

5

SHARE CHRIST



When have you needed courage to introduce yourself to someone?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLrelationships

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE **45**

THE POINT

We have a responsibility to introduce our friends to Jesus.



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.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

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.

In Jesus’ day, to be someone’s disciple meant you went where he went, slept where he slept, ate what he ate, and did everything you could to emulate him. John the Baptist had disciples like this, including Andrew and another unnamed man (see John 1:40). So it certainly caught their attention when their mentor and role model said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

John had been proclaiming the coming of the Messiah for a long time, so his followers knew enough to know they wanted to meet Jesus and follow Him. They chose to be the Lord’s disciples. We know this because they “followed Jesus” and asked Him, “where are you staying?” They were ready to go where He went, sleep where He slept, and eat what He ate.

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.

How did Jesus first catch your attention?

QUESTION #2

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."

The term "evangelism" makes a lot of believers nervous. We know sharing the gospel with others is important, yet we're frightened by the prospect of actually doing it.

But notice how naturally and quickly Andrew told his brother Simon (we know him best as Peter) about Jesus. As Jewish men, they longed for the coming of the Messiah—the promised Savior. So, it's easy to imagine Andrew brimming with excitement as he announced the good news that Jesus was in fact the Messiah they sought.

Andrew's influence led Simon to his own encounter with Jesus, which was transformational. Jesus even changed Simon's name to reflect who he would ultimately become: "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called 'Cephas' (which is translated 'Peter')." Jesus essentially gave Simon a nickname that means "rock." Peter may have been rash and impulsive, but under the leadership and lordship of Christ, he would become a leader solid as a rock.

The following day Jesus traveled to Galilee where He met Philip. Notice there isn't a "one-size-fits-all" approach for people to come to faith in Christ. Some people, like Andrew, need to hear a testimony—"Look, the Lamb of God" (v. 36).

What can we learn from Andrew and Philip's response to following Jesus?

QUESTION #3

PICTURING EVANGELISM

Which of the following images best represents the practice of evangelism in your mind?



How has your understanding of evangelism shifted and changed throughout your journey with Christ?

Blank space for writing a response to the question above.

Others, like Philip, need a more direct approach—“Follow me.” Jesus took different approaches with different people, and so should we.

Philip received an invitation from Jesus to follow Him, and he naturally passed that invitation onward by telling Nathanael the good news as well. Philip’s message was a bit more descriptive: “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”

Andrew and Philip modeled evangelism for us simply by sharing the good news of the gospel with others. Do you want to tell someone about Jesus? Tell them the good news you’ve found in knowing and following Christ.

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!”

While Andrew, Peter, and Philip immediately began to follow Jesus, Nathanael was more hesitant. We don’t know if Nathanael’s attitude reflected a rivalry between his hometown of Cana (see John 21:2) and Nazareth, or a general perception that Nazareth was “on the wrong side of the tracks.”

Lots of people today love to argue against Jesus’ claims. When we encounter such people, we’ll do well to follow the example of Philip—starting with two things Philip *did not* do:

What are some ways we can respond when others express doubts about Jesus?

QUESTION #4

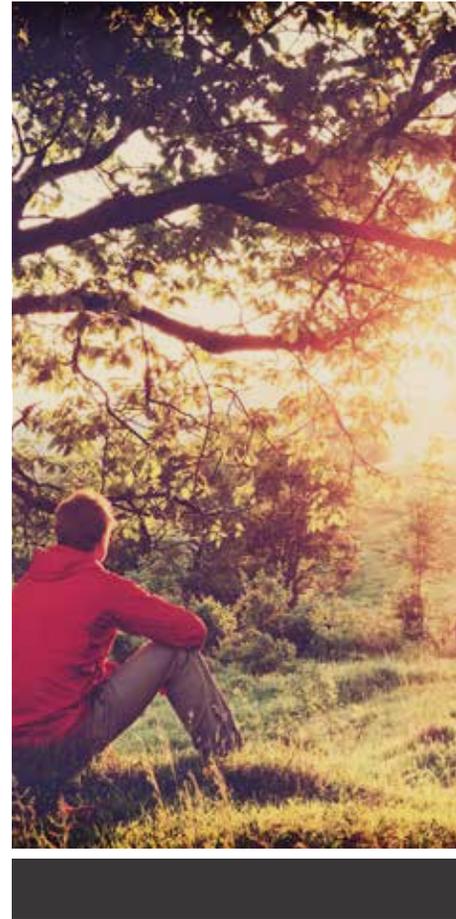
- ▶ **Philip did not take Nathanael’s skepticism as a personal offense.** People who doubt Jesus aren’t always doubting us, as well. They may simply be honest about their experiences.
- ▶ **Philip did not get into an intellectual argument with Nathanael.** Instead, Philip simply repeated what Jesus had said earlier: “Come and see.”

Philip gave us a great example by simply keeping the focus on Jesus. This approach calls for patience with those who are hesitant, doubtful, or even unkind when they hear the good news. Their preexisting view of reality can hinder them from seeing the joy of salvation in Christ. We must graciously help them see beyond their blind spots so they can find Jesus.

Nathanael responded to Philip’s invitation, though he remained skeptical. Jesus responded to that skepticism by telling Nathanael, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” For rabbis and their students, a fig tree was considered a place of prayer and meditation on the law—a place of devotion. That’s how Jesus identified Nathanael as a sincere Jew with no deceit.

This was a supernatural insight from Jesus, and it grabbed Nathaniel’s attention. More than that, it blew away his doubts. Philip had challenged Nathanael to “come and see”—to check out Jesus for himself. Nathanael did, and he was changed. He became a disciple.

Simon, Philip, and Nathaniel—think about what a difference was made in their lives (and in the world) because of a simple invitation. How much difference can we make in peoples’ lives today with that same invitation to “Come and see”?



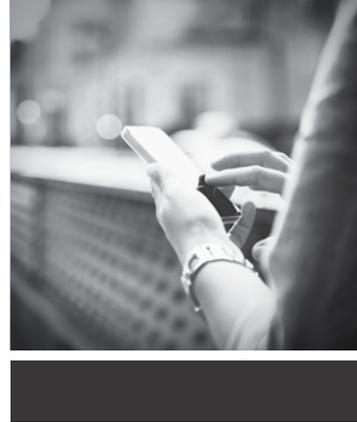
How can we make sure our group is a place for others to “Come and see” Jesus?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

How will you invite others to “Come and see” Jesus this week? Consider these suggestions:

- ▶ **Pray.** If you’ve never talked about Jesus with someone else, begin with prayer. Who do you know who’s without Christ? Pray for that 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 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.



Someone introduced you to Jesus. Someone took the time to share good news with you and help you “Come and see” what Christ was all about. Now it’s time for you to do the same.

My thoughts

Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLrelationships**