40-45.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Point out that companies often ask customers to give feedback on how satisfied they were with a purchase. Ask for a show of hands if anyone has ever given feedback, positive or negative, after buying an item online. It is often very helpful to read the feedback from other buyers when making a purchase. Hearing about someone’s personal experience is very beneficial. In this passage, the apostle John reported Andrew’s and Philip’s positive experiences after meeting Jesus.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG page 64**.

Ask a volunteer to read this paragraph:

“The word evangelism makes a lot of believers nervous. We know sharing Jesus with others is important, but we’re frightened by the prospect of actually doing it. For some, this is especially true when sharing Christ with family members. But notice how naturally and quickly Andrew told his brother Simon about Jesus. With great enthusiasm Andrew announced to Simon the good news that Jesus was in fact the Messiah they sought!”

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 3** to explain that the terms *Messiah* and *Lamb of God* were synonymous.

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 4** on this page and page 67 to explain the Greek form of the name Peter, *Cephas*, an Aramaic word for “rock.” Share how this functioned like a nickname and was a name that reflected who Simon would become.

Simon. Jesus had met the crying need of Andrew’s heart, and he could not contain his joy. He had to tell Simon immediately, so Simon could experience in Jesus what Andrew had.

Although Andrew seemed to live in the shadow of Simon throughout the Gospels, he became one of the first disciples of Jesus. He also brought Simon to Jesus. When featured in this Gospel, John regularly depicted Andrew bringing someone to Jesus (John 6:8; 12:22).

3 ▶ Simon could have been intrigued by John’s ministry as well. Given his proximity, Simon might have followed the Baptist as one of his disciples also. When Andrew found his brother, he said to him, **“We have found the Messiah.”** *Messiah* means “Anointed One” and carried deep meaning for John throughout his Gospel. He wrote this Gospel to convince readers that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing in Him a person could find life (20:31).

Andrew gave Simon a reliable, first-person testimony, without hesitation or doubt, that the long-anticipated Messiah had finally come. After spending a day and an evening with Jesus, Andrew had examined Him, asked Him question upon question, and came to the joyful conclusion that he should believe the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus.

Andrew’s announcement, “We have found the Messiah,” echoed the Baptist’s proclamation, “Look, the Lamb of God!” Obviously, his disciples had learned from the Baptist that *Lamb of God* and *Messiah* were synonymous terms. While Andrew’s simple pronouncement showed no awareness of the saving nature of Messiah’s ministry, he knew enough to make the connection. He also knew enough about Jesus that he should tell other people about Him. ◀

Because he brought Simon to Jesus, Andrew saw Simon begin his life-changing journey in a relationship with the Messiah. In Andrew, we have an example of someone who, after only one day with Jesus, went searching for his brother to bring him to Jesus. We only have to have a willingness to tell others of our experience with Jesus. The rewards of sharing the message last for eternity.

4 ▶ **Verse 42b.** It must have shocked Simon for Jesus to look right at him and call him by name, **“You are Simon, son of John,”** then suddenly change his name to **Cephas**, or the more common Greek form of the name, **Peter**. *Cephas* was not typically a name, but the Greek transliteration of an Aramaic word for “rock.” Thus Simon’s new name actually functioned more like a nickname. Jesus not only knew him,

but He knew what Simon would eventually become, so Jesus gave him a name that would reflect his character after the Lord's work in him. Over the course of the next three plus years, Jesus would change Simon from a self-centered, defensive, and overbearing man into a solid, immovable, and unbreakable rock for God. ◀

Jesus knows everything about us, including our futures, before we ever meet Him. We begin with Christ by trusting Him as the Lamb of God who takes away our sin, and He gradually develops us to the point where we can be used to bring others to Him.

Verses 43-45. The day after Andrew brought Simon to Him, Jesus left for Galilee to go soul-winning Himself. John continued developing the “finding” theme contained in the previous paragraph as Jesus **found Philip** and as **Philip found Nathanael**. Unlike when Jesus saw Andrew and John and asked them, “What are you looking for?” Jesus issued Philip a direct command, “**Follow me.**” This classic invitation stated as a present tense imperative carried the idea of an ongoing commitment to follow Jesus.

In keeping with how he had introduced Andrew along with Peter, John paused to offer a narrative aside, **Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter**. With Andrew and Philip, John introduced a disciple who sought out another to tell him about Jesus. That person then became the center of attention. This information served to establish a relationship between the two brothers and Philip.

