

## SESSION 5

# SHARE CHRIST

### ▶ **The Point**

We have a responsibility to introduce our friends to Jesus.

### ▶ **The Passage**

John 1:35-49

### ▶ **The Bible Meets Life**

A casual introduction can often turn into something far greater. Ivan Vaughan introduced Paul McCartney, a friend from school, to another friend, John Lennon. Those two later would form *The Beatles* and change the world of music. Bill Fernandez introduced his friend Steve Wozniak to another friend, Steve Jobs. They eventually gave us Apple®.

We know this on a personal level, as well. Many of us were casually introduced at a social event or other occasion to the person who later became our spouse. A wise man once observed that who you become depends a lot on three things: the people you meet, the places you go, and the books you read. I think this is solid advice, but let's consider the role we play in helping other people meet Christ—because a relationship with Jesus Christ changes everything.

In the Gospel of John, we're introduced to some men who met Jesus of Nazareth. They, in turn, introduced others to Him. And each of these seemingly casual introductions ended up changing a life.

### ▶ **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. John 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).

## What does the Bible say?

**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.

### **John 1:35-49**

<sup>35</sup> The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> 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?”

<sup>39</sup> “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.

<sup>40</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed him. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated “the Christ”), <sup>42</sup> 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”).

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

<sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> 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.”

<sup>46</sup> “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Nathanael asked him. “Come and see,” Philip answered.

<sup>47</sup> Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

<sup>48</sup> “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you,” Jesus answered.

<sup>49</sup> “Rabbi,” Nathanael replied, “You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!”

# GET INTO THE STUDY



10 minutes

Notes



**DISCUSS:** Question #1 on page 45 of the PSG: **“When have you needed courage to introduce yourself to someone?”**

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** Piggyback on Question #1, above, by encouraging group members to play a short game. Ask each person to introduce themselves to another person in the group. They are to tell that person their name, how they spent most of their day so far, and their

opinion on the last TV show they watched. There is a catch, however—group members are not allowed to use any word that contains the letter “a.” Once the first wave of group members have finished their introductions, their partners can then introduce themselves with the same rules.

**Note:** Remember that having fun is a positive experience for just about everyone; it’s also an experience that can help deepen the relational bonds between group members. So encourage your group members to “jump in” for this little game—even to “ham it up” if they’re in the mood.

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to “The Bible Meets Life” on page 46 of the PSG. Introduce the theme of telling others about Jesus by reading or summarizing the text—or by encouraging group members to read on their own.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to “The Point” on page 46 of the PSG: **“We have a responsibility to introduce our friends to Jesus.”**

**PRAY:** Transition into the discussion by praying for clarity as you and your group members approach the Scriptures. Pray that God would lead each of you through His Word.

Dotted lines for taking notes.



# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### 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.***

**READ:** John 1:35-39 on page 47 of the PSG. Read the text out loud or ask a volunteer to do so.

**GUIDE:** Use the first three paragraphs on page 63 of this Leader Guide to provide some context on the relationship between John the Baptist and his disciples—including his goals for pointing them toward Jesus.

**DISCUSS:** Question #2 on page 47 of the PSG: **"How did Jesus first catch your attention?"**

**RECAP:** Read aloud the final two paragraphs from page 47 of the PSG:

It was common for rabbis to quiz potential disciples to see if they were worthy. Not Jesus. He only asked, "What are you looking for?" The two men called Jesus "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher") and asked where He was staying. Jesus' invitation was both simple and profound: "Come and you'll see." What a beautiful picture of Jesus' love for people. He's always available to those who seek Him.

We tend to fill our lives with activities and schedules. Jesus stayed busy, too, but He was always "interruptible." He remains accessible today for all who are willing to come and see.

**TRANSITION:** Having found the Messiah, it's interesting to note what Andrew did next. We can see for ourselves in verses 40-45.

**ALTERNATE QUESTION:**  
*Who in your life is good at introducing others to Jesus?*

## John 1:35-39 Commentary

### **Seek a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.**

**[Verses 35-37]** John the Baptist understood his calling: to prepare the way for the Messiah. His preaching emphasized the coming judgment, the need for repentance, and the coming Messiah.

One day, John the Baptist stood with two of his disciples, one later identified as Andrew (see v. 40). Having become convinced that their religious activities and heritage lacked the power to atone for their sins, they attached themselves to John as his disciples. When John **saw Jesus passing by**, John willingly pointed the two disciples to Jesus. Normally a teacher trained his disciples to go out and teach others. John modeled a true servant's heart because he showed none of the normal 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. For months, he prepared the way for the Messiah by connecting Him to the sacrificial system. 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-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 in a literal way; eventually, they walked with Him in a spiritual way as well.

**[Verse 38]** Knowing someone had begun to follow Him, 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 the Baptist had introduced these two followers to Jesus, they were likely so awestruck they could not speak. Jesus' question broke the ice for them. The Lord certainly did not ask Andrew and John what they were seeking because He lacked information. Rather, His question forced them to consider why they followed Him.

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. They wanted to know where He stayed so they could meet with Him and find out more. Their question underscored their commitment and hunger for Him to become their teacher. They sought out a personal encounter with Jesus.

**[Verse 39]** Jesus replied to their seeking hearts by saying, **"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 Commentary

### **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 Jesus was the Messiah, Andrew immediately went and found Simon. Jesus had met the crying need of Andrew's heart, and he could not contain his joy. He had to tell Simon immediately. 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 a person can find life by believing in Him (see 20:31).

Andrew's announcement, "We have found the Messiah," echoed John the Baptist's proclamation, "Look, the Lamb of God!" Obviously, his disciples had learned from John 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.

**[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* is the Greek transliteration of an Aramaic word for "rock." Thus, Simon's new name actually functioned more like a nickname. Jesus knew what Simon would eventually become, so Jesus gave him a name that would reflect his future character.

**[Verses 43-45]** Jesus continued to direct the action by departing from the wilderness area and heading toward 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 asked Andrew and John, "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. John paused to offer a narrative aside, stating that **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 tangential bit of information served to establish a relationship between the two brothers and Philip, who came from the same Galilean town.

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. Philip's conclusion about Jesus told everything, **"We have found the one Moses wrote about."** Philip told Nathanael what he had learned firsthand from Jesus—that the Messiah was **"Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."**







## John 1:46-49 Commentary

### *Invite others to know Jesus for themselves.*

**[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."** Despite Nathanael's skepticism, Philip challenged him to **"come and see."**

John offered the testimony of several eyewitnesses—Andrew, John, Simon Peter, Philip—who came to the conclusion that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

**[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**. Nathanael had not yet met Jesus or had any conversation with Him, yet Jesus described his heart and character accurately. Jesus contrasted Nathanael with the original Israel and forced the readers to recall the story of Jacob. Jacob, whose name meant "deceiver," took his brother's blessing by deceiving their father Isaac. As **Jesus saw Nathanael** approaching, 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.

**[Verse 48]** Nathanael knew Jesus had aimed His words at him personally; he 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 essentially said: "I saw you when My eyes could not see you. I can see your heart." That the Lord saw Nathanael without seeing him physically pointed to His omniscience.

**[Verse 49]** Nathanael stacked together three great titles, **"Rabbi ... Son of God ... King of Israel."** John clearly wanted to show Nathanael as a skeptic without any predisposed notion to believe Jesus could be the Messiah. The radical change 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 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 and his purity of heart allowed him to see truth by the grace of God. John designed this portion of the narrative 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 and 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. Likewise, 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 Peter and pointed him to Jesus, and just like Philip invited Nathanael to meet Jesus, each of us can do the same for family members, friends, and classmates.