John did not elaborate on the conversation between Jesus and Philip, but it had to have been an amazing experience for Philip because he immediately looked for Nathanael to tell him about Jesus. Although John offered nothing directly in the narrative about the conversation between Jesus and Philip, Philip's conclusion about Jesus told everything, “**We have found the one Moses wrote about.**” Philip could not keep such good news to himself. He found Nathanael and told what he had learned firsthand from Jesus—that the Messiah was “**Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.**”

Philip simply told Nathanael what he had learned about Jesus. We know relatively little about Philip. He received only scant mention in John's gospel (John 6:4-7; 12:20-23; 14:6-11). He may have lacked the confidence and initiative to assert himself to follow Jesus without a direct invitation. But we should remember he did follow Jesus. And he brought others to Jesus. Philip's actions provide us with an unashamed example of telling someone our own experiences with Jesus.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG pages 64-65** that describes how Philip came to follow Jesus:

“Andrew followed Jesus after John announced Him as the Lamb of God, but Jesus simply issued the call for Philip to follow Him, and Philip followed. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach for people to come to faith in Christ. Some people need to hear a testimony—others need a more direct approach—“Follow me.” Jesus’ took different approaches to invite people to follow Him.”

SAY: “Immediately after Philip responded to Jesus' invitation to follow Him, he found his friend Nathanael to tell him about Jesus.”

DISCUSS: Question #3 (PSG, p. 65): What often holds us back from telling others about Jesus?

(Alternate: What can we learn from Andrew and Philip's response to following Jesus?)

TRANSITION: “Next we will see how Nathanael responded to what he learned about Jesus.”

STUDY THE BIBLE

John 1:46-49



15 minutes

READ: Read or ask a volunteer to read John 1:46-49.

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 5** to explain Nathanael's initial skepticism that the Messiah could come from Nazareth.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG page 66** to learn how Philip dealt with Nathanael.

- *Philip did not take Nathanael's skepticism as a personal offense.*
- *Philip did not get into an intellectual argument with Nathanael.*

DISCUSS: Question #4 (PSG, p. 67): What are some ways we can respond when others express doubts about Jesus?

John 1:46-49

46 "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him. "Come and see," Philip answered.

47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus answered.

49 "Rabbi," Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!"

Invite others to know Jesus for themselves.

Nathanael's friend Philip shared the good news with him, so Nathanael had the privilege of hearing it from someone who cared very much for him. But to hear any talk of Messiah connected with Nazareth made no sense to Nathanael.

5 ▶ Verse 46. Even in the face of Philip's enthusiasm about Jesus, Nathanael started out as a doubter who refused to believe anything worthwhile could "**come out of Nazareth.**" Nathanael could not envision that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. Although Nathanael expressed skepticism, Philip challenged him to "**come and see.**"

John offered the testimony of eyewitnesses—Andrew, John, Simon Peter, Philip—who came and asked questions based on the Old Testament promises and came to the conclusion that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Philip challenged Nathanael in essence, "You come and ask your questions."◀

Verse 47. Even as Nathanael approached Him, Jesus read him like a book. Jesus called him a true Israelite in whom there was "**no deceit.**" This alone could have stopped Nathanael in his tracks. He had not yet met Jesus or had any conversation with Him, yet Jesus described his heart and character accurately. As **Jesus saw Nathanael** approaching Him, He sized him up as someone with no hypocrisy or phoniness. In a

nation full of apostates and supposedly self-righteous people who exalted themselves, Jesus had found an honest, true-hearted man—a rare commodity in Israel.

Jesus knows everything about us. Nothing escapes His watchful eye, not even a single thought. This cuts both ways. First, this offers great hope to anyone willing to hear the gospel. Despite his skepticism, Nathanael responded to Philip’s invitation to go see Jesus. A willingness to listen to the truth can result in a person receiving purpose and direction in life. However, we should see the warning that comes in knowing that Jesus sees everything. We cannot hide our sin and hope it will not be judged.

Verse 48. Nathanael knew Jesus had aimed His words at him personally, and asked, “**How do you know me?**” Jesus’ answer convinced him. Philip must have found Nathanael **under the fig tree** and there told him about Jesus. This implied Jesus also knew about Nathanael’s disparaging Nazareth comment—Jesus knew everything about him. Jesus essentially said, “I saw you when My eyes could not see you. I can see your heart.” That the Lord saw him without seeing him physically pointed to His omniscience.

Verse 49. Nathanael stacked together three great titles, “**Rabbi ... Son of God ... King of Israel.**” John wanted to show Nathanael as a skeptic without any predisposed notion to believe Jesus could be the Messiah. The radical change that occurred in him showed the compelling weight of evidence caused Nathanael to confess Jesus as Messiah.

Nathanael’s confession anticipated John’s hope in writing his Gospel: that his readers might come to “believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). Nathaniel’s willingness to come to Jesus allowed John to lift up Christ and to give readers a clear picture of His divine nature.

John took the experiences of this little group of men who knew each other and who caught fish together, and he showed how Jesus changed their lives. Even from the beginning of His ministry, Jesus commissioned this collection of the most common people who could offer first-person testimonies of how Christ had changed their lives and could change the lives of others as well.

In a similar way, the gospel came to us through the first-person testimonies of one or more individuals whom God placed in our lives. Just like Andrew found his brother and pointed him to Jesus, and just like Philip found his friend and invited him to meet Jesus, each of us can do the same for our family members, our friends, and our classmates.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG page 68** to three titles that Nathanael attributed to Jesus:

- *Rabbi*
- *The Son of God.*
- *The King of Israel.*

DISCUSS: Question #5
(PSG, p. 68): **What are some ways we can invite others to “come and see” who Jesus is?**

(Alternate: *What are the main benefits of following Christ?*)

LEADER PACK: Point to **Item 5: Come and See.**



DO: Encourage group members to take a few minutes to complete the activity “**Come and See**” on **PSG page 68.**

LIVE IT OUT



5 minutes

GUIDE: Emphasize **The Point:** We have a responsibility to introduce our friends to Jesus.

REVIEW: Review **Live It Out** (PSG, p. 69; see text to the right). Encourage each group member to follow through this week with at least one of the applications.

WRAP IT UP

GUIDE: Emphasize that as believers we all have a story of our initial encounter with Jesus that includes the people who influenced us to follow Him. We then encourage others to consider following Jesus.

PRAY: "Father, help us to express our gratitude for those who invited us to follow Jesus. Remind us that we have a responsibility to invite our family and friends to follow Him as well."

LIVE IT OUT

What will you do to invite others to "come and see" Jesus?

- ▶ **Pray.** If you've never talked about Jesus with someone else, begin with prayer. Who do you know who is without Christ? Pray for the person, pray for the opportunity to talk, and pray for boldness.
- ▶ **Invite.** Invite others to "come and see" by inviting them to join you in your Bible study group. Bible study is a great way for individuals to see what God's Word says about Jesus.
- ▶ **Tell.** Telling others about Jesus does not require a deep grounding in the Bible and theology. Telling someone about Jesus is as simple as telling how you met Him and what He has done in your life. Share with others your own encounter with Jesus and how He changed your life.



BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR



Part of a stone plaque shows a fisherman returning with his catch; the two seated on the lower register share a cup. Dated to about 2900–2350 B.C., the plaque is from Khafajah, the site Tutub, which was part of ancient Mesopotamia.

Nathanael, mentioned only in John’s Gospel, is the first person John declared to be a believer. Only one piece of personal information is certain about Nathanael: John states he was from Cana of Galilee.

Nathanael had a hard time believing someone from Nazareth could ever be the Messiah. Philip took Nathanael to Jesus, who surprised Nathanael when He referred to him as a true Israelite.

Nathanael’s reply, “How do you know me?” provided Jesus an opportunity to challenge Nathanael. Jesus stated He knew Nathanael was under a fig tree before Philip approached him (1:48). By stating He saw Nathanael under the fig tree prior to Philip’s arrival, Jesus revealed He had access to personal information that only God had. Nathanael’s faith confirmed in him the truth of Jesus’ statement. Nathanael, having cultivated his faith as a true Israelite, declared Jesus’ identity by using two messianic titles: Son of God and King of Israel (v. 49). How appropriate that a true Israelite would know the true King of Israel and could identify the Son of God.

Jesus equated these declarations with belief. Thus, Nathanael believed and received Jesus, becoming the first example of the truth in 1:12.

The excerpt above is from the article “Nathanael: All We Know” (Fall 2013), which relates to this session. More *Biblical Illustrator* articles are available that relate to this session. See page 7 about *Biblical Illustrator*.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It is our responsibility to see that every person has the opportunity to hear that truth so they may repent of sin and trust in Christ.

Each week, make yourself available either before or after the session to speak privately with anyone in your group who wants to know more about becoming a Christian. See the article, “Leading Someone to the Greatest Decision of All,” on page 2 for guidance in leading a person to Christ.

Remind group members that **page 2** in the **PSG** offers guidance in how to become a Christian. Encourage believers to consider using this article as they have opportunities to lead others to Christ.

GROUPS MATTER.

Grow with other group leaders at the **Groups Ministry blog**.

LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry